



Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra  
Faculty of Letters and Languages  
Department of English Language and literature

# MASTER DISSERTATION

Letters and Foreign Languages  
English Language  
Sciences of the Language

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## Exploring the Impact of Game-based Learning in Enhancing Grammar Proficiency among EFL Learners

### The Case of First-Year Students of English at Biskra University

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Dissertation submitted to the department of English and literature in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for a  
**Master Degree in Sciences of Language**

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## **Declaration**

I, **HAFNAOUI Rahma**, do hereby declare that this submitted work is my original work and has not previously been submitted for any institution or university for a degree. I also declare that a list of references is provided forward indicating all the sources of the cited and quoted information. This work was certified and completed at Mohammed KHEIDER University of Biskra.

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## Dedication

*\*I dedicate this humble work to the handle of my life my beloved father Mohamed, your strength, wisdom, and support have guided me in ways words cannot express. I proud of you as a great father you were and still my biggest supporter in life, may god protect you.*

*\*To my dearest mother Menani Imane; your endless love, sacrifices, and encouragement have been my light through every challenge. You are my greatest inspiration.*

*\*To my precious Aunt, Menani Wafa who is like a second mother to me. Your kindness, care, and constant support have meant the world. Thank you for your pieces of advice that you have been always give me.*

*\*To my wonderful sisters, Hanane and Djoumana and my beloved brother Housseem, thank you for your love, understanding, and for always standing by my side with warmth and encouragement.*

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## **Abstract**

Grammar plays a significant role in the development of English language proficiency among first-year EFL university students. Traditional approaches to grammar teaching, which often rely on teacher-led explanations and rote memorization, frequently fail to engage learners or meet their diverse learning needs. In recent years, game-based learning (GBL) has been given as an innovative strategy to enhance the linguistic abilities, including grammar. Accordingly, this study explores the potential use of GBL to enhance grammar proficiency among first-year EFL students at Biskra University. It aims to determine whether incorporating games into grammar teaching can support learners' understanding, retention, and application of grammatical rules more effectively than traditional methods or not. For this, a descriptive study was conducted, and the data were collected through a semi-structured questionnaire designed and administered to (n=70) first year EFL students at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra, in addition to a structured interview, which was conducted with (n= 4) EFL teachers of grammar at Biskra University. The results revealed that both teachers and students showed favorable attitudes towards the use of games, shedding light on their effectiveness in simplifying complex grammar concepts and creating a more engaging learning environment. According to them, integrating games into grammar lessons positively influences students' grammar proficiency; they do not only increase student motivation and participation but also provide meaningful and interactive opportunities to practice grammar in context. On account of these findings, a number of pedagogical recommendations are served for teachers, learners, and syllabus designers, for the sake of the thoughtful integration of game-based activities into grammar teaching.

***Key words:*** Grammar instruction, grammar proficiency, games, gamed-based approach, student engagement.

## **List of Abbreviation and Acronyms**

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language  
**GBL:** Game- based Learning  
**GB:** Game-based  
**SLA:** Second Language Acquisition  
**GTM:** Grammar Translation Method  
**CLT:** Communicative Language Teaching  
**ALM:** Audio-lingual method  
**TBL:** Task-Based Learning  
**CBI:** Content -Based Instruction  
**ICT:** Information and Communication Technology  
**ZPD:** Zone of Proximal Development  
**SDT:** Self-Determination Theory  
**VS:** Versus

## **List of Tables**

<b>Table 3.1:</b> Students' Age Distribution.....	40
<b>Table 3.2:</b> Students' Gender.....	41
<b>Table 3.3:</b> Students' Years of Learning English.....	42
<b>Table 3.4:</b> Students' Evaluation of Their English Grammar Proficiency.....	43
<b>Table 3.5:</b> Teachers' Use of Games when teaching Grammar.....	44
<b>Table 3.5.1:</b> Types of Games Teachers of Grammar Use.....	44
<b>Table 3.6:</b> Frequency of Teachers' Use of Games when Teaching Grammar.....	45
<b>Table 3.7:</b> Students' Responses about whether Learning Grammar through Games Is More Engaging than through Traditional Methods or not.....	46
<b>Table 3.8:</b> The Grammar Aspects that Students Think Would Improve the Most through Games.....	47
<b>Table 3.9:</b> Challenges that Students Face when Using Games to Learn Grammar at University.....	49
<b>Table 3.10:</b> The Degree of Students' Grammar Proficiency Improvement after Learning through Games.....	50
<b>Table 3.11:</b> Students' Responses about whether They Feel more Confident to use Grammar Correctly or Not after Playing Educational Games.....	51
<b>Table 3.12:</b> The Potential Benefits of Game-based Learning Students Agree with.....	53
<b>Table 3.13:</b> Favorite grammar games students' use in learning grammar.....	55

## List of Figures

<b>Figure 3.1:</b> Students' Age Distribution.....	41
<b>Figure 3.2</b> Students' Gender.....	41
<b>Figure 3.3</b> Students' Years of Learning English.....	42
<b>Figure 3.4</b> Students' Evaluation of Their English Grammar Proficiency.....	43
<b>Figure 3.5</b> Teachers' Use of Games when Teaching Grammar.....	44
<b>Figure 3.5.1</b> Types of Games Teachers of Grammar Use.....	45
<b>Figure 3.6</b> Frequency of Teachers' Use of Games when Teaching Grammar.....	46
<b>Figure 3.7</b> Students' Responses about whether Learning Grammar through Games Is More Engaging than through Traditional Methods or not.....	47
<b>Figure 3.8</b> The Grammar Aspects that Students Think Would Improve the Most through Games.....	48
<b>Figure 3.9</b> Challenges that Students Face when Using Games to Learn Grammar at University.....	49
<b>Figure 3.10</b> The Degree of Students' Grammar Proficiency Improvement after Learning through Games.....	50
<b>Figure 3.11</b> Students' Responses about whether They Feel more Confident to use Grammar Correctly or Not after Playing Educational Games.....	51
<b>Figure 3.12</b> The Potential Benefits of Game-based Learning Students Agree with.....	53

## List of Appendices



**Appendix 1:** Students' Questionnaire

**Appendix 2:** Teachers' Interview

<b>Declaration.....</b>	<b>II</b>
<b>Dedication.....</b>	<b>III</b>
<b>Acknowledgements.....</b>	<b>IV</b>
<b>Abstract.....</b>	<b>V</b>
<b>List of Abbreviation and Acronyms.....</b>	<b>VI</b>
<b>List of Tables.....</b>	<b>VII</b>
<b>List of Figures.....</b>	<b>VIII</b>
<b>List of Appendices.....</b>	<b>IX</b>
<b>Contents.....</b>	<b>X</b>

### **General Introduction**

Introduction.....	1
1. Study Background.....	1
2. Statement of the Problem.....	2
3. Research Questions.....	3
4. Research Hypotheses.....	3
5. Aims of the Study.....	3
6. Significance of the study.....	3
7. Research Methodology.....	4
7.1 Research Approach.....	4
7.2 Data Collection Tools.....	4
7.3 Population and Sampling Techniques.....	4

### **Chapter One: Literature Review**

Introduction.....	6
Section One: Grammar Proficiency in L2.....	6
1.1.1 Definition of Grammar.....	6
1.1.2 The Importance of Grammar in Teaching.....	7
1.1.3 Components of Grammar.....	8
1.1.3.1 Phonology.....	8
1.1.3.2 Morphology.....	8
1.1.3.3 Syntax.....	8
1.1.3.4 Semantics.....	8
1.1.4 Grammar Teaching Methods.....	8
1.1.4.1 Grammar Translation Method (GTM).....	9

1.1.4.2 Communicative Language Teaching (CLT).....	9
1.1.4.3 The Audio-Lingual Method (ALM).....	9
1.1.4.4 Task-Based Learning (TBL).....	10
1.1.4.5 Content-based Instruction (CBI).....	10
1.1.5 Grammar Teaching in EFL Contexts.....	11
1.1.6 Grammatical Knowledge and Grammatical Ability.....	12
1.1.6.1 Grammatical Knowledge.....	12
1.1.6.2 Grammatical Ability.....	12
1.1.7 Strategies for Effective Grammar Instruction.....	13
1.1.7.1 Integrating Grammar with Writing.....	13
1.1.7.2 Teaching Grammar in Context.....	13
1.1.7.3 Using Students' Writings as Examples.....	13
1.1.7.4 Providing Targeted Mini-lessons.....	13
1.7.5 Encouraging Peer Editing.....	13
1.1.8 Use of Explicit and Implicit Instruction.....	13
1.1.8.1 Explicit Instruction.....	14
1.1.8.2 Implicit Instruction.....	14
1.1.8.3 Usage over Terminology.....	14
1.1.9 Common Grammar Challenges for EFL Learners.....	15
1.1.9.1 Word Order.....	15
1.1.9.2 Tense Use.....	15
1.1.9.3 Prepositions.....	15
1.1.9.4 Articles.....	16
1.1.9.5 Subject-verb Agreement.....	16
1.1.9.6 Pronouns and Possessive Forms.....	16
1.1.9.7 Conditional Sentences.....	16
1.1.9.8 Gerunds and Infinitives.....	16
1.1.10 Assessing Grammar Proficiency: Types of Grammar Assessments.....	16
1.1.11 The Role of Feedback in Grammar Learning.....	18
Section Two: Game-based Learning.....	19
1.2.1 Multiple Perspectives on the Definition of Game-based Learning.....	19
1.2.1.1 Cognitive Perspective.....	19
1.2.1.2 Constructivist Perspective.....	19

1.2.1.3 Pedagogical Perspective.....	19
1.2.1.4 Psychological Perspective.....	20
1.2.2 Game-based Learning Vs. Gamification.....	20
1.2.3 The Importance of Game-Based Learning in EFL Classroom.....	21
1.2.4 Advantages and Disadvantages of Game-based Learning in EFL Classrooms	23
1.2.4.1 The Advantages.....	23
1.2.4.2 The Disadvantages.....	24
1.2.5 Types of Games Used for Grammar Learning.....	24
1.2.5.1 Board Games.....	24
1.2.5.2 Card Games.....	25
1.2.5.3 Role-playing Games.....	25
1.2.5.4 Sentence Building and Word Order Games.....	25
1.2.5.5 Digital Grammar Games.....	25
1.2.5.6 Bingo and Other Vocabulary-Based Grammar Games.....	26
1.2.5.7 Competitive Grammar Quizzes and Races.....	26
1.2.6 Studies on the Use of GBL to Teach Grammar.....	26
Conclusion.....	27

## **Chapter Two: Research Methodology**

Introduction.....	29
2.1 Research Approach.....	29
2.1.1 The Research Approach for this Study.....	30
2.2 Research Design and Strategies.....	30
2.3 Data Collection Methods.....	31
2.3.1 The Students' Questionnaire.....	32
2.3.2 The Teachers' Interview.....	32
2.4 Data Collection Procedures.....	33
2.4.1The Students' Questionnaire.....	33
2.4.2TheTeachers' Interview.....	34
2.5 Data Analysis Procedures.....	34
2.6 Population and Sampling .....	37
2.6.1 Teachers.....	37
2.6.2 Students.....	37
Conclusion.....	37

### **Chapter Three: Fieldwork and Data Analysis**

Introduction.....	40
3.1 Data Analysis.....	40
3.1.1 Analysis of the Students' Questionnaire.....	40
3.1.2 Analysis of the Teachers' Interview.....	58
3.2 Discussion and Summary of the Findings.....	67
Conclusion.....	70
<b>General Conclusion</b> .....	71
<b>Implications and Recommendations</b> .....	73
<b>Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research</b> .....	74
<b>References</b> .....	76
<b>Appendices</b>	
الملخص	

# **General Introduction**

## **Introduction**

Grammar proficiency is a cornerstone of language learning, and its mastery is essential for effective communication in the English language. In traditional language classrooms, grammar teaching often focuses on rote memorization and drills, which may not engage students effectively. As educational practices evolve, new, more interactive methods, such as game-based learning (GBL), are being explored to enhance students' learning experiences. GBL refers to the use of games and play to facilitate learning in an engaging and interactive manner.

In recent years, GBL has gained attention in the educational community as an innovative method for improving various aspects of language learning, including grammar. By incorporating game mechanics into lessons, GBL provides an enjoyable and motivating environment for students to practice and master grammar rules. While there is significant research on the general use of game-based learning in education, limited studies specifically focus on its impact on grammar proficiency among Algerian EFL learners. Many studies have concentrated on vocabulary acquisition or speaking skills, leaving a gap in understanding how GBL can enhance grammatical accuracy and understanding in EFL contexts since language is grammar.

### **1. Study Background**

The importance of learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) continues to grow in today's interconnected world. English serves as the primary medium of communication in global business, education, and technology, making it an indispensable skill for individuals pursuing academic and professional success. For non-native speakers, acquiring English proficiency opens doors to international opportunities and facilitates cultural exchange. Among the essential components of English language proficiency, grammar plays a pivotal role in constructing coherent and accurate sentences, which are necessary for effective communication.

However, teaching grammar to EFL learners often relies on traditional methods, such as rote memorization and repetitive drills, which can fail to sustain learner engagement or foster long-term retention. Many EFL learners find mastering grammar rules challenging, which can lead to frustration, limited progress, and decreased motivation (Wang and

Lieberoth, 2016). As a result, there is a pressing need for more innovative and engaging methods of grammar instruction.

In recent years, game-based learning (GBL) has emerged as a new approach to address these challenges. By incorporating elements of play, competition and interactivity, GBL creates an engaging environment that encourages active participation. Research shows that GBL not only enhances motivation but also improves grammar proficiency and fosters better retention of language rules. Wang and Lieberoth (2016) found that integrating game-based design in language learning significantly increased learner engagement and retention.

Similarly, Tsai (2018) highlighted the effectiveness of GBL in making grammar instruction more enjoyable and meaningful for EFL learners, emphasizing its role in improving overall learning outcomes. Hwang et al. (2017) explored the use of digital games in grammar teaching and observed substantial improvements in learners' grammatical accuracy and communicative competence. Likewise, Chik and Ho (2020) emphasized how gamified language learning platforms have positively impacted learners' grammar proficiency through dynamic and interactive activities.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

Despite the critical importance of grammar proficiency in English as Foreign Language (EFL) learning, traditional methods of grammar instruction often fail to effectively engage learners. Conventional approaches, such as rote memorization and repetitive drills, may lead to a lack of motivation, reduced participation, and limited retention of grammar rules. These challenges are particularly pronounced in EFL contexts, where learners may already face difficulties with complex linguistic structures.

The need for innovative and effective teaching strategies has led educators to explore alternative methods, such as game-based learning. Research suggests that game-based approaches can create interactive and enjoyable learning environments, which improve student motivation, participation, and mastery of grammar rules. However, there remains a gap in understanding the extent to which these approaches impact grammar proficiency among EFL learners, particularly at Biskra University.

This study seeks to address this gap by exploring the effectiveness of game-based learning strategies in enhancing grammar proficiency among EFL learners. Furthermore, it aims to contribute to the development of innovative pedagogical practices that better align with the needs and preferences of learners.



### **3. Research Questions**

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

**RQ1:** What are the game-based learning activities used by teachers to enhance grammar proficiency among EFL students.

**RQ2:** Does game-based pedagogy have an effect on EFL learners' grammar proficiency.

### **4. Research Hypotheses**

It is hypothesized that:

**RH0:** Game-based pedagogy does not have an effect on improving EFL learners' grammar proficiency.

**RH1:** Implementing game-based pedagogy into the teaching of EFL grammar can significantly affect EFL learners' grammar proficiency.

### **5. Aims of the Study**

Generally, the current study seeks to investigate whether or not implementing a game-based pedagogy enhances EFL learners' grammar proficiency. More specifically, this study seeks to attain the following specific objectives:

- To explore the types of game-based learning activities teachers use to teach grammar.
- To assess the effectiveness of these activities in improving the grammar proficiency among EFL learners.

### **6. Significance of the study**

The significance of this study lies in its potential to transform grammar instruction in EFL classrooms by introducing game-based learning as an engaging and effective teaching method. Traditional grammar teaching often lacks student motivation and active participation, but game-based learning fosters interaction, collaboration, and enjoyment, making grammar lessons more appealing. This research provides teachers with practical strategies to enhance grammar proficiency while addressing common challenges like low engagement and difficulty in explaining complex rules. Additionally, it bridges gaps in existing research, advocates for innovative curriculum design, and empowers both educators

and learners, ultimately promoting a more dynamic and interactive language-learning experience.

## **7. Research Methodology**

### **7.1 Research Approach**

This study adopts a mixed-method research approach to explore the use of game-based learning in enhancing grammar proficiency among EFL learners. The research design involves collecting data through questionnaire distributed to first-year students and an interview to EFL grammar teachers. The questionnaire for students focuses on their experiences with game-based activities and its impact on grammar learning, while the teachers' interview examines their perspectives on the use of games as a teaching method, including its challenges and benefits.

### **7.2 Data Collection Tools**

To gather data, we adopt two data collection tools; the first is a questionnaire designed for first year students at Biskra University. It seeks to gather their opinions on the use of game-based learning and its impact on their understanding and retention of grammar rules. The second instrument is an interview designed for EFL teachers to explore their strategies and perspectives on the effectiveness of game-based activities used for grammar instruction.

### **7.3 Population and Sampling Techniques**

The population for this study consists of first-year English language students. A convenience sampling technique is used to select the participants (sample). The mixed-method data collected was analyzed to identify patterns, insights, and trends related to the integration of game-based learning in grammar instruction, providing a comprehensive understanding of its effectiveness and practical applications.

More specifically, the sample that was used in this study is represented by seventy (70) students of first-year at Biskra University. Also, four (4) teachers who conduct grammar lessons for these students, particularly those integrating game-based activities into their instruction, are included.

# **Chapter One:**

## **Literature Review**

## **Introduction**

Grammar is a fundamental aspect of language learning, providing the structural foundation for effective communication. “Proficiency in grammar enables learners to construct meaningful and accurate sentences, contributing to overall language competence” (Ellis, 2006). However, traditional grammar instruction often relies on rote memorization and repetitive exercises, which may lead to disengagement and limited practical application (Larsen-Freeman, 2015). As a result, alternative approaches to grammar instruction are being explored to enhance learner engagement and improve learning outcomes. One such approach is game-based learning (GBL), which incorporates interactive and playful elements into the educational process. Research suggests that GBL can enhance motivation, engagement, and retention in language learning by creating a more immersive and interactive experience (Gee, 2007).

In the context of language acquisition, games can provide meaningful practice opportunities, encourage collaboration, and reduce learning anxiety (Zhang, 2018). By integrating structured game play into grammar instruction, learners can develop a deeper understanding of the grammatical rules in an enjoyable and contextualized manner. This chapter includes two sections. The first section discusses grammar, highlighting its role in language acquisition and the challenges EFL learners face in mastering grammatical structures. The second section explores game-based learning, examining its potential to enhance grammar proficiency through interactive and engaging activities.

## **Section One: Grammar Proficiency in L2**

### **1.1.1 Definition of Grammar**

Many scholars have defined grammar from different perspectives reflecting its complexity and significance in language studies. Huddleston and Pullum (2002) describe grammar as the system of rules and principles that govern sentence structure, including syntax, morphology, and phonology. Similarly, Greenbaum and Quirk (1990) emphasize that grammar accounts for the structural rules of both written and spoken language.

From a linguistic perspective, Chomsky (1965) introduced the concept of generative grammar, defining it as a system of rules that generates all and only the grammatical sentences of a language. This view highlights the cognitive aspect of grammar and how it

enables language users to produce and understand well-formed sentences. Crystal (2003) extends this idea by describing grammar as the structural foundation of language, essential for effective communication and meaning-making.

In the context of language teaching, Thornbury (1999) defines grammar as a description of the rules that govern sentence formation, incorporating both syntax (sentence structure) and morphology (word formation). Similarly, Richards and Schmidt (2010) explain grammar as a system that determines how words combine to form sentences, including aspects such as word order, verb tense, and agreement. These perspectives highlight grammar's crucial role in language learning, particularly for EFL learners who rely on grammatical rules to develop proficiency.

### **1.1.2 The Importance of Grammar in Teaching**

Acquiring a language requires learning its grammatical rules which define how words and structures should be used correctly. These rules ensure the proper function of a language and allow effective communication (Ur, 2012; Thornbury, 1999). According to Crystal (2004), grammar encompasses various elements such as phrases, clauses, words, and phonetics, evolving alongside language itself; its significance became more apparent with the development of written communication, as clear guidelines are necessary to structure language correctly in written forms. However, he stated that grammar is not only essential for writing but also for verbal communication. Without a solid grammatical foundation, spoken communication may suffer from mispronunciations, word misinterpretations, or overall confusion. Many EFL learners struggle to balance both grammatical accuracy and effective communication skills (Crystal, 2004).

In today's world, strong communication abilities are highly valued, but without proper grammatical knowledge, success in language proficiency remains incomplete (Harmer, 2007). Therefore, EFL learners should focus on both correct writing and grammatical fluency in speech. Furthermore, grammar is more than just memorizing rules. It involves vocabulary acquisition, which is crucial for clear and effective communication.

For Celce-Murcia (2019) the ability to use words correctly and appropriately strengthens both spoken and written expression; a lack of vocabulary can weaken a speaker's credibility, while excessive re-editing of written content may dilute its core message. Hence,

mastering grammar and vocabulary through proper training is essential for making speech and writing more coherent, meaningful, and engaging (Celce-Murcia, 2019).

### **1.1.3 Components of Grammar**

Grammar encompasses the set of structural rules that govern the composition of clauses, phrases, and words in any given natural language. Its primary components include phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics (Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams, 2017).

**1.1.3.1 Phonology:** This is the study of the sound systems of languages. It involves understanding how sounds function within a particular language or languages (Yule, 2020).

**1.1.3.2 Morphology:** This component examines the structure of words. It focuses on the formation and composition of words, including the study of morphemes, which are the smallest units of meaning (Aronoff & Fudeman, 2011).

**1.1.3.3 Syntax:** Syntax involves the arrangement of words and phrases to create well-formed sentences: it dictates the rules that govern sentence structure, ensuring clarity and coherence in communication (Carnie, 2013).

**1.1.3.4 Semantics:** This area deals with meaning. It explores how words, phrases, and sentences convey meaning, including the study of concepts like synonyms, antonyms, and ambiguity (Hurford, Heasley, & Smith, 2007).

**1.1.3.5 Pragmatics:** Pragmatics examines how context influences the interpretation of meaning; it considers factors such as the speaker's intent, the relationship between speakers, and the situational context (Griffiths, 2006).

### **1.1.4 Grammar Teaching Methods**

In teaching grammar, different methods have been developed to help learners improve their grammatical knowledge and usage. These methods vary in how grammar is presented, practiced and integrated into language learning. This section discusses various recognized approaches:

#### **1.1.4.1 Grammar Translation Method (GTM)**

According to Richards and Rodgers(2014), the grammar translation method is a traditional approach to in teaching grammar; it emphasizes the explicit teaching of grammar rules and translation of sentence and texts between the target language and the learners' native language. They stated that this method is mainly teacher-centred, in other words, the teacher explains grammar rules in detail and provides students with exercises to practice them so that grammar rules are presented first, followed by examples and practices or they are taught deductively. In addition, students often work on translating sentence from their first language into the target language and vice versa. Richard and Rodgers (2014) argued that the focus is on developing reading and writing skills rather than speaking and listening. Although this method has been criticized for its lack of emphasis on communication, it can help students gain a strong understanding of grammatical forms (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

#### **1.1.4.2 Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)**

This method is an approach that prioritizes the use of language in real communication and instead of focusing only on the explicit teaching of grammar rules, CLT emphasizes on the fluency and the ability to convey meaning (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011). For Larsen-freeman and Anderson (2011), grammar is taught in context through communicative activities such as discussions, role-play, problem-solving tasks, and group work; students learn grammar naturally as they use the language in meaningful interaction while teachers act more as facilitator than a lecturer, guiding students as they communicate. This approach encourages learners to focus on both accuracy and fluency, to help them develop the ability to use grammar appropriately in different situations (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011).

#### **1.1.4.3 The Audio-Lingual Method (ALM)**

According to Richards and Rodgers (2014), ALM is built on behaviourist theories of learning which view language acquisition as a process of forming habits through repetition and reinforcement. In the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, they also stated that this method gained popularity for its structured and systematic approach in teaching grammar; it places a strong focus on drilling language patterns to help learners internalize grammatical rules through frequent practice. Rather than starting with written explanations, the method encourages learners to pick up grammar inductively by repeating sentence and dialogue they hear:

dialogue form the foundation of lessons, allowing students to mimic pronunciation, intonation, and sentence structures as closely as possible to native speakers and the main aim of ALM is to help learners produce grammatically, without having to consciously think about the rules (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

#### **1.1.4.4 Task-Based Learning (TBL)**

Task based learning takes a slightly different approach by encouraging learners to use language to complete meaningful tasks that reflect real-life situations (Ellis, 2003). Instead of teaching grammar as a set of isolated rules, TBL creates opportunities for learners to use grammar naturally as they work towards a goal; such as solving a problem, giving a presentation, or writing a report and encourages learners to become more independent and collaborative as they work together to complete tasks and make decisions (Willis & Willis, 2007). Richards (2014) stated that grammar is introduced through these communicative tasks rather than taught explicitly at the start; tasks like planning a trip, conducting a survey, or discussing a topic help learners focus on getting their message across while their grammatical accuracy improves as they communicate. Ellis (2003), highlighted that TBL gives learners many chances to notice, practice and fine-tune grammar through repeated and purposeful use rather than just memorising rules. He also stated that this approach reflects the idea that language learning occurs better when learners are engaged and using the language in meaningful ways (Ellis, 2003).

#### **1.1.4.5 Content-based Instruction (CBI)**

CBI is an approach that integrates language learning with the study of meaningful subject matter. Instead of teaching grammar in isolation, CBI encourages learners to acquire language skills while exploring topics that interest them like history, science, or cultural studies (Snow, 2010). This method helps students see how grammar naturally functions within authentic contexts which can make their language learning experience more engaging and relevant (Brinton, Snow, & Wesche, 2013). According to Snow (2010), CBI is based on the idea that language is best learned when it is connected to content that learners genuinely want to understand by.

Furthermore, he stated that CBI supports the development of both language and proficiency and academic skills at the same time: when students read articles, watch



documentaries, or participate in discussion on an interested topic, they practice vocabulary, grammar, reading, writing, and speaking in an integrated manner. Briton et al. (2003) highlighted that one of the strengths of CBI is its flexibility and it can be adapted to suit different levels of language ability and a wide range of subjects. CBI aids learners make meaningful connections between grammar and communication embedding language practice within content that is interesting and relevant to them, thus this approach can make grammar learning more natural and enjoyable (Snow, 2010; Briton et al., 2003).

### **1.1.5 Grammar Teaching in EFL Contexts**

Grammar teaching in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) contexts has undergone significant transformations in recent years, influenced by advancements in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research. According to Ur (2012), “effective grammar instruction should strike a balance between explicit teaching of grammar rules and opportunities for students to practice grammar within communicative contexts”. Ur argues that grammar teaching should not be treated in isolation but should instead be integrated into meaningful communication tasks, allowing learners to acquire grammar naturally as they engage in real-world language use. The explicit focus on grammar should be carefully contextualized to help students see its relevance and practical application, avoiding a purely mechanical approach (Ur, 2012).

Ellis (2006) delves deeper into the challenges and issues surrounding grammar teaching, particularly from an SLA perspective. He highlights the ongoing debate regarding the effectiveness of explicit versus implicit grammar instruction. While some educators argue that explicit teaching of grammar rules is necessary for learners to understand and internalize language structures, Ellis suggests that it should not be the sole focus of instruction. He proposes that grammar teaching should include ‘consciousness-raising’ activities that help learners notice and reflect on grammar features in meaningful contexts. Ellis stressed that grammar teaching should strike a balance between focusing on accuracy (correct use of grammar) and fluency (the ability to use grammar fluidly in communication). In this context, Ellis argues that grammar instruction should be complemented by ample opportunities for learners to practice and use grammar in communicative tasks, thus enhancing both their understanding of grammar rules and their ability to use them effectively. (Ellis, 2006).

Both Ur and Ellis recognize the importance of adapting grammar teaching methods to the specific needs and levels of learners (Ur, 2012; Ellis, 2006). Ur suggests that different learners may require different approaches depending on their proficiency levels, motivations, and learning contexts. Similarly, Ellis advocates for differentiated teaching that considers the learners' individual backgrounds, learning preferences, and linguistic needs. By adapting methods to suit the learners' context, grammar instruction becomes more meaningful and engaging, leading to better retention and application of grammar.

## **1.1.6 Grammatical Knowledge and Grammatical Ability**

### **1.1.6.1 Grammatical Knowledge**

Grammatical knowledge refers to an internalized system of informational structures that learners acquire (Purpura, 2004). According to Purpura (2004), “grammatical knowledge consists of two primary components: grammatical form and grammatical meaning”. The grammatical form pertains to linguistic structures, whereas grammatical meaning includes both literal and intended meanings. The literal meaning is derived from the structural arrangement of linguistic elements, while the intended meaning conveys the speaker’s actual intent in communication. Both aspects are essential for effectively conveying meaningful messages.

### **1.1.6.2 Grammatical Ability**

Grammatical ability is defined as the capacity to apply grammatical knowledge accurately and meaningfully in real-life communication (Purpura, 2004). This suggests that learners must not only understand grammatical structures but also be able to use them in practical contexts. Grammar in language learning encompasses more than just theoretical knowledge; it also requires the ability to apply it effectively, a concept some linguists refer to as grammatical competence. Bachman and Palmer (1996) further explain that grammatical ability integrates both grammatical knowledge and strategic competence.

## **1.1.7 Strategies for Effective Grammar Teaching**

### **1.1.7.1 Integrating Grammar with Writing**

One of the most effective ways to teach grammar is by integrating it into students' writing activities rather than teaching it in isolation. Research suggests that when grammar instruction is embedded within the writing process, students develop a deeper understanding of grammatical structures and their practical applications (Weaver, 1996).

### **1.1.7.2 Teaching Grammar in Context**

Instead of teaching grammar rules separately, one can introduce them within writing assignments. For example, if students are working on a narrative piece, the teacher focuses on punctuating dialogue correctly (weaver, 1996; Myhill, 2005).

### **1.1.7.3 Using Students' Writings as Examples**

Here, the teacher highlights both strong and weak grammatical structures from the students' own writings rather than relying solely on textbook exercises (Andrews et al., 2006).

### **1.1.7.4 Providing Targeted Mini-Lessons**

The teacher can conduct short, focused lessons addressing specific grammatical issues observed in his/her students' writings. This could include lessons on sentence fragments, subject-verb agreement, or parallel structure (Fearn & Farnan, 2007).

### **1.1.7.5 Encouraging Peer Editing**

Students are required to review each other's work, focusing on specific grammatical aspects. Peer feedback allows them to recognize errors in context and improve their own grammar proficiency (Min, 2006).

## **1.1.8 Use of Explicit and Implicit Instruction**

Explicit instruction involves direct teaching of grammar rules, while implicit instruction allows students to discover grammatical patterns through exposure and practice. According to Ellis (2006) a combination of explicit and implicit grammar teaching can

facilitate language acquisition. The following are some highlighted guidelines to implement the two pedagogies (Ellis, 2009):

#### **1.1.8.1 Explicit Instruction**

- ✓ Start with a brief explanation of a grammar rule, followed by examples.
- ✓ Use visual aids (charts, diagrams) to illustrate concepts like verb tense or sentence structure.
- ✓ Provide guided practice through exercises before students apply the rule independently.

#### **1.1.8.2 Implicit instruction**

- ✓ Introduce grammar naturally through reading and listening activities.
- ✓ Encourage students to analyse patterns in authentic texts (e.g., articles, short stories, dialogues).
- ✓ Use inductive teaching methods, where students infer rules from examples rather than being told directly.

#### **1.1.8.3 Usage over Terminology**

Many students struggle with grammar because they see it as a set of abstract rules rather than a tool for effective communication. To make grammar more engaging and practical, teachers should prioritize usage over technical terminology (Larsen-Freeman, 2015). Larsen-Freeman listed the following teaching strategies:

- ✓ **Grammar in real-life contexts:** Instead of teaching grammar through definitions like ‘past perfect continuous’, teachers should show students how and when to use these tenses in real conversation or writing. This helps learners understand grammar in practical, everyday situation.
- ✓ **Functional explanations:** Rather than simply naming parts of speech, like calling a word a ‘subordinating conjunction’, teachers should explain what the word does; such as how it connects ideas in a sentence. This helps students see the purpose behind grammar rules.

- ✓ **Discovery-based learning:** students should be encouraged to look at examples and think about how different grammar choices change the meaning of a sentence. This aids them understand grammar through exploration and critical thinking.
- ✓ **Minimizing excessive rule memorization:** Teachers should avoid giving too many complicated grammar rules and terms instead they should offer clear and simple explanations supported by examples, so students can understand and remember grammar more easily.

### **1.1.9 Common Grammar Challenges for EFL Learners**

Despite of the importance of grammar in learning English, many EFL learners face difficulties with it. These problems often come from differences between their first language and English one as well as from the complex rules of English grammar. Understanding these challenges can help teachers support learners more effectively.

#### **1.1.9.1 Word Order**

English has a strict word order (Subject, Verb, and Object), unlike many other languages. EFL learners may struggle with placing words in the correct order, especially in complex sentences; such as in languages like German or Spanish, word order can vary depending on the sentence structure or verb conjugation (Corder, 1978).

#### **1.1.9.2 Tense Use**

According to Aziz (2003), “The English tense system, including distinctions like present perfect, past perfect, and simple past, can be confusing for learners whose first language does not have the same distinctions”. (Aziz, 2003).Learners often misuse tenses because they do not exist in their native language or are used differently.

#### **1.1.9.3 Prepositions**

Prepositions can be difficult because many languages do not have an equivalent system. The nuances in the use of prepositions; such as (in, on, and at) in English can confuse learners who do not have these distinctions in their native tongue (O'Grady, 2010).

#### **1.1.9.4 Articles**

For Master (2002), the use of articles (a, an, the) is another frequent challenge, particularly for learners whose first language does not use articles or has different rules for their usage (e.g., Russian or Chinese). Learners often omit articles or misuse them, not understanding when to use definite and indefinite articles correctly (Master, 2002).

#### **1.1.9.5 Subject-verb Agreement**

In English, the subject and verb must agree in number and person, which may not be required in other languages (e.g., Japanese or Chinese). This leads to errors such as ‘She go to school’ instead of ‘She goes to school’ (Truscott, 2004).

#### **1.1.9.6 Pronouns and Possessive Forms**

Learners often struggle with the different forms of pronouns (e.g., subjective, objective, and possessive) and their correct usage. For example, mistakes like ‘Him is my brother’ instead of ‘He is my brother’ are common (Hinkel, 2002).

#### **1.1.9.7 Conditional Sentences**

Understanding and correctly using conditional if (zero, first, second, and third conditionals) poses a challenge for many learners. The conditional structures in English are often not directly transferable to the students’ first language (Ellis, 2006).

#### **1.1.9.8 Gerunds and Infinitives**

The choice between gerunds and infinitives is difficult for many EFL learners, especially when the verb requires one form in English but another in their native language. For instance, verbs like "enjoy" require the gerund form ‘enjoy swimming’, while ‘want’ requires the infinitive form ‘want to swim’ (Murphy, 2014).

### **1.1.10 Assessing Grammar Proficiency: Types of Grammar Assessments**

Assessing grammar proficiency in EFL involves using various methods and approaches to evaluate the learners’ understanding and use of grammatical rules. There are several assessment techniques for measuring EFL learners’ grammar proficiency including:

direct assessment, indirect assessment, dynamic assessment, formative assessment, summative assessment. First, direct assessment explicitly tests grammar knowledge, focusing on the ability to use specific grammatical structures. fill-in-the-blank exercises, multiple-choice questions, and sentence correction tasks (Richards & Schmidt, 2002). On the other hand, indirect assessments assess grammar proficiency by evaluating writing or speaking skills in context, focusing on how well students apply grammar in real-world communication. Examples include writing essays, creating dialogues, or speaking tasks (Norris, 2009).

Second, another type of assessments includes the dynamic assessment which integrates both assessment and teaching into a single, unified activity. This approach does not merely evaluate a learner's static level of grammatical knowledge but rather focuses on their ability to develop and improve their grammar proficiency when provided with appropriate guidance and mediation. For Alsaadi (2021), through a process of interactive feedback, scaffolding, and graduated prompting, dynamic assessment seeks to identify not only what learners already know but also their potential for future learning. In other words, it assesses the zone of proximal development (ZPD) by considering both learners' current abilities and how much they can achieve with assistance (Alsaadi, 2021). According to Lantolf and Poehner (2014), dynamic assessment captures the learners' capacity to grow and adapt, offering a more comprehensive picture of grammatical proficiency compared to traditional static assessment.

Third, Formative assessments are conducted throughout the learning process to provide continuous feedback to both teachers and students. These assessments help identify areas of weaknesses and allow for targeted instructional interventions. Examples include quizzes, peer assessments, and ongoing writing tasks (Black & William, 1998). The main goal of formative assessments is to guide learning rather than merely to assign grades.

Finally, According to Sadler (1989), summative assessment provides a snapshot of learners' grammar proficiency, but they are less helpful in guiding day-to-day learning. Formative assessment attempts to gauge learning within an instructional period, at the end of the teaching process, or at specified milestones. Summative assessments include: final exams, standardized tests, and large-scale projects (Sadler, 1989).

### **1.1.11 The Role of Feedback in Grammar Learning**

Feedback is a crucial component of grammar learning as it helps learners understand their mistakes and improves their understanding of grammatical rules. Feedback can be both formative and summative, and it serves several purposes in the learning process.

There are several ways to provide feedback in a grammar course. For instance, providing immediate feedback helps learners recognize and correct errors while they are still engaged with the learning material. This type of feedback is especially useful for correcting basic grammar mistakes, such as subject-verb agreement (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). On the other hand, delayed feedback involves offering feedback after the learner has had time to reflect on their performance; this can be useful in more complex grammar assessments or in written tasks where learners may benefit from the opportunity to revise and improve their work (Ferris, 2003).

Positive feedback reinforces correct grammar use and encourages learners while corrective feedback helps learners recognize errors and provides strategies for improvement (Sheen, 2007). In addition, Peer and self-feedback are valuable tools in grammar learning as they allow learners to become more aware of grammar rules and practice applying them. Peer feedback encourages collaboration and the exchange of ideas, while self-feedback helps learners develop autonomy in their learning process (Tsui & Ng, 2000).

## **Section Two: Game-based Learning**



## **1.2.1 Multiple Perspectives on the Definition of Game-based Learning**

Game-based Learning (GBL) has been defined from various perspectives, reflecting its interdisciplinary nature and diverse applications in education. Below are several definitions from different scholars and frameworks.

### **1.2.1.1 Cognitive Perspective**

From the cognitive perspectives, GBL is seen as a method that enhances learning through active engagement, problem-solving, and situated cognition. Gee (2003) defines GBL as a teaching approach where video games provide immersive environments that promote deep learning by requiring players to think critically, experiment with solutions, and adapt to new challenges. He emphasizes that well-designed games incorporate principles of good learning, such as situated meaning, distributed knowledge, and social interaction.

### **1.2.1.2 Constructivist Perspective**

From a constructivist point of view, GBL is closely associated with the students' learning by doing where they learn by interacting with games and building their understanding through those experiences. Piaget (1951) suggested that learning occurs through experience and adaptation, and games provide structured opportunities for learners to engage in trial-and-error learning. Similarly, Vygotsky's (1978) theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) supported GBL by highlighting how games scaffold learning, allowing players to progress from simple to more complex tasks with appropriate support.

### **1.2.1.3 Pedagogical Perspective**

Educational researchers define GBL as an approach that integrates game elements to achieve specific learning outcomes. (Prensky (2001, p. 5) asserts that "the use of game-based mechanics, aesthetics, and thinking to engage people motivates action, and promote learning". He further added that games serve as effective learning tools because they provide immediate feedback, challenge learners at appropriate levels, and encourage active participation.

#### **1.2.1.4 Psychological Perspective**

Through a psychological framework, GBL is seen as an effective tool for enhancing motivation and engagement in learning. Deci and Ryan's (1985) Self-determination Theory (SDT) explains how games satisfy three core psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness, which drive intrinsic motivation. When applied to learning, games enhance motivation by offering choices, progressive challenges, and social interaction.

In conclusion, GBL can be broadly defined as an instructional approach that integrates game elements, mechanics, and design principles to create engaging learning experiences that foster knowledge acquisition, critical thinking, and motivation (Prensky, 2001; Gee, 2003). It encompasses various learning theories, including cognitive, constructivist, psychological, and social perspectives, making it a versatile tool for modern education.

#### **1.2.2 Game-based Learning Vs. Gamification**

In GBL, the use of games is approached in a strategic way that compliments the overall educational framework. This entails the creation of games, specially crafted around specific objectives to enhance the interactive nature of the material and emulate real life problem-solving involving critical thinking and skill acquisition (Gee, 2003). Often, some of these games are a replica of the real-world environments which provides the learners with an opportunity to utilize knowledge in practical context. On the other hand, gamification uses a relatively trivial approach through the use of points, badges, leader boards, and rewards, unlike its more holistic counterpart that uses hardcore full games (Deterding et al., 2011). According to Deterding et al. GBL promotes experiential learning and cognitive engagement while gamification enhances motivation through superficially rewarding routine tasks.

Both have unique educational attributes, but their primary purpose remains completely different. Additionally, GBL works wonders when it comes to the nurturing of higher order thinking skills, collaboration, and active learning since it brings out experimentation, complex problem-solving, and risk-free exploration learning (Plass et al., 2015). According to Ke (2016), Developing and implementing a gamed based learning

requires a considerable amount of time, expertise, and the appropriate technological infrastructure making GBL resource intensive.

On the contrary, gamification tends to be simpler to incorporate into structured lesson plans and can be used in multiple classes without much customization (Ke, 2016). Some researchers contend, however, that giving prizes and competition as motivation to learn periphery distractions to peripheral motivating factors instead of true to the learning activity being gamified (Deci et al., 2001).

Both GBL and gamification have proven effective in different educational settings, and their success largely depends on the context in which they are applied. While GBL is ideal for subjects requiring deep conceptual understanding and problem-solving skills, gamification can be beneficial for tasks that require repetitive practice, such as vocabulary learning or memorization; educators must carefully consider their learning objectives, students' needs, and available resources when choosing between these approaches, or they may opt to integrate elements of both to maximize engagement and learning outcomes (Sailer et al., 2017).

### **1.2.3 The Importance of Game-Based Learning in EFL Classroom**

GBL has become an essential tool in EFL classrooms, offering a dynamic and engaging approach to language instruction. Unlike conventional teaching methods, which may sometimes be monotonous or rigid, games introduce an element of fun, making the learning process more enjoyable and motivating for students (Hadfield, 1990). Games are structured with specific rules, objectives, and interactive elements that encourage active participation, which is crucial for language acquisition. By integrating games into language learning, educators can create a more stimulating and immersive environment where students naturally absorb linguistic concepts (Hadfield, 1990).

One of the key advantages of using games in EFL classrooms is their ability to provide a meaningful and contextualized framework for language learning. According to Constantinescu (2012), games facilitate the improvement of students' understanding of both written and spoken English. They enable learners to practice vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation in real-life communicative settings rather than through rote memorization. By engaging in structured play, students are exposed to authentic language use, allowing them

to develop their language skills in a more natural way. This process supports constructivist learning principles, where learners actively build their knowledge through interaction and experience (Constantinescu, 2012).

Furthermore, Gozcu & Caganaga (2016) argued that the use of games helps to create a positive and student-centred classroom atmosphere where engagement and collaboration are prioritized. As students participate in interactive language games, they develop a sense of enjoyment and investment in the learning process. Gozcu and Caganaga (2016) emphasized that games attract learners' interest more effectively than traditional lessons because they incorporate elements of competition, cooperation, and problem-solving; This increased engagement leads to higher levels of intrinsic motivation, as students become more eager to participate in classroom activities.

Moreover, traditional grammar teaching often follows a one size fits all approach, which may not cater to the diverse learning needs of students. However, Gardner (1993) stated that GBL accommodates various learning styles:

- **Visual learners:** these learners understand better when they see information. In GBL, they can improve their grammar by using games that have clear pictures, diagrams, and written texts. Digital games with colourful images, interactive flashcards, and videos can help visual learners remember grammar rules and examples more easily.
- **Auditory learners:** auditory learners learn best by listening. They benefit from games that focus on sounds, such as pronunciation-based grammar games and activities with spoken instructions or dialogues. Listening to stories, songs, and conversations in games helps them understand and remember grammar structures through hearing.
- **Kinaesthetic learners:** this kind of learning make learners learn best by doing physical activities. They enjoy grammar games that involve movement; such as races, role plays, or board games where they need to act, move, or use their hands. These activities help them stay active and understand grammar better through practice and action.

## **1.2.4 Advantages and Disadvantages of Game-based Learning in EFL Classrooms**

### **1.2.4.1 The Advantages**

One of the most significant advantages of GBL is that it increases student motivation and engagement. Traditional teaching methods often rely on passive learning techniques, which can lead to disinterest and lack of participation. In contrast, games create a dynamic learning environment where students actively engage with the material, making the learning process more enjoyable and effective (Hadfield, 1990). Games introduce competition, rewards, and interactive elements, which encourage students to participate and stay motivated throughout the lesson (Gozcu & Caganaga, 2016).

Another key benefit of GBL is its ability to reduce anxiety and create a low-stress learning environment. Many EFL learners, especially beginners, experience anxiety when speaking or practising a new language due to fear of making mistakes (Crookal, 1990). However, games shift the focus from error correction to experiential learning, allowing students to take risks and develop confidence in their language abilities without fear of criticism (Mei & Yu-Jing, 2000). From another point of view, Mei (2000) declared that the playful nature of games fosters a relaxed classroom atmosphere, which can lead to improved fluency and communication skills. Additionally, GBL promotes active learning and knowledge retention by providing learners with hands-on experiences. According to Constantinescu (2012), games help students internalize language structures by encouraging repeated practice in meaningful contexts. Unlike rote memorization, which often results in short-term retention, game-based activities reinforce language skills through repeated exposure and application, leading to deeper learning (Constantinescu, 2012).

Furthermore, GBL encourages collaborative learning and social interaction, which are essential components of language acquisition; many language games require teamwork, communication, and problem-solving, fostering peer interaction and cooperative learning (Plass et al., 2015). This social aspect of GBL aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, which emphasizes the importance of social interaction in language development.

#### **1.2.4.2 The Disadvantages**

Despite its many advantages, GBL also comes with certain limitations. One of the main challenges is the potential for classroom management issues. Games can sometimes lead to excessive excitement or competition, making it difficult for teachers to maintain discipline and keep students focused on the learning objectives so that without proper structure and clear rules, classroom games may become distractions rather than effective learning tools. Moreover, the development and implementation of game-based activities can be time-consuming. Teachers must invest considerable effort in designing, selecting, or adapting games that suit their students' proficiency levels and learning objectives (Urberman, 1998). Additionally, some digital or technology-based GBL tools may require access to resources that are not readily available in all educational settings, creating potential inequities in access to learning materials (Prensky, 2001).

Lastly, excessive reliance on GBL may lead to overemphasis on extrinsic motivation rather than fostering intrinsic motivation for learning. If students become too focused on winning or earning rewards, they may lose interest in the language-learning process itself; therefore, it is essential for educators to balance game-based activities with other instructional methods to ensure holistic language development (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

### **1.2.5 Types of Games Used for Grammar Learning**

Using games in grammar teaching helps students learn in an active and enjoyable way. This section describes some types of games that are often used to support grammar learning, starting with:

#### **1.2.5.1 Board Games**

Urberman (1998) stated that board games are widely used in grammar instruction because they encourage student participation and interaction while reinforcing grammatical structures; games such as 'Snakes and Ladders' or 'Monopoly-style' games can be adapted for grammar practice by requiring students to correctly form sentences, use specific tenses, or answer grammar-related questions before moving forward. He said that "Board games encourage student participation and interaction while reinforcing grammatical structure" (Urberman, 1998).

### **1.2.5.2 Card Games**

According to Mei and Yu-Jing (2000), Card-based grammar games like matching pairs or grammar flashcards, they are effective for practicing sentence construction, verb conjugations, and parts of speech; one common game is ‘Grammar Go Fish’, where students must match sentences with the correct verb tense or word form. Another variation is Memory Card Matching, where learners find pairs of subject-verb agreements or synonyms. These games enhance retention by encouraging learners to repeatedly engage with grammatical structures (Mei & Yu-Jing, 2000).

### **1.2.5.3 Role-playing Games**

Role-playing games allow students to practice grammar in meaningful, real-life scenarios. In these games, students assume different roles and engage in scripted or improvised dialogues that focus on specific grammatical points; for instance, a ‘restaurant role-play’ activity might require students to correctly use modal verbs (e.g., can, must, should) while placing orders or making polite requests, it encourage communicative competence and allow students to apply grammar rules in authentic contexts (Gozcu & Caganaga, 2016).

### **1.2.5.4 Sentence Building and Word Order Games**

Sentence-building games help students practice word order, sentence structure, and grammatical accuracy; activities like ‘Scrambled Sentences’ where students must rearrange words to form grammatically correct sentence, reinforce syntax and sentence construction skills (Hadfield, 1990). Similarly, Chain Sentences where each student adds a new phrase to an evolving sentence, enhance students’ ability to form complex grammatical structures.

### **1.2.5.5 Digital Grammar Games**

According to (Plass et al., 2015), with advancements in technology, digital games have become an essential tool in grammar instruction; Online platforms such as Kahoot!, Quizzes Live, and Duolingo offer interactive grammar quizzes, sentence completion exercises, and gamified learning experiences. Plass et al. (2015) argued that these games use immediate feedback and repetition to help students internalize grammar rules more effectively. Additionally, computer-based simulation games such as The Sims or Mine craft

Education Edition, encourage grammar practice through storytelling and problem-solving tasks.

#### **1.2.5.6 Bingo and Other Vocabulary-Based Grammar Games**

Grammar Bingo is a popular game that reinforces specific grammatical structures. Instead of numbers, bingo cards contain different verb forms, sentence patterns, or parts of speech. The teacher calls out a definition or an example and students mark the correct grammatical element on their cards (Uberman, 1998). This game promotes recognition of grammar patterns in an engaging and competitive manner.

#### **1.2.5.7 Competitive Grammar Quizzes and Races**

According to (Chen, 2005), grammar races and quizzes add excitement to the learning process by introducing a competitive element; for instance, in ‘Relay Races’, students must run to a board and correct or complete sentences as quickly as possible. ‘Grammar Jeopardy’ is another game where teams compete by answering grammar-related questions with varying levels of difficulty and these games reinforce learning through repetition and active participation (Chen, 2005).

### **1.2.6 Studies on the Use of GBL to Teach Grammar**

Recent studies have explored the impact of GBL on grammar proficiency, yielding promising results. Aratea and Pasubillo (2024) conducted a quasi-experimental study with 143 ninth-grade students in the Philippines, focusing on the use of modals. The experimental group received eight game-based lessons, while the control group experienced traditional instruction. Findings revealed a significant improvement in the grammar skills of the experimental group, suggesting that GBL creates a fun, conducive, and learner-centred environment that enhances grammar proficiency.

Similarly, a systematic literature review by Derus and Mohammad (2021) analyzed studies from 2019 to 2023 on the effectiveness of GBL in grammar learning. The review concluded that GBL methods positively impact students' academic achievement, motivation, and engagement in learning activities, thereby supporting grammar acquisition. Additionally, a study by Fakhruddin et al. (2022) examined the implementation of Quizzes, a game-based learning platform, in teaching grammar. The results indicated that integrating



such digital tools into grammar instruction not only enhances students' understanding of grammatical concepts but also increases their enthusiasm and participation in the learning process.

Collectively, these studies suggested that incorporating GBL strategies into grammar teaching can effectively improve learners' grammatical accuracy and overall language proficiency.

## **Conclusion**

Game-based Learning (GBL) represents a transformative shift in grammar education, making it more interactive, engaging, and student-centred. Traditional methods of teaching grammar often fail to capture the interest of modern learners, leading to disengagement and ineffective retention of language structures. By incorporating the elements of play, competition, and rewards, GBL not only motivates students but also creates an environment that fosters active participation, making grammar learning more enjoyable and meaningful. This approach shifts the focus from rote memorization to real-world application, where learners can engage with grammar structures in context, thereby enhancing their language skills.

# **Chapter Two:**

## **Research Methodology**

## **Introduction**

This chapter aims to describe the methodology used in this study, which explores the use of game-based learning (GBL) in enhancing grammar proficiency among EFL learners. It presents the research approach, design, and data collection tools adopted to obtain the findings for this study. Additionally, it explains the procedures followed in selecting participants, gathering data, and the process of analyzing this data. By applying a structured research methodology, this study ensures a comprehensive exploration of the research questions providing insights into the impact of GBL on grammar learning, and it addresses the research inquiries in order to either validate or refute the alternative hypothesis (H1).

### **2.1 Research Approach**

In research, different approaches are used to collect and analyze data. The choice of a research approach depends on the research nature and the objectives of the study. There are three types of research approaches: qualitative approach, quantitative approach, and mixed method approach. Each approach has its own characteristics and procedures to gather data. Creswell (2014, p.4) states the difference between these types of research approach. On one side, the author says that “qualitative research approach is used to explore and understand the meaning individuals or groups refer to a social or human people”. This method is often used when researchers want to gain deep insights into a specific phenomenon rather than just measuring facts.

On the other side, Creswell (2014, p.4) defines the quantitative approach by mentioning that it is “an approach of testing objectives theories by examining the relationship among variables, it can be measured using statistical procedures”. The quantitative approach uses structured tools such as surveys, tests, and questionnaires to gather data that can be analyzed statistically. This method is useful when researchers need to measure the extent of a phenomenon or compare results across different groups. To simplify, the quantitative approach deals with testing theories or relationships between variables and measures data using statistics.

Finally, the mixed method approach as defined by Creswell (2014, p. 4) “is an approach to inquiry involving collecting both quantitative and qualitative data and using distinct designs that may involve philosophical assumptions and theoretical framework.” For further clarification, the mixed method approach features qualitative and quantitative techniques to offer a more in-depth analysis of the research issue at hand. This approach is

useful in situations where a single type of data cannot fully address the research objectives. Mixed methods approaches provide a way to capture the statistical data alongside the qualitative experiences of the participants.

As stated above, the mixed method approach is best suited for this research because it explores what the students think about game-based learning and whether it actually enhances their grammar proficiency. Adopting a mixed methods approach ensures that the researcher is able to refine and corroborate the findings from the different methods utilized. To conclude, a research approach gives a researcher a particular structure within which to conduct his or her studies; research approaches are divided into three broad categories: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method approaches.

### **2.1.1 The Research Approach for this Study**

Given the aim of this study, the mixed-method approach was adopted. Differently stated, depending on the nature and objectives of this study, which seeks to highlight the effect of GBL use on EFL learners' grammar proficiency, the researcher opted for a combination of both qualitative and quantitative approaches to effectively address the research problem stated. For the purpose that it is suitable for the nature of the present study, it helps to get detailed and more credible responses. Significantly, the mixed method approach grants the chance to check if there is a positive effect of GBL implementation on EFL learners' grammar proficiency, and it offers the possibility to know teachers' and students' attitudes and perspectives towards the use of GBL in enhancing grammar proficiency among EFL learners.

## **2.2 Research Design and Strategies**

It is essential for any researcher to have a clear understanding of their research design and make a careful selection as it plays a crucial role in organizing the research process. According to Gorard (2013, p. 8), research design in social sciences refers to the systematic arrangement of a research project or program from its initiation, with the aim of increasing the probability of obtaining solid evidence that effectively addresses the research questions while making efficient use of available resources. In other words, research design provides a structured approach to conducting research from the initial phase to the final stage to ensure credible findings. Research design can take various forms. In this regard, Bhattacharjee (2012, pp. 39-40) outlines different types of research designs, including field surveys,

experimental studies, cross-sectional field surveys, focus group research, action research, and case study research.

Taking into account both the nature of the present study and the limitations of time, a descriptive case study framework was adopted as the most suitable research design. A descriptive case study is a research method that aims to provide a detailed account of phenomenon within its real world context. It focuses on describing and analyzing events, processes, or experiences without manipulating variables. According to Yin (2014), a descriptive case study seeks to present an accurate representation of a specific case by collecting and analyzing qualitative or quantitative data. Similarly, Lambert (2012) defines descriptive case studies that provide a comprehensive, contextualized, and systematic description of a phenomenon, allowing researchers to gain deeper insights into complex issues.

In the context of educational research, a descriptive case study is particularly useful for investigating teaching methods, classroom dynamics, and students' learning experiences. This approach enables researchers to document how a specific instructional strategy is implemented, how learners respond to it, and what challenges arise during the process (Lambert, 2012). By using a descriptive case study design, this research aims to observe, describe, and interpret the use of GBL in grammar teaching for first year EFL learners while considering teachers' and students' perspectives. A descriptive case study design is deemed the most appropriate research approach for the present study.

## **2.3 Data Collection Methods**

Data collection methods refer to the different techniques researchers use to gather information for their studies. According to Walliman (2006, p.83), data collection methods can be considered as the 'raw materials' necessary for conducting research. The choice of data collection methods depends on the research problem and the approach used by the researcher as the interpretation of data plays a crucial role in obtaining meaningful results. To ensure accuracy and reliability in research findings, selecting appropriate data collection methods is essential. Researchers must carefully choose methods that align with the objectives of their study. Several techniques exist for collecting data, including questionnaires (structured, semi-structured, and unstructured), interviews (structured, semi-structured, and unstructured), observation (passive and active), focus group, and quasi-experimental.

In this study, the researcher employed both a semi-structured questionnaire and a structured interview as data collection tools. The interview method was used to obtain insights from EFL teachers, while the questionnaire was designed to gather data from first-year EFL students at Biskra University.

### **2.3.1 The Students' Questionnaire**

The primary aim of this study's questionnaire is to explore students' experiences, perceptions, and attitudes toward using games in grammar learning. It aimed to find out whether game-based activities make learning grammar more engaging and effective compared to traditional teaching methods. The questionnaire also examined how students feel about their own grammar proficiency and whether they think games would help them improve their skills. Through this data, the research aims to provide valuable insights and determine whether GBL positively influences first-year EFL students' grammar proficiency and their engagement in language learning, thus, to assess and discover challenges associated with GBL and collect suggestions for improvement.

In the current study, students' questionnaire is divided into four main sections, each one focusing on a specific aspect of the research. These sections include general background, which gathers demographic and background information about the participants to provide context for their responses. Experience with GBL is another section; this section assesses students' exposure to and experience with using games in grammar teaching at the university level. Also, the perceived effectiveness of GBL part measures students' perceptions of the impact of GBL on their grammar proficiency and engagement. Finally, a section is devoted for open-ended questions, which consists of three questions allowing students to express their thoughts, opinions and suggestions freely.

### **2.3.2 The Teachers' Interview**

This study's interview is designed to explore EFL teachers' perception of GBL as a teaching strategy for grammar teaching. Its primary aim is to determine whether teachers consider GBL more effective than traditional methods and to identify its potential benefits and limitations. Since teachers play a key role in choosing the teaching strategies, their insights help determine how effective games are in teaching grammar, in engaging students, and in overcoming the learning challenges. The interview focused on the benefits and difficulties of using games in grammar lessons and how teachers assess their students' progress in university EFL classrooms.

Moreover, the interview investigates whether GBL contributes to students' confidence in using grammar in real life communication and how teachers assess its impact on grammar proficiency. It also identifies the major obstacles to implementing GBL at the university level and seeks suggestions for improving its effectiveness. The open-ended nature of the questions allows teachers to provide detailed insights, making the interview a valuable tool for understanding the role of GBL in EFL grammar teaching.

This study's interview consists of ten open-ended questions aimed at gathering in-depth information about teachers' experiences in teaching grammar, the challenges students typically encounter, and the effectiveness of GBL in addressing these difficulties. The questions explore whether teachers have incorporated games into their grammar teaching, the types of games they used, and how students generally respond to such activities. Additionally, the interview examines which aspects of grammar such as verb tenses, sentence structure, or parts of speech benefit the most from GBL.

## **2.4 Data Collection Procedures**

To collect data for this study, two main tools were used: a questionnaire for students and an interview with teachers. The process of gathering data was carefully planned to ensure that the responses were accurate and useful for the research.

### **2.4.1 The Students' Questionnaire**

The students' questionnaire was distributed to two selected groups of first-year EFL students during their learning sessions at Biskra University. Before answering the questions, students were given a brief explanation about the purpose of the study and how their responses would help in understanding the role of GBL in grammar proficiency. They were also assured that their answers would be kept confidential and used only for academic purposes.

Students were asked to complete the questionnaire independently and honestly. The questionnaire included multiple-choice questions, rating scales, and open-ended questions to allow students to express their experiences and opinions freely. Most students completed the questionnaire in one sitting, which took about 30 to 40 minutes in each group. However, during the process, it was observed that some students avoided answering certain questions, particularly those requiring personal opinions or reflections on their learning experiences.

This might have been due to uncertainty or lack of familiarity with the topic. Despite this, most students provided thoughtful responses.

Once completed, the questionnaires were collected and reviewed to ensure completeness and readability. Any unclear or missing responses were noted, and the data was then prepared for further analysis. After collecting the responses, the data was carefully organized and prepared for analysis.

#### **2.4.2 The Teachers' Interview**

The interviews with EFL grammar teachers were scheduled in advance to ensure their availability. EFL Teachers were personally invited to participate in the study, and the purpose of the interview was explained to them. Each interview was conducted face-to-face in a quiet environment to allow for a smooth discussion. The interviews were structured, meaning that a set of prepared questions was used. Each interview lasted between 20 to 30 minutes. The responses were noted and recorded during the interviews.

After collecting the questionnaire responses and interview recordings, the data was carefully reviewed and organized. The questionnaire results were categorized and became ready for analysis, while the interviews were transcribed and examined for key themes. This step helped in identifying common patterns and differences in students' and teachers' views on GBL in grammar teaching.

By using the questionnaire and the interviews, this study ensured that the collected data was comprehensive and reliable, providing a clear understanding of the effectiveness of GBL in enhancing grammar proficiency.

### **2.5 Data Analysis Procedures**

In this research, the data analysis procedures involve both qualitative and quantitative methods. The quantitative data comes from the students' questionnaire, which will be analyzed descriptively, using Microsoft Excel. The researcher will count how many students chose each response and calculate percentages to identify trends. This statistical approach helps in understanding the overall attitudes of students toward the use of games in grammar learning. On the other hand, the qualitative data comes from teacher interview, which will be analyzed using thematic analysis. Instead of using numbers, this method focuses on summarizing key ideas and identifying common themes in teachers' responses. This



approach allows for a deeper grasping of their perspectives on teaching grammar by integrating the concept of gamification to enhance students' grammar proficiency.

More specifically, Descriptive analysis is a method used in research to summarize, organize, and present data in a clear and understandable way. It helps researchers identify patterns within responses without making predictions or drawing conclusions beyond the collected data (Creswell, 2014). This study employed descriptive analysis to analyze the responses of first-year EFL students regarding the use of GBL in improving grammar proficiency. Descriptive analysis involves organizing and summarizing data using numerical indicators such as frequencies, percentages, and measures of central tendency (Dornyei, 2007). These statistical tools allow researchers to present data in a structured format, making it easier to identify general trends and relationships within the collected responses. The responses from the questionnaire will be categorized based on key variables, and their distribution will be analyzed accordingly.

To enhance clarity, the results will be visually represented using tables, bar graphs, and pie charts. These tools help illustrate the distribution of responses and highlight key trends in the data (fraenkel and wallen, 2012).

**Tables:** used to display numerical data in a structured manner, making it easier to compare different response categories.

**Bar Charts:** useful for comparing different response categories by representing data using vertical or horizontal bars.

**Pie Charts:** effective for showing the proportion of responses in different categories, giving a visual representation of the percentage distribution.

Descriptive analysis provides a systematic way to organize and present data, allowing researchers to gain insights into participant responses. By summarizing questionnaire results using frequencies, percentages, and visual representations, this study aims to provide a clear picture of students' views on the role of GBL in improving grammar proficiency. The findings will contribute to understand how students perceive this approach and its effectiveness in language learning (Brown, 2014).

On the other hand, thematic analysis is a widely used method in qualitative research for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns or themes within data. It offers a flexible and accessible approach to analyze qualitative data, allowing researchers to organize and

describe their dataset in rich detail. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is not tied to any specific theoretical framework, which makes it adaptable to a range of research questions and paradigms. The process involves several structured steps that guide researchers from initial engagement with the data to the final reporting of results. The first step is familiarization with the data, where researchers immerse themselves in the data by reading and re-reading transcripts or written responses to gain a deep understanding. During this stage, initial impressions and potential patterns begin to emerge (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

The second step in generating initial codes, where meaningful segments of the data are highlighted and labeled with concise codes. These codes represent interesting features in the data that may relate to the research question. Coding can be done manually or with the assistance of qualitative data analysis software (Nowell et al., 2017). The third step is searching for themes, which involves organizing the codes into broader themes. A theme is a pattern that captures something important about the data in relation to the research question. This process often includes grouping similar codes together to form preliminary themes (Clarke and Braun, 2013).

The fourth one is reviewing themes. In this phase, the researcher reviews the themes to ensure they accurately reflect the coded data and the entire dataset. Some themes may be refined, split, or combine, while others may be discarded if they are not supported by enough data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The fifth step is defining naming themes, where each theme is clearly defined and described what is unique and significant about each theme, and how it contributes to understand the data. The names of themes should be concise, clear, and reflect the essence of the theme (Nowell et al., 2017). The final step is producing the report, which involves weaving together the analytical narrative and data extracts to present a compelling and coherent story about the data. The researcher provides evidence for each theme using quotes or examples from the dataset and connects the finding back to the research question and existing literature (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

To sum up, thematic analysis provides a systematic yet flexible approach to analyze qualitative data. When conducted rigorously, it can yield insightful and trustworthy results that enhance the understanding of complex human experiences and social phenomena.

## **2.6 Sampling and Population**

To ensure the validity of the hypothesis and collect some information that help answering the research question, the research deals with grammar EFL teachers and EFL students to collect their responses to feed the study.

### **2.6.1 Teachers**

From a total of ten teachers of grammar EFL teachers at Mohamed Kheider university of Biskra, the researcher engaged with four ( $n=4$ ) volunteer teachers who specifically teach grammar courses to first year students. These teachers were selected non-randomly, based on their willingness to participate in the study as well as their experience in teaching grammar at the university level. Their insights and perspectives were crucial in understanding the effectiveness of game-based approaches in enhancing students' grammar proficiency. Through interview and discussions, they provided valuable feedback regarding the challenges, benefits, and pedagogical strategies associated with integrating GBL into grammar teaching.

### **2.6.2 Students**

In this study, first year EFL students at Mohamed Kheider university of Biskra were selected as the population. This population was chosen because grammar is a fundamental part of their English learning process, and improving their proficiency at this stage can enhance their overall language skills. Additionally, investigating their experiences with GBL provides valuable insights into its effectiveness in grammar teaching.

As a sample for this research, seventy ( $n=70$ ) students were selected based on convenience sampling technique. The sample is distributed over two specific groups, which were chosen based on accessibility, ensuring practical and efficient data collection. This sampling technique ensures a practical selection of participants, allowing the study to gather reliable data on the impact of GBL on grammar proficiency.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter established the methodological framework for exploring the use GBL in enhancing grammar proficiency among first-year EFL students. By structuring a well-designed, careful planned, reliable research methodology, this chapter lays the foundation

for analyzing the impact of GBL on grammar learning so that the upcoming chapter will present and interpret the findings, offering valuable insights into its usage and effectiveness.

# **Chapter Three:**

## **Fieldwork and Data**

### **Analysis**

## Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the current study and their implications regarding the use of GBL in enhancing grammar proficiency among EFL learners. The results obtained from students' responses and teachers' perspectives were analyzed using the descriptive and thematic analyses in order to provide valuable insights into the role of using gamification in fostering engagement and improving grammar proficiency. Furthermore, the analyses shed light on the attitude of both learners and teachers towards the integration of GB approaches in grammar teaching. By interpreting these findings, this chapter aims to contribute to the broader discussion on the usage of educational games in improving grammar proficiency and to provide answers to the study's central research questions.

### 3.1 Data Analysis

#### 3.1.1 Analysis of the Students' Questionnaire

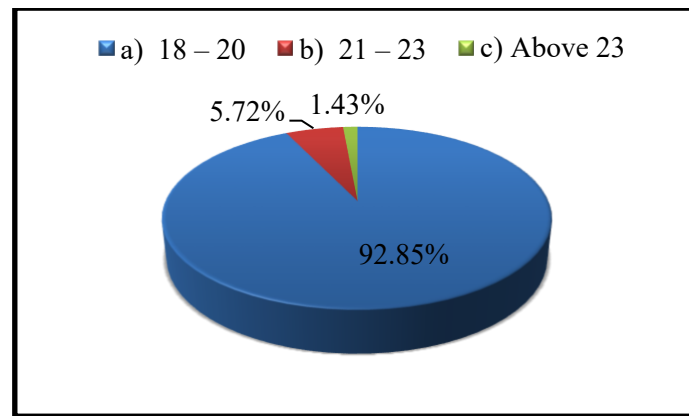
In the current study, descriptive analysis was employed to interpret the data collected from the students' questionnaire. This method was chosen for its effectiveness in summarizing and presenting the quantitative data in a clear, concise, and understandable manner.

#### Section One: General Background

**Q1.** Would you specify your age, please?

Option	Frequency	Percentage
a) 18 – 20	65	92.85%
b) 21 – 23	4	5.72%
c) Above 23	1	1.43%
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.1:** Students' *Age Distribution*



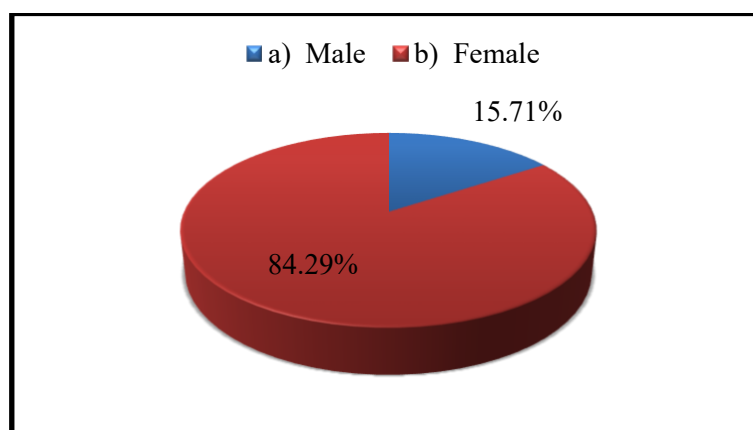
**Figure 3.1:** students' *Age Distribution*

The table 3.1 and the pie chart 3.1 above present the age distribution of the participants in this study. The majority of students 92.85% are between 18 and 20 years old, while 5.72% are aged from 21 to 23, and only 1.43% is above 23 years old. This indicates that most participants are young, which is the expected age for first-year EFL students at university.

**Q2. Would you specify your gender, please?**

Option	Frequency	Percentage
a) Male	11	15.71%
b) Female	59	84.29%
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.2** *Students' Gender*



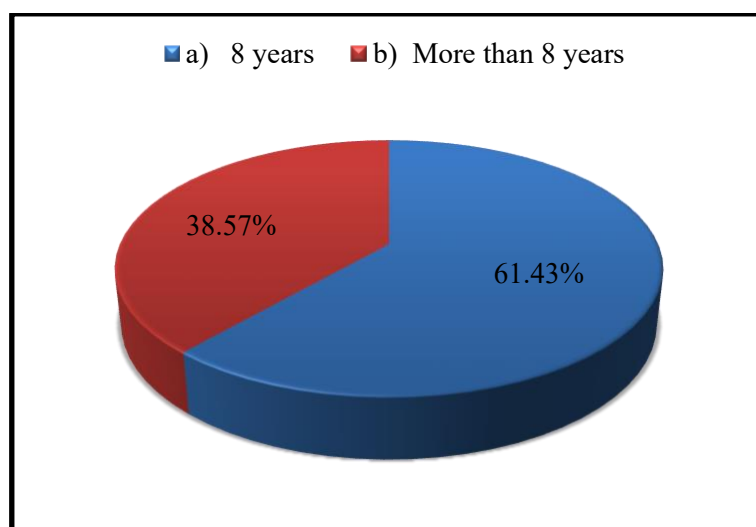
**Figure 3.2** *Students' Gender*

As shown in table 2.2, the majority of respondents were females, comprising 84.29% (59) of the total sample. In contrast, only 15.71% (11) were males. The female gender may have different attitudes than males. Furthermore, these results may also indicate a tendency among male students to avoid or escape foreign language learning. This may be attributed to the fact that males often show a stronger preference for scientific streams and sports compared to females who tend to prefer learning languages and they are more inclined to choose literary streams.

### Q3. How long have you been learning English?

Option	Frequency	Percentage
a) 8 years	43	61.43%
b) More than 8 years	27	38.57%
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.3** *Students' Years of Learning English*



**Figure 3.3** *Students' Years of Learning English*

Students were asked how long they have been learning English. As shown in table 2.3, most students 63.43% (or 43 out of 70) have been learning English for 8 years. The rest 38.57 or 27 students have been learning for more than 8 years. The results showed that the majority of students have similar level of experience in learning English. However, some students have studied English for longer period. Those who have studied for more than 8 years may be they got repeated their first-year at university level or at the middle and high

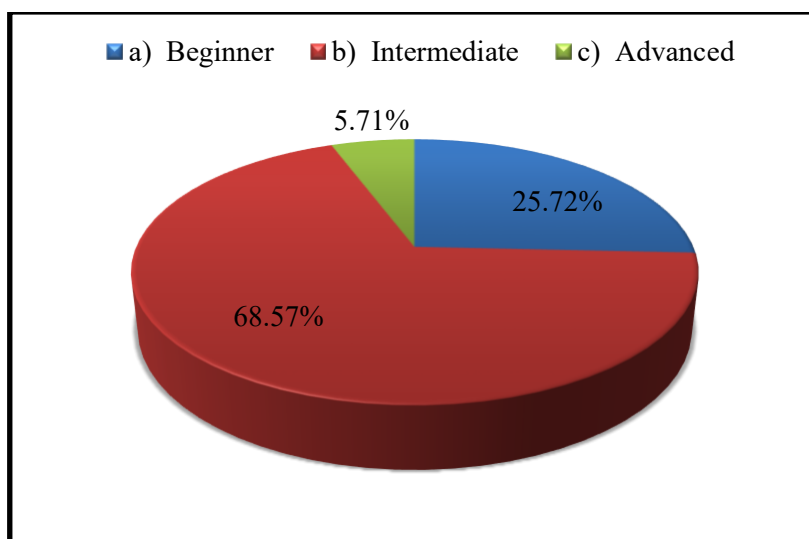


school level. Also, they may start studying English since early age in private schools previously.

**Q4. How would you rate your English grammar proficiency?**

Option	Frequency	Percentage
a) Beginner	18	25.72%
b) Intermediate	48	68.57%
c) Advanced	4	5.71%
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.4** *Students' Evaluation of Their English Grammar Proficiency*



**Figure 3.4** *Students' Evaluation of Their English Grammar Proficiency*

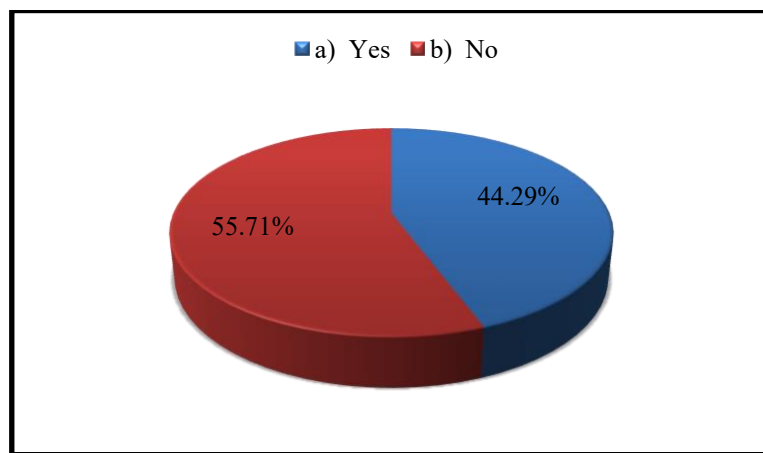
According to the results above, most students 68.57% (48) consider themselves at an intermediate level. Some students 25.72% (18) think they are beginners, while only few students (4) 5.71% see themselves as advanced in grammar. The results indicate that the majority of students have a moderate understanding of grammar, while some students still at a basic level in grammar learning; this level of grammatical proficiency may influence students' productive skills because grammar serves as a fundamental component of effective language use. The small percentage reveals that these students are highly skilled; this may be due to their extended exposure to the English language through advanced coursework, private language learning, or consistent practice in both academic and communicative contexts.

## Section Two: Experience with Game-based Learning

**Q5. Has your teacher ever used games to teach you English grammar at university?**

Option	Frequency	Percentage
a) Yes	31	44.29%
b) No	39	55.71%
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.5** *Teachers' Use of Games when teaching Grammar*

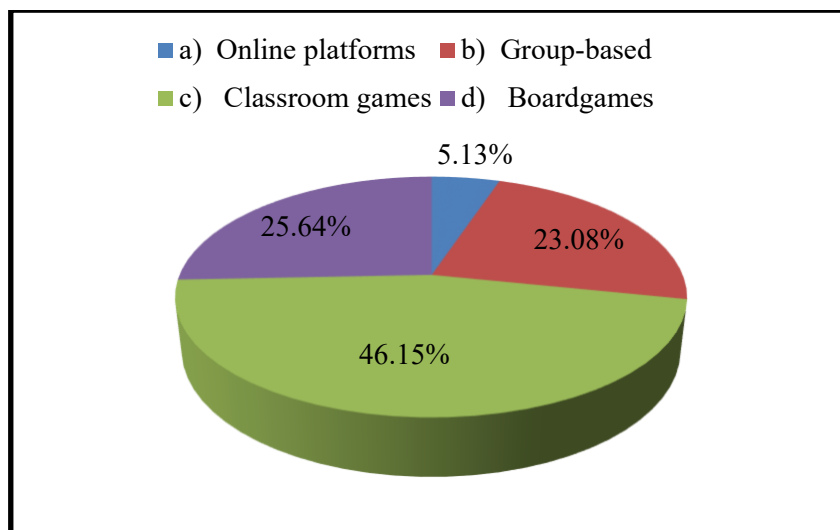


**Figure 3.5** *Teachers' Use of Games when Teaching Grammar*

The data illustrates that the majority of teachers 55.71% do not use games in grammar teaching, while 44.49% incorporate them into their lessons. A follow-up question (**If yes, what types of games have you been engaged in?**) was asked to reveal the types of games that grammar teachers incorporate in their grammar courses.

Option	Frequency	Percentage
a) Online platforms	2	5.13%
b) Group-based	9	23.08%
c) Classroom games	18	46.15%
d) Board games	10	25.64%
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.5.1** *Types of Games Teachers of Grammar Use*



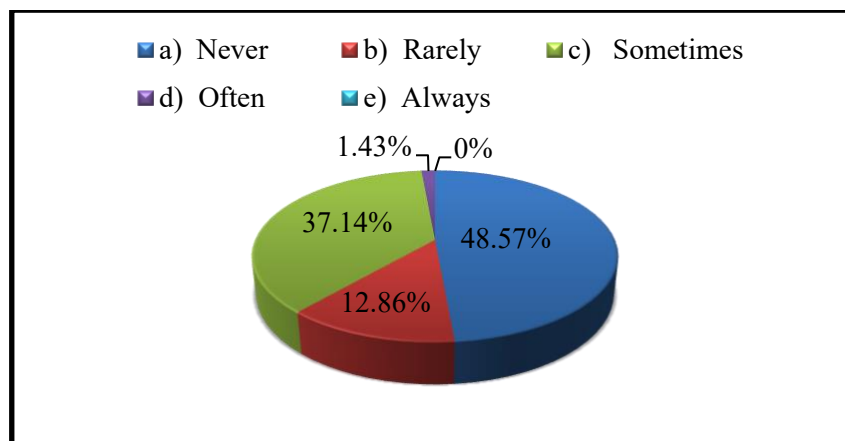
**Figure 3.5.1** *Types of Games Teachers of Grammar Use*

Among the various game types used, classroom games (competitive games such as quizzes, flashcard games, time-based-activities, etc) are the most common ones (46.15%), followed by board games (25.64%) and group-based games (23.08%), with online platforms being the least utilized with (5.15%). These findings show that although GBL is present, it is not widely implemented and this may be attributed due to teachers' negative attitude or large class size which may produce classroom noise and discipline issues. Additionally, the findings indicate that online learning is not widely adopted in the teaching of grammar courses.

**Q6. How often do your university teachers use games to teach grammar?**

Option	Frequency	Percentage
a) Never	34	48.57%
b) Rarely	9	12.86%
c) Sometimes	26	37.14%
d) Often	1	1.43
e) Always	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.6** *Frequency of Teachers' Use of Games when Teaching Grammar*



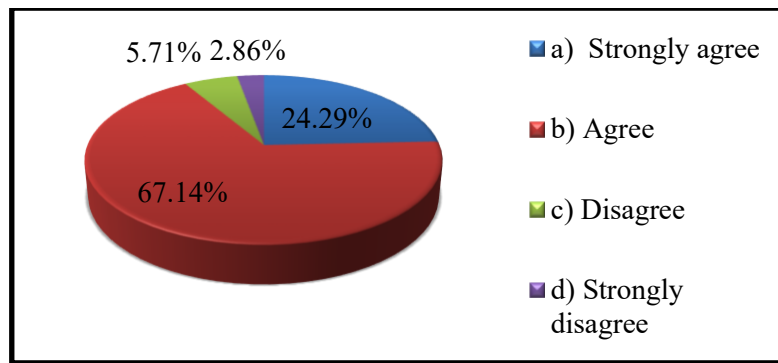
**Figure 3.6** *Frequency of Teachers' Use of Games when Teaching Grammar*

The table and the pie chart show that nearly half of the students (48.57%) reported that their teachers never use games for teaching grammar. A significant portion (37.14%) mentioned that games are used sometimes, while 12.86% stated they are rarely used. Only 1.43% of students experienced games being used often, and none reported that games are always adopted and used. These findings reveal that GBL is not a regular practice in university grammar teaching, and some teachers integrate it occasionally. Also, these results of question (Q6) confirm the previous results of question (Q5), which neglected the use of games by teachers. This could be either due to teachers' negative attitude, the planning this approach requires, a lack in teachers' knowledge of the teaching practices involved in this approach, or due to other reasons related to classroom management, classroom size, and material availability.

**Q7. Learning grammar through games is more engaging than through traditional methods.**

Option	Frequency	Percentage
a) Stronglyagree	17	24.29%
b) Agree	47	67.14%
c) Disagree	4	5.71%
d) Stronglydisagree	2	2.86%
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.7** *Students' Responses about whether Learning Grammar through Games Is More Engaging than through Traditional Methods or not*



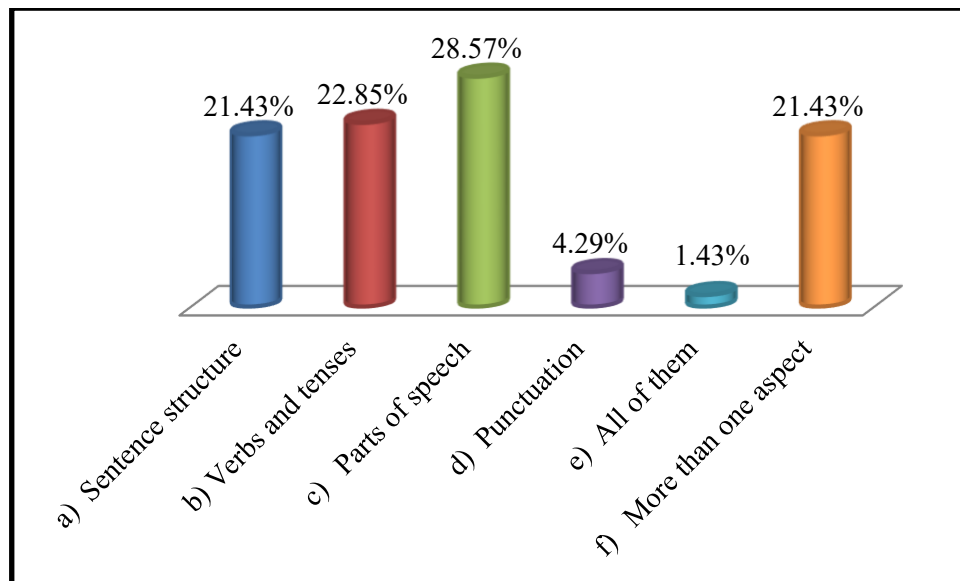
**Figure 3.7** *Students' Responses about whether Learning Grammar through Games Is More Engaging than through Traditional Methods or not*

This question is based on students' perceptions and aims to determine whether students find learning grammar through games more engaging than traditional methods. The results show that the majority of students believe that games enhance engagement in grammar learning. Specifically, 67.14% (47 students) agreed, while 24.29% (17 students) strongly agreed. On the other hand, only 5.17% (4 students) disagreed, and 2.86% (2 Students) strongly disagreed. These findings showed that most students prefer GBL over traditional methods. With over 90% of students expressing a positive view integrating games into grammar teaching could be an effective way to improve students' engagement. Nevertheless, some students who disagreed that learning grammar through games is not engaging or effective than the traditional way of teaching, it may refer to the students' differences (the extroverted and the introverted learners) and preferences (students may prefer other learning style and dislike this method of using games).

**Q8. Which aspects of grammar do you think would improve the most through games?**

Option	Frequency	Percentage
a) Sentence structure	15	21.43%
b) Verbs and tenses	16	22.85
c) Parts of speech	20	28.57%
d) Punctuation	3	4.29%
e) All of them	1	1.43%
f) More than one aspect	15	21.43%
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.8** The Grammar Aspects Students Think Would Improve the Most through Games



**Figure 3.8** *The Grammar Aspects that Students Think Would Improve the Most through Games*

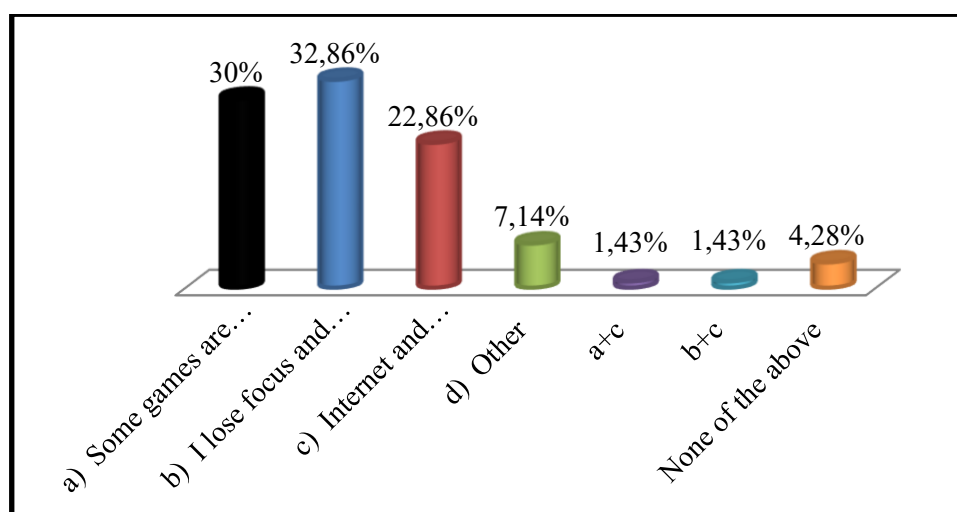
Through this question, the table and the bar chart indicate that the majority of students see “parts of speech” as the most likely to improve through GBL, with 28.57% (20 students) selecting this option. Following closely, 22.85% (16 students) believe that “verbs and tenses” would benefit the most, while 21.43% (15 students) think “sentence structure” would witness the greatest improvement. Other 21.43% (15 students) indicated that more than one grammar aspect would improve, revealing they see multiple benefits from using games. Fewer students chose “punctuation” with only 4.29% (3 students) selecting this option, indicating that they do not give much interest to it, though this aspect may affect their written production. Additionally, just 1.43% (1 student) believed that all aspects of grammar would improve equally through games.

These findings indicated that students perceive GBL as particularly effective for understanding parts of speech, verbs, and sentence structure. The lower percentage of punctuation implies that students might see it as requiring different teaching approaches or more structured learning methods. The findings also indicate that the parts of speech are seen as isolated parts of the language, they might require a more interactive approach to make their learning more effective and engaging.

**Q9. What challenges do you face when using games to learn grammar at university?**

Option	Frequency	Percentage
a) Some games are too difficult and complicated	21	30%
b) I lose focus and get distracted	23	32.86%
c) Internet and technology issues	16	22.86%
d) Other	5	7.14%
a+c	1	1.43%
b+c	1	1.43%
None of the above	3	4.28%
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.9** *Challenges that Students Face when Using Games to Learn Grammar at University*



**Figure 3.9** *Challenges that Students Face when Using Games to Learn Grammar at University*

Table 3.9 and bar chart3.2 present the challenges students face when using games to learn grammar at university. The data reveals that the most common difficulty is losing focus and getting distracted, reported by 32.86% of students. The second most common challenge is that some games are too difficult and complicated (30%). Additionally, 22.86% of students experience internet and technology issues, while 5.71% reported other challenges.

A small percentage of students selected multiple challenges (1.43% for a+c and b+c), and 2.86% stated that they faced no difficulties. As a result, the distraction is a significant

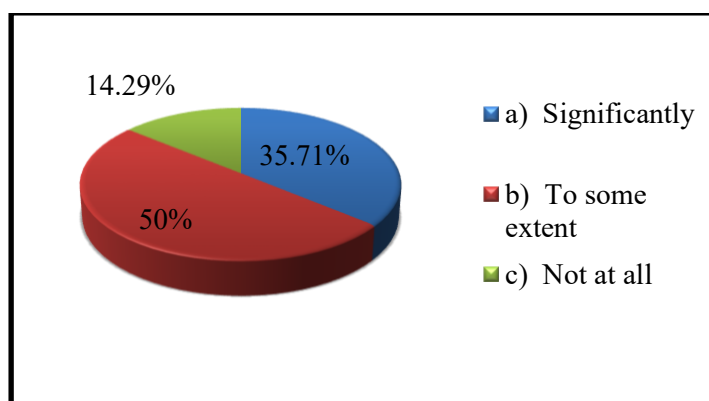
issue when using games for grammar learning, which indicates that some games also pose a challenge, indicating a need for well-designed games that match students' proficiency levels. Internet and technology problems further highlight external barriers that can hinder learning effectiveness. In the "others" section, one student mentioned losing focus because some classmates take a long time to understand the material. These findings emphasize the importance of selecting appropriate games, minimizing distractions, and ensuring reliable technological support to enhance the learning experience; thus may due to the selection of the right games by teachers who do not fit the students' level and/or suit their mental capacities, or teachers here are using games just for fun not for grasping grammar rules.

### Section Three: Perceived Effectiveness of Game-based Learning

**Q10. Do you think game-based learning has/would improve(ed) your grammar proficiency at university?**

Option	Frequency	Percentage
a) Significantly	25	35.71%
b) To some extent	35	50%
c) Not at all	10	14.29%
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.10** *The Degree of Students' Grammar Proficiency Improvement after Learning through Games*



**Figure 3.10** *The Degree of Students' Grammar Proficiency Improvement after Learning through Games*

The rationale behind this question is to understand whether students believe that the use of GBL is likely improve their grammar proficiency at university or not. Table 3.10 and

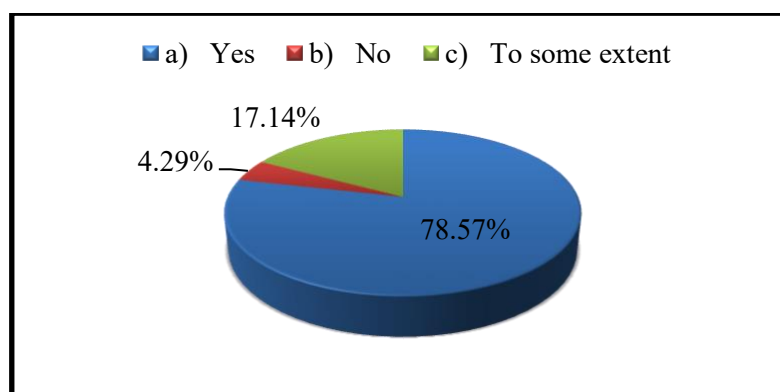


pie chart 3.8 present their responses that show 50% of students think games help “to some extent”, while 35.71% believe they help “significantly”. However, 14.29% of students feel that games do not help at all; this finding revealed that most students (85.71%) find the use of games beneficial for learning grammar, but the level of effectiveness varies. Since only 35.75% consider games highly beneficial, improvements may be needed to make them more useful and effective, such as adjusting game difficulty or aligning them more closely with the learning goals and objectives. The 14.29% who do not find games useful highlight the need to explore alternative learning methods or address possible challenges, such as difficulty levels, distractions, or personal learner’s differences and/or preferences. Understanding these concerns can help improve the use of GBL in grammar teaching.

**Q11. Do/would you feel more confident when using grammar correctly after playing educational games?**

Option	Frequency	Percentage
a) Yes	55	78.57%
b) No	3	4.29%
c) To some extent	12	17.14%
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.11** *Students’ Responses about whether They Feel more Confident to use Grammar Correctly or Not after Playing Educational Games*



**Figure 3.11** *Students’ Responses about whether They Feel more Confident to use Grammar Correctly or Not after Playing Educational Games*

The data presented in the table and pie chart above reveals students’ perceptions of their confidence in using grammar correctly after engaging with educational games. Out of 70 respondents, a substantial majority of 78.57% (55 students) indicated that they felt/would

feel more confident in their grammar usage when implementing educational games. Meanwhile, 17.14% (12 students) reported feeling somewhat confident, suggesting that although the games can have a positive impact, it was not strongly enough to fully boost their confidence. Only a small minority of 4.29% (3 students) responded negatively, stating that the games did/would not help them feel more confident at all. These few students who responded that they do not feel confident when using games may be because of their introverted characters, psychological issues which may reflect individual differences in learning preferences, or familiarity with games.

These results highlight a clear trend: educational games appear to have the potential of building a positive influence on students' grammatical confidence. The high percentage of positive responses reveals that educational games may create a more relaxed and engaging environment for learning grammar. This can reduce anxiety and encourage learners to experiment with language use more freely. The fact that a notable portion of students can experience a lower level of confidence "to some extent" may reflect their levels of prior knowledge or due to the uninteresting types of games used for them.

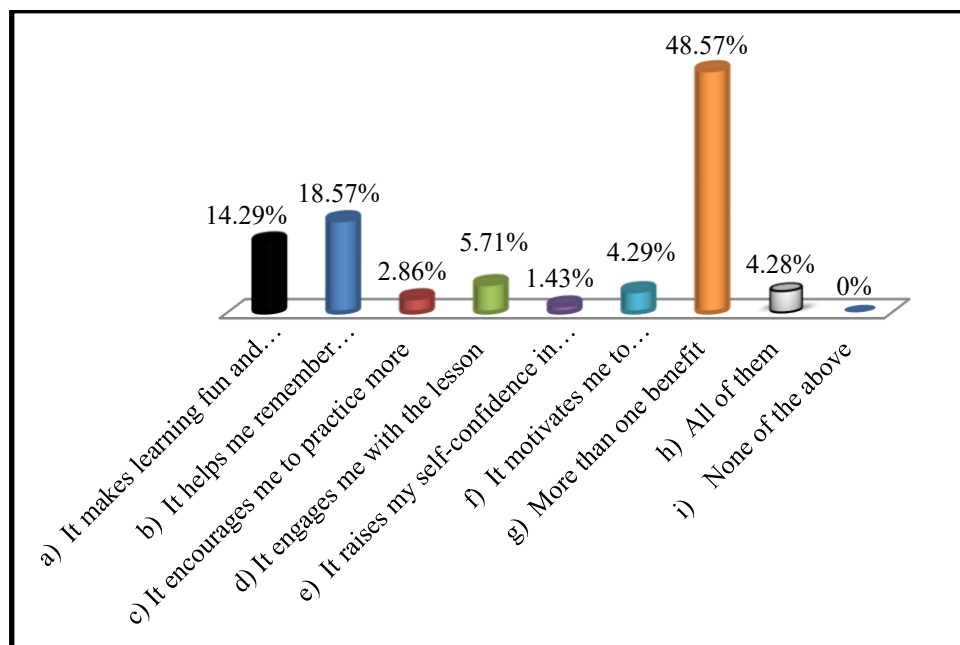
On the other hand, the minimal number of negative responses implies that educational games, at the very least, may hinder students' confidence because of their introverted characters, psychological issues which may reflect individual differences in learning preferences, familiarity with games, or even due to their negative attitude towards these games. By fostering a sense of achievement and active participation, educational games can be a valuable strategy for promoting confidence and improving learners' attitudes toward grammar learning.

**Q12. Which potential benefits of game-based learning do you agree with?**

Option	Frequency	Percentage
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a) It makes learning fun and enjoyable	10	14.29%
b) It helps me remember grammar rules better	13	18.57%
c) It encourages me to practice more	2	2.86%
d) It engages me with the lesson	4	5.71%
e) It raises my self-confidence in using the language structures	1	1.43%
f) It motivates me to communicate and deploy the new grammar rule	3	4.29%
g) More than one benefit	34	48.57%
h) All of them	3	4.28%
i) None of the above	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.12** *The Potential Benefits of Game-based Learning Students Agree with*



**Figure 3.12** *The Potential Benefits of Game-based Learning Students Agree with*

The findings provide insights into students' perceptions regarding the potential benefits of GBL in grammar teaching. The highest proportion of students, representing 48.57% (34 out of 70), selected "more than one benefit", indicating that the majority recognized multiple advantages in using games for learning grammar. Additionally, 18.57% of the students stated that GBL helps them remember grammar rules better, which is a strong indication that games may foster the retention of the already learned information retention and understanding of linguistic structures. Another 14.29% found that games make learning

fun and enjoyable, suggesting that the motivational and engaging nature of games contributes positively to the learning experience.

Smaller percentages of students pointed to more specific benefits. For instance, 5.71% said games engage them with the lesson, while 4.29% reported that games motivate them to communicate and use the new grammar rules. Only 2.86% agreed that games encourage them to practice more, and 1.43% mentioned that games boost their self-confidence in using language structures. Interestingly, 4.28% of students believe that all of the mentioned benefits apply, and none of the students selected “none of the above”, indicating that nearly all participants saw at least some value in GBL.

These findings indicate that GBL is perceived by students as a multifaceted method that goes beyond simple entertainment. It supports memory, increases motivation, and improves classroom engagement. The fact that nearly half of the respondents chose “more than one benefit” underlines the idea that educational games can serve multiple pedagogical purposes simultaneously. This reinforces the importance of incorporating interactive GB activities in grammar lessons as a strategy to cater to different learning preferences and to make the grammar learning process more dynamic and effective.

**Section Four: Open-Ended Questions**

**Q13. What is your favorite grammar game, and why do you like it?**

Based on the results of this question, the responses have been classified in a table which illustrates some various games that students prefer to learn grammar:

Type of Game	The Purpose of Choosing It
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<b><i>Group-based</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ‘Since I like to play games in groups and change ideas’</li> <li>- ‘It Helps me strengthen the relationship between me and my colleagues’</li> <li>-‘because It was fun to play with friends’.</li> <li>-‘Because it is fun and interactive’.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Flashcards</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- because they help me remember the rules easier’.</li> <li>- It Helps me focus on and remember the rules’.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Kahoot</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-‘Because it is fun and helps with grammar revision’</li> <li>-‘Because it makes learning fun through interactive quizzes’.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Quizzes</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ‘Because they are so fun’.</li> <li>- ‘It Helps me remember grammar rules’.</li> <li>-‘Because it Improves my English team work skills’.</li> <li>-‘Because they make learning interactive and competitive’.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Geopardy</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-‘Because it Improves my English team work skills’.</li> <li>-‘Because in this game you should find the correct sentence structure before the time ends and it makes learning enjoyable’</li> </ul>

**Table 3.13:** Favorite grammar games students’ use in learning grammar

Based on the students’ responses to question 13, many students mentioned that they enjoyed grammar games because they made learning more fun and motivating. Popular apps like Kahoot and Geopardy were praised for their interactive and game-like features. Several students also noted that grammar games helped them memorize grammar rules and improve their understanding. Others valued group games that encouraged collaboration and idea sharing. Moreover, Competitive games like grammar quizzes and time-based activities were seen as exciting and motivating.

**Q14. In what ways do you think game-based learning could be improved for learning grammar at university?**

According to the students' feedback to this question and their suggestions about improving GBL for grammar learning, we divided them into four key themes:

**1. Skill development and practice**

- “It helps a lot to develop the students' skills in grammar”.
- “It makes learning fun and it encourages more practice”.
- “Maybe we could have fun and remember rules better”.
- “My favorite games are group and classroom games because they engage me to exercise and practice more”.

**2. Interactive and fun learning**

- “In many ways such as making difficult lessons easy to understand”
- “GBL can be improved by incorporating more interactive activities”.
- “It encourages friendly competitions”.

**3. Use of technology and digital tools**

- “GBL could be improved by integrating more digital tools, interactive apps and real world scenarios”.
- “Using interactive games, integrating technology in teaching grammar”.

**4. Regular integration into lessons**

- “Integrating games into lessons regularly instead of using them as extra activities”.

First, many students mentioned that GBL could help them develop grammar proficiency and improve through repeated practice. Second, they highlight that making games fun and interactive helped making grammar easier to remember. A third group shows using more digital tools and apps to make learning more modern and engaging. In addition, some students said group games and friendly competitions would motivate them and

improve communication. At last, students suggested that grammar games should be regularly included in grammar lessons, not just used occasionally.

**Q15. Do you have any additional comments or suggestions?**

Regarding the additional comments or suggestions provided by the students, several ideas were shared to improve the GBL experience. These included:

- “If teachers use games in their teaching, it will be more fun to learn”.
- “I think it is a good idea to learn in an enjoyable way like games because it is so useful and helpful”.
- “Adding more digital tools and team-based competitions could make learning more engaging and effective”.
- “Grammar games should balance fun and learning”.
- “Offering variety of games adapted to different students’ levels for better understanding and engagement”.
- “I think if we tried to play games in grammar lessons, this will help us more in our studies because it will make the lessons easier”.
- “I believe that using games for learning grammar can be even more effective if combined with speaking and writing activities”.
- “My favorite grammar game is board game because it helps me remember grammar rules better”.
- “Crosswords game because it is more fun and makes my English skills better and it corrects my vocabulary”.

Through these answers, it is noticed that students have a strong interest in including games as part of grammar teaching. Several students revealed that when teachers use games in their lessons, learning would become more enjoyable and effective. They believed that grammar games should strike a balance between fun and learning to help students remain focused and motivated. Some students recommended adding digital tools and team-based competitions to make grammar learning more engaging. Others emphasized the need for

variety in grammar games, indicating that using different types of games based on students' levels can increase understanding and participation.

Few students mentioned that grammar games should be part of the regular learning process and combined with speaking and writing tasks for greater effectiveness. They also shared that board games and vocabulary-based games helped them remember grammar rules better and enhance their English skills, especially vocabulary and grammar accuracy. All in all, students viewed grammar games as a useful and enjoyable way to learn. Their comments highlight the importance of using diverse, level appropriate games that combine enjoyment with grammar proficiency development.

### **3.1.2 Analysis of the Teachers' Interview**

In the current study, thematic analysis is employed to analyze the data collected from the teachers' interview. This method enables the researcher to identify key patterns and shared perspectives regarding the use of GB approaches in grammar teaching, thus providing a deeper understanding of teachers' attitudes and insights in relation to the research objectives.

**Q1: Can you describe your experience in teaching grammar to first-year university EFL learners?**

**Teacher 1:** It is hard to teach L1 grammar because the majority of them are below-average students.

**Teacher 2:** Many students struggle with basic grammar rules and often lack the foundational knowledge required to grasp more complex structures which make it challenging to maintain their understanding and progress smoothly throughout the courses.

**Teacher 3:** It is a bit difficult to engage L1 students. They need something that interests and motivates them to stay focused during the session.

**Teacher 4:** It has been an acceptable experience. A number of students were eager to learn and improve their grammar level.

According to the teachers' answers, teachers 1 and 2 declare that they face challenges in grammar teaching due to students' low proficiency and lack of motivation. Teachers feel



the current methods are not engaging enough, implying that more interactive, motivating strategies like games could enhance students focus and learning outcomes whereas teacher 4 shows that some students are motivated, which aligns with the potential benefits of GB activities. The responses suggests that students need more engaging tools, hinting that teachers may benefit from structured GB techniques to better capture attention and improve focus. The mixed experiences from struggle to modest success indicate a need for alternative strategies like games to enhance learning outcomes, especially for below-average or disengaged students.

**Q2: What challenges do students typically face when learning grammar at the university level?**

**Teacher 1:** The complexity of lessons (too many details and exceptional cases they are supposed to learn by heart)

**Teacher 2:** The grammar syllabus encompasses an extensive range of rules, exceptions, and intricate cases that students are often required to memorize thus leading to the confusion and hindering students' ability to accurately apply grammatical structures in both written and spoken contexts.

**Teacher3:** They mainly suffer with the huge amount of structures they are supposed to learn, which affects their motivation and engagement.

**Teacher 4:** Some students lack grammatical competence. When they join the English department, they get surprised that an advanced level of English is being taught. Therefore, they struggle to cope with the pace of lessons progress and they fail to improve their level.

Teachers 1, 2 and 3 perceived that the challenges students face when learning grammar are overwhelmed by the volume and complexity of grammar rules. This overload can demotivate learners and reduce their willingness to engage in grammar learning. Teacher 4 stated that some students enter university without strong grammar foundation, making it difficult to keep up with the advanced level of teaching expected in the English department; thus, there is a mismatch between teaching pace and students' ability to keep up, especially for those with weaker background. Furthermore, teacher 4 identified several barriers such as too much content, low incoming competence, and fast paced lessons. These findings justify

the investigation into alternative teaching strategies as a means to enhance students' motivation, engagement, and proficiency in grammar.

**Q3: Do you think that game based learning is more effective than traditional method for teaching grammar? If yes, in what way?**

**Teacher 1:** Sure, Game-based learning can be more motivating for a generation that is connected to screens, video games, rather than the papers.

**Teacher 2:** I presume it is more fun and students tend to get more engaged when learning and having fun at the time.

**Teacher 3:** Yes as it keeps them motivated and engaged to participate throughout the session. It helps in learning the grammar rules in a fun way.

**Teacher 4:** I think game-based learning is important but traditional ways of teaching cannot be left out. A combination of both is effective.

There is an agreement established between teachers 1, 2, and 3 about the significance of GBL in boosting motivation as it is a key driver of effective learning. Students who are more engaged are more likely to absorb and retain grammar rules. Also, they add, through GBL, that the sense of fun in grammar lessons is emphasized, suggesting that when students enjoy the learning process, they may be less resistant to challenging content. While GBL is seen as effective, teacher 4 believed that it should complement rather than replace traditional methods. Through teachers' responses above, it is shown that teachers generally have a positive attitude towards GBL due to its engagement, motivation, and fun elements. The comments also reveal that such methods can support learning outcomes when well-implemented.

**Q4: Have you ever incorporated game-based learning in your grammar lessons? If yes, what types of games have you used?**

**Teacher 1:** Honestly I did not try any.

**Teacher 2:** I honestly seldom incorporate games other than crosswords and online guessing games.

**Teacher 3:** Sometimes, especially when I feel students are bored, I devote the last 20 minutes of the session to present games, such as verb charades, verb chain, preposition illustration, etc.

**Teacher 4:** Yes, I incorporated puzzles and crossword to teach parts of speech.

Teacher 1 and 2 has little to no experience with GBL. This reflects a gap between the perceived benefits and the actual classroom practices. It may suggest possible reasons like lack of training or resources. Teacher 3 reports using games selectively, especially as a tool to regain attention or manage classroom energy. This shows that some teachers view GBL not as the main method, but as a complementary strategy to improve engagement. Teachers 3 and 4 tend to use language related puzzles and word games. This implies that when they do use games, they choose the ones that directly support grammar learning goals. It shows an understanding of aligning games with specific content. Games are mostly used as supplementary and certain games like crosswords, verb charades are chosen to match grammar topics, which supports their potential effectiveness when used thoughtfully. There is interest but limited application.

#### **Q5: How do students generally respond to grammar-focused games in class?**

**Teacher 1:** They would appreciate it because they seem so exuberant (animated) and ambitious to try a different method of learning grammar lessons.

**Teacher 2:** They can become more motivated to learn especially if collaborations with peers are allowed.

**Teacher 3:** All students respond positively to the games. They participate enthusiastically and even some of them ask me to add another round in order to keep playing. I feel they learn better as their concentration improves.

**Teacher 4:** They get motivated and they participate considerably.

In this question, all teachers (1, 2, 3, and 4) noted that students are/can be ambitious, and eager to continue playing when grammar is introduced through GB activities. This shows a shift from passive to active learning as students are motivated by the novelty and interactivity of games. Teacher 2 points out that the students would become more motivated when they collaborate with peers. This reveals that games foster teamwork and peer interaction; they enhance the learning experience. Therefore, activities that encourage group

work or friendly competition can strengthen both engagement and language practice. Teachers here observe that students (would) respond positively, (would) remain focused for longer periods, and (would) even request for additional rounds. This implies that GB grammar tasks are likely to help maintain student attention, potentially reducing boredom or anxiety often associated with grammar lessons.

From teachers' perspectives, games appear to increase motivation, foster positive attitude, and sustain focus. This perceived effectiveness aligns with the idea that integrating student-centered activities can lead to better language outcomes. So the teachers unanimously report that grammar-focused games can result in higher levels of student motivation, engagement, and collaboration. These findings reveal that GB approaches may be an effective strategy for enhancing grammar proficiency among EFL learners, indicating that well designed GB activities could be a valuable method for both teaching and reinforcing grammar concepts.

**Q6: Which aspects of grammar (e.g., verb tenses, sentence structure, part of speech, etc.) do you think would improve the most when using games?**

**Teacher 1:** Parts of speech and verb tenses

**Teacher 2:** Maybe when learning tenses

**Teacher 3:** Verbs and parts of speech

**Teacher 4:** All aspects of grammar can be taught effectively using games.

Three out of four teachers (T1, T2, and T3) specifically mention verb tenses or verbs. This suggests that verb tenses are viewed as one of the most teachable and improvable grammar points through games. Games often involve repetition, time based activities, or sentence building exercises, which are ideal for practicing tenses. Teacher4 believed that all aspects of grammar can benefit from GBL which reflects a broader belief in the flexibility of games to support a wide range of grammar topics, not just limited to specific structures like tenses or parts of speech. The teachers' emphasis on verb tenses and parts of speech suggests that the games used are likely involve sentence construction, time-based tasks (for verb tenses) and categorization or labeling activities (for parts of speech). These hints provide insights into the nature of the games being applied, and teacher 4's broader view

supports the idea that games may enhance overall grammar proficiency to assess their general effectiveness.

**Q7: Do you think game-based learning can help develop students' confidence in using grammar in real-life communication? Why or why not?**

**Teacher 1:** Yes of course. A game puts students in a real life context.

**Teacher 2:** Yes why not, If it is done right and students are having fun appropriate grammar structures and forms can be naturally integrated into their casual speech and writing.

**Teacher 3:** I am not sure about the use of grammar in real life communication as the games I opt for are not based on communication. Instead, they focus on isolated forms and structures, like verbs and prepositions.

**Teacher 4:** Games participate in improving students' grammar mastery. Therefore, they will be able to express themselves confidently in communicative situations.

Teacher1 supported the idea strongly, stating that games simulate real life context, which can help students use grammar in more natural and meaningful ways. Teacher 2 agreed but added a condition: "If games are used properly and engage students, grammar can be smoothly integrated into casual speech and writing". Teacher4 also agreed, emphasizing that games improve grammar mastery and thus increase students' confidence in communication. Those three teachers recognize the value of GBL in building both grammatical accuracy and communicative confidence. They see games as a method that offer contextual and enjoyable learning experiences, which supports the idea that grammar can be better internalized when it is part of meaningful interaction. Whereas teacher 3 expressed doubt, explaining that the games they use are focused on isolated grammar points like verbs and prepositions rather than communication. Teacher 3's perspective introduces an important nuance which shows that all GBL leads to communicative competence.

The majority of teachers (three out of four) agree that GBL can support grammar use in real life communication, particularly when games are well designed and engaging. However, one teacher's concern highlights that not all grammar games necessarily promote communicative skills. This indicated that for GBL to be useful and effective, the games should focus on meaningful communication rather than isolated grammar practice.

**Q8: How do you assess whether games have successfully helped students improve their grammar proficiency?**

**Teacher 1:** It is through comparison between their results using the traditional and game-based methods

**Teacher 2:** Feedback from students and different assessment formats that are summative and formative.

**Teacher 3:** Through systematic observation of students' performance during game activities, error frequencies, and comparing these criteria across sessions to assess grammar improvement.

**Teacher 4:** A written or oral quiz will show students improvement in terms of their grammar mastery.

This variety in teachers' responses appears first in teacher1's answer, who adopted a comparative assessment approach. By comparing results from traditional grammar teaching with those from GBL, the teacher attempted to identify measurable improvement. This method suggests a data driven attitude toward evaluating teaching methods. Teacher 2 employs both student feedback and a combination of summative (e.g., final tests or projects) and formative (e.g., ongoing quizzes, class-work) assessment. This comprehensive strategy recognizes that grammar learning is not just about final results but also about the learning process.

Furthermore, teacher 3 indicated that s/he assesses students through their performance during games, activities and error frequencies that students make within the session by comparing these indicators across sessions to assess grammar improvement. According to Teacher 4, the effectiveness of educational games reveals on the students' production and output. S/he relied on direct testing methods, such as written or oral quizzes, to measure progress in grammar. This traditional assessment method shows that some teachers still prefer structured evaluation to determine mastery.

While this approach of assessment may not fully capture the communicative or interactive benefits of using games, it provides a practical and straightforward way to assess grammar improvement. The analysis reveals that most teachers attempt to assess the impact of GB grammar learning through comparison, feedback, and quizzes. Their strategies differ

in the depth and structure. Most teachers' responses reflect an awareness of the assessment practices, whether through direct comparison, mixed assessments, or traditional quizzes.

**Q9: What are the biggest challenges in implementing game-based learning in grammar instruction at the university level?**

**Teacher 1:** The large number of L1 groups.

**Teacher 2:** Lack of technical means e.g. electricity cuts and poor internet connection as I like to use online interactive games.

**Teacher 3:** It cannot be implemented with all types of lessons.

**Teacher 4:** There are many challenges among which high number of students and availability of teaching materials.

Teacher 1 and teacher 4 declare that the large number of students makes classroom management difficult and may limit the feasibility of GBL. They suggested that while teachers might want to explore different games, classroom size constrains their ability to apply them effectively. Also, teacher 4 added availability of teaching materials as a key challenge which means that insufficient resources can limit the variety and depth of grammar games that teachers can implement. Teacher 2 highlighted technical issues such as electricity cuts and poor internet, which hinder the use of online interactive games. Thus, this teacher reflects a systematic limitation that prevents teachers from using certain types of games, especially digital or online ones. Moreover, teacher 3 pointed out that GBL is not compatible with all types of lessons; this highlights a pedagogical challenge, showing that not all grammar lessons can be taught through games.

The responses reveal that while teachers may be open to use GBL, several practical and technical challenges hinder its implementation. These include: Large class size, which makes game facilitation difficult, technical issues such as poor internet and electricity, especially for digital games, incompatibility with some lesson types (limiting the versatility of games), and lack of teaching materials, restricting the tools teachers can use. These findings show that teachers' choices are often shaped by physical and technical limitations rather than pedagogical preferences. Therefore, the effectiveness of games in improving grammar proficiency is influenced not only by how well designed they are, but also by whether the environment supports their use or not.

**Q10: What improvements or supports would help make game-based learning more effective in EFL grammar teaching?**

**Teacher 1:** Understanding lessons and solving difficult activities and being more engaged in grammar.

**Teacher 2:** Encouragement from the department staff to use games and take them more seriously as eligible teaching methods.

**Teacher 3:** If the grammar lessons are designed based on this approach, students would benefit more from it. By this I mean not using games only at the end of sessions, but using it as the primary means of teaching and learning the grammar rules.

**Teacher 4:**

- a) Limitation of students' number in the class.
- b) Doing needs analysis to spot the type of games that would meet and repair students' weaknesses.
- c) Using ICT tools to facilitate the implementation of games.
- d) Combining games with suitable traditional methods to increase efficiency

Starting with teacher 4's response by revealing what improvements could lead to more effective grammar learning through games, s/he raises the issue of class size as a barrier and suggested to reduce the number of students per class to make GBL more manageable. S/he reinforced the idea that large class size limits teachers' ability to apply games successfully. Teacher 4 added that a needs analysis should be conducted to choose games that address students' specific weaknesses. Teacher 3 emphasizes that grammar lessons should be designed with games as a central instructional tool, not just as an end of session activity. These responses highlighted the importance of intentional curriculum planning when using games. Instead of treating games as additions, teachers believe they should be a fundamental part of lesson design.

In addition, teacher 4 proposed using ICT tools to support GBL. The integration of technology is seen as a way to overcome logistical challenges and diversify game formats (e.g., digital quizzes, interactive platforms). Also, s/he suggested combining games with traditional teaching methods for better results which reflects a balanced approach where games are not seen as replacements but as supplements to conventional grammar teaching.



Teacher1 mentioned that games help students better understand lessons, solve difficult tasks, and stay engaged in grammar learning. The response focused on learner' benefits which is to improve grammar proficiency through engagement and active learning, and they can lead to deeper understanding and motivation when games are used effectively in the classroom. The teachers 1, 2, 3, and 4 proposed several improvements that can enhance the use and the impact of GBL in grammar teaching, including:

- Better curriculum integration and targeted game selection through needs analysis.
- Institutional encouragement and support for innovative teaching methods.
- Smaller class size to facilitate smoother GB activities.
- The Use of ICT tools to modernize and support implementations.
- Blending games with traditional methods for greater efficiency and balance.

It is apparent that the teachers recognize that the types of games used are strongly influenced by curriculum design, institutional policy, and technological access. They show that strategic improvements could significantly boost the use of games to enhance first year EFL learners' grammar proficiency.

### **3.2 Discussion and Summary of the Findings**

The study provided insights into the use of GBL in enhancing grammar proficiency among first-year EFL learners' grammar proficiency and teachers of grammar module. This part presents a comprehensive synthesis of the results obtained from both research instruments, including the students' questionnaire and the teachers' interview. Our results showed that a wide range of GB techniques are sometimes employed by teachers, including physical classroom games. These games were integrated into various stages of grammar lessons, like warm-ups, reinforcement activities, and formative assessment tasks.

Importantly, teachers reported that the selection of games should be based on learners' needs, lesson objectives, and the nature of the grammar lessons, demonstrating that game usage was intentional and pedagogically motivated. These findings are supported by the students' responses, which confirmed frequent exposure to such activities in class. The students' questionnaire revealed strong evidence that learners felt more engaged, confident, and capable of understanding grammar when it was taught through educational games. Many learners expressed that GBL made the classroom environment more enjoyable which in turn facilitated better concentration and retention of grammatical structures, both groups held

positive views; students appreciate the interactivity and fun. Likewise, teachers observed that students were more active, participative, and responsive when grammar was taught using GB strategies, and they viewed GBL as a method that fosters engagement and meaningful learning.

The findings of this study reveal that both teachers and students generally have positive attitudes toward the use of GBL in grammar teaching. Students indicated that games make grammar lessons more enjoyable and easier to understand. Similarly, some teachers reported that using games occasionally and recognizing their potential to increase learners' engagement. However, others admitted to rarely use GBL, citing challenges including time constraints, curriculum pressure, and limited training. These findings align with those of Babar et al. (2022), who found that EFL teachers in their study appreciated the value of GBL but faced similar barriers, including lack of institutional support and insufficient resources.

In relation to the study's findings, it was shown that across different contexts, even when teachers understand the benefits of GBL, practical limitations can restrict its application in the classroom. Moreover, Hafiza and Pratolo (2022) emphasized that GBL is most effective when teachers are trained in selecting or designing suitable games aligned with learning goals. This may explain why, in the current study, some teachers used games effectively while others avoid them, possibly due to their negative attitude and lack of experience in integrating games into grammar lessons.

The impact of GBL was naturally observed through students' responses. Most students stated that grammar games helped them better retain rules, feel more motivated, and participate more actively. These findings align with the results of Da-Oh et al. (2023), who found that Thai students learning grammar through games showed improved grammar performance compared to those using traditional methods. Therefore, it was suggested that the positive impact of GBL on grammar learning may be due to the reduced anxiety and increased student interaction created by games.

Similarly, Aratea and Pasubillo (2024) observed that grammar proficiency among students improve when modal verbs were taught through games. The students in their study became more confident and engaged, similar to the students in the present study who reported that GBL helped them participate more freely in class. However, not all studies reported strong learning outcomes. For instance, Almusharraf (2023) found that although

students enjoyed GBL like kahoot!, their grammar performance did not significantly improve. This indicated that enjoyment alone may not be enough if the games are not well-integrated with grammar lessons objectives; they might entertain without reinforcing learning.

In the present study, students felt that games helped their grammar learning. However, some researchers found that games could sometimes hinder deep understanding and some others in their studies raised concerns about the time required to plan and use games and doubted their long term effectiveness. Likewise, Li and Tsai (2013) found that although games initially attracted students' attention, their interest decreased over time. In addition, Chen and Yang (2019) reported that some students viewed games as distractions rather than useful learning tools, especially when the games were not closely related to the lesson's objectives.

The results of these previous studies and the present one may be attributed to various dimensions. First, cultural and educational settings influence how GBL is implemented. In contexts like Thailand or the Philippines, GBL may be more common or officially supported, leading to better integration and outcomes. In contrast, in the context of this study, the use of GBL may still be emerging, with teachers needing more support and resources. Second, the learners' level and familiarity with technology also matter. Hung et al. (2020) noted that high-achieving students tend to benefit more from contextual game-based grammar activities.

In relation to the research questions, teachers reported using a diverse range of activities both traditional and technology based that catered to different learning styles and classroom contexts. In addition, the data showed that learners became more confident and accurate in their grammar usage, and teachers observed clear learning gains linked to the use of the educational games. In light of these findings, the null hypothesis which stated that GBL does not affect grammar proficiency among EFL learners is rejected. The consistent evidence from both learners and teachers suggested otherwise. The alternative hypothesis, which proposed that implementing GBL pedagogy significantly improves grammar proficiency, is accepted. The results confirm that GBL strategies, when effectively designed and integrated are likely lead to better understanding, increased motivation, and improved grammatical accuracy.

## **Conclusion**

The third chapter was devoted to the fieldwork of the study, incorporating the adopted research methodology and presenting a thorough analysis and interpretation of the data collected through a students' questionnaire and teachers' interview. The main objectives of this chapter was to explore the types of GBL activities used in grammar teaching and assess their effectiveness in improving grammar proficiency among first year EFL students. In one hand, the students' questionnaire provided insights into learners' experiences and attitudes toward GBL in grammar lessons. Most students expressed a positive perception of game-based learning as helpful method that can make grammar more understandable, enjoyable, and engaging. Responses also revealed that learners felt more motivated and confident when grammar was taught through games, which helped them better grasp rules and structures in an interactive way of teaching.

On the other hand, the teachers' interview offered qualitative data to deepen the comprehending of how GBL is implemented and perceived by grammar teachers. They confirmed that they occasionally incorporate variety of GB activities to enhance students' grammar learning and they emphasized that games foster active participation, reduce learners' anxiety, and encourage collaborative learning. Teachers also acknowledged some challenges like time constraints and classroom management, but agreed that the benefits of GBL outweigh its drawbacks. All in all, the findings from both tools complement one another and demonstrate an alignment with the study's objectives. The use of GBL in grammar classes appears to have a positive impact on learners' engagement and grammatical accuracy.

## **General Conclusion**

In the domain of English as a Foreign Language teaching, one of the ongoing challenges in how to enhance learners' engagement and improve their grammatical proficiency using effective and motivating strategies. This study aimed to explore the use of

game-based learning (GBL) approaches, specifically within grammar teaching to boost first year EFL students' engagement and ultimately improve their grammar proficiency. The purpose was to shed light on how integrating educational games into grammar teaching can positively impact students' attitudes, participation, and their learning outcomes in the classroom. The researcher attempted through this study to answer the research questions stated earlier and to check the validity of one of the suggested hypotheses.

The dissertation was composed of three major chapters. The first chapter, literature review, was divided into two Sections; the first one represented a theoretical framework which illustrates a general overview of English grammar and some other relevant concepts, as well as its importance in learning English as a foreign language. The second section discussed GBL and its role in language education. In addition, the literature review chapter presented previous studies that showed how games can help learners better understand grammar rules and stay motivated in class.

In the second chapter, research methodology, the researcher dealt with the description of research methodology used to conduct this study. It explained the research approach, the research design, the data collection tools and procedures, in addition to the population and the sampling technique. The research approach adopted was based on the mixed methods. The data was collected through a questionnaire dedicated for first year EFL students and through an interview designed for grammar teachers in the same department. This approach provided a comprehensive understanding of students' attitudes and teachers' perspectives and experiences about teaching grammar using games. The second chapter also explained how the data were analyzed to explore the use of GBL and its impact on learners' grammar proficiency and motivation.

The third chapter, results and data analysis, presented the fieldwork and data analysis of the students' questionnaire and the teachers' interview results. The finding showed that most students enjoy learning grammar through games and find them helpful in understanding grammar rules. Moreover, teachers expressed positive attitudes toward GBL implementation confirming that games would help reduce learners' anxiety, increase participation, and improve their focus on grammar. Both the students' and teachers' responses supported the idea that GBL is a useful method for teaching grammar in an EFL context.

Based on the results, the research questions were answered and the objectives of the study were achieved. Most importantly, the study allowed the researcher to reject the null

hypothesis and accept the alternative one, which supported the idea that using GBL can significantly improve EFL learners' grammar proficiency. In addition, based on the research aims that include the types of activities teachers use to teach grammar and assessing their effectiveness on EFL students' grammar proficiency, the study revealed that teachers employ a variety of game-based activities to support grammar teaching. These activities include both physical classroom games and technology-based games: board games, crosswords, online guessing games, and interactive quizzes.

Teachers reported that these games were strategically integrated into different stages of their grammar lessons such as during warm-up exercises, reinforcement tasks, and formative assessments for the sake of increasing student engagement and facilitating their comprehension. Importantly, the selection of games was intentional and based on learners' needs, lesson's objectives, and the nature of the grammar topics. Teachers emphasized that choosing activities matched students' proficiency levels and learning styles to ensure that the games contributed meaningfully to grammar teaching.

The findings indicated that game-based activities were effective in enhancing students' grammar proficiency. The students' questionnaire responses showed strong evidence that learners felt more engaged, confident, and capable of understanding grammar rules when they were taught through games. Students reported that games helped them retain grammar rules better, participate more actively, and concentrate more effectively during lessons. They also expressed that the classroom environment became less intimidating and more enjoyable, which positively influenced their learning feedback and outcomes.

Teachers also observed that students were more active, participative, and responsive when grammar was taught through games. They noted improvements in students' grammatical accuracy, confidence, and motivation. Overall, both quantitative and qualitative data indicated that GBL strategies, when appropriately designed and integrated into lessons, significantly improved learners' grammar understanding and proficiency. These results validate the use of GBL as an effective method for enhancing grammar learning in EFL contexts.

To conclude, this study confirmed that GBL is a useful and effective approach to grammar teaching. It encouraged students' motivation and helped them grasp grammar rules better and creating a more enjoyable learning environment. Therefore, teachers were encouraged to integrate such methods into their grammar lessons.

## **Implications and Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, several recommendations can be made to enhance grammar proficiency among first year EFL student through the use of GBL approaches:

### **For teachers**

- Teachers should incorporate and integrate GBL strategies into their grammar teaching because games can make learning more engaging and provide students with interactive ways to apply grammar rules.
- To overcome the challenges posed by limited experience in using games, teachers should consider participation in professional development programs focused on GBL strategies.
- Teachers should be trained in how effectively design and implement educational games which can enhance their teaching practices and increase their confidence in using games in the classroom.
- Teachers should select or design games that align with the specific grammatical challenges faced by their students because tailoring games that address common areas of difficulty in grammar will ensure that the activities are both enjoyable and educational.
- Teachers should be aware of the game-based activities that are likely to serve the objectives and students' needs in learning grammar rules.

### **For learners:**

- Learners should engage actively in GB activities that can enhance their comprehension and retention of grammatical structures.
- Students should supplement GB activities with other forms of study such as reviewing grammar rules and doing exercises.
- In GBL, mistakes are a natural part of the process. Students have to view errors as valuable learning experiences and using them as opportunities to reinforce their understanding of grammar rules through the integration of games.

## **Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research**

Although this study was carefully designed and conducted like any research, it has its limitations, which include the following:

- Some student avoided answering certain questions in the questionnaire, particularly the open-ended ones this may be due to their uncertainty, lack of interest, or inability with expressing their thoughts in writing.
- The limited duration of the study might have restricted the ability to capture the full effects of Game-Based Learning (GBL) on grammar proficiency. A longer research period could allow for a deeper understanding of how GBL influences language learning over time.
- The sample size used in this study was relatively small and limited to first-year EFL learners at a single institution. This raises concerns about the generalizability of the findings to broader populations.

Based on the limitations stated earlier, call for future inquiry is necessary:

- Future research could investigate the reasons behind the limited use of games by teachers, perceptions, and available resources. Offering professional development in game-based learning strategies could help overcome this barrier.



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# Appendices

## **Appendix 1: Students' Questionnaire**

**Dear Student,**

The current questionnaire aims to explore the effectiveness of using games in learning the language grammar. Your responses will help assess how the games-based approach influences grammar proficiency and overall engagement in this class. Please tick the appropriate answer, and provide statements whenever necessary. Be assured that your responses will be kept confidential and used only for academic research purposes. Your contribution to the accomplishment of this research study is highly appreciated.

### **Section One: General Background**

**1. Age:**

- ☐ 18 – 20
- ☐ 21 – 23
- ☐ Above 23

**2. Gender:**

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

**3. How long have you been learning English?**

- ☐ 8 years
- ☐ More than 8 years

**4. How would you rate your English grammar proficiency?**

- ☐ Beginner
- ☐ Intermediate
- ☐ Advanced

## Section Two: Experience with Game-based Learning

**5. Has your teacher ever used games to teach you English grammar at university?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

**➔ If yes, what types of games have you been engaged in?**

☐ Online platforms

☐ Group-based

☐ classroom games

☐ Board games

☐ Others

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.....

.....

**6. How often do your university teachers use games to teach grammar?**

☐ Never

☐ Rarely

☐ Sometimes

☐ Often

☐ Always

**7. Do you find learning grammar through games more engaging than traditional methods?**

☐ Strongly agree

☐ Agree

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly disagree

**8. Which aspects of grammar do you think would improve the most through games?**

- ☐ Sentence structure
- ☐ Verbs and tenses
- ☐ Parts of speech (e.g., prepositions, conjunctions, and articles)
- ☐ Punctuation

**9. What challenges do you face when using games to learn grammar at university?**

- ☐ Some games are too difficult and complicated
- ☐ I lose focus and get distracted
- ☐ Internet and technology issues
- ☐ Other

.....  
.....

### **Section Three: Perceived Effectiveness of Game-Based Learning**

**10. Do you think game-based learning has/would improve(ed) your grammar proficiency at university?**

- ☐ Significantly
- ☐ To some extent
- ☐ Not at all

**11. Do/would you feel more confident using grammar correctly after playing educational games?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ To some extent

**12. Which potential benefits of game-based learning do you agree with?**

- ☐ It makes learning fun and enjoyable
- ☐ It helps me remember grammar rules better
- ☐ It encourages me to practice more
- ☐ It engages me with the lesson
- ☐ It raises my self-confidence in using the language structures
- ☐ It motivates me to communicate and deploy the new grammar rule
- ☐ None of the above

#### **Section Four: Open-Ended Questions**

**13. What is your favourite grammar game, and why do you like it?**

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.....

**14. In what ways do you think game-based learning could be improved for learning grammar at university?**

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**15. Any additional comments or suggestions?**

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**Thank you for your participation 😊**

## **Appendix 2: Teachers' Interview**

I truly appreciate your willingness to participate in this interview that aims to explore your experiences and perspectives on using game-based learning in teaching grammar courses. Your insights will be valuable for our research. It is privileged to learn from your expertise in this area.

Thank you for generously sharing your knowledge

**Student's Name:** HAFNAOUI Rahma

### **Questions**

**Q1. Can you describe your experience in teaching grammar to first-year university EFL learners?**

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**Q2. What challenges do students typically face when learning grammar at the university level?**

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**Q3. Do you think game-based learning is more effective than traditional method for teaching grammar? If yes, in what way?**

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**Q4. Have you ever incorporated game-based learning in your grammar lessons? If yes, what types of games have you used?**

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**Q5. How do students generally respond to grammar-focused games in class?**

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**Q6. Which aspects of grammar (e.g., verb tenses, sentence structure, parts of speech, etc.) do you think would improve the most when using games?**

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.....

**Q7. Do you think game-based learning can help develop students' confidence in using grammar in real-life communication? Why or why not?**

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.....

**Q8. How do you assess whether games have successfully helped students improve their grammar proficiency?**

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**Q9. What are the biggest challenges in implementing game-based learning in grammar instruction at the university level?**

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**Q10. What improvements or supports would help make game-based learning more effective in EFL grammar teaching?**

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**Thank you for sharing your insights and experiences.**

## الملخص

تلعب القواعد النحوية دورًا هامًا في تطوير إتقان اللغة الإنجليزية لدى طلاب السنة الأولى في الجامعات الذين يدرسون اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. غالبًا ما تفشل المناهج التقليدية لتدريس القواعد النحوية، والتي تعتمد غالبًا على الشرح المباشر من المعلم والحفظ عن ظهر قلب، في إشراك المتعلمين أو تلبية احتياجاتهم التعليمية المتنوعة. في السنوات الأخيرة، أصبح التعلم القائم على الألعاب (GBL) استراتيجية مبتكرة لتعزيز القدرات اللغوية، بما في ذلك القواعد. وبناءً على ذلك، تستكشف هذه الدراسة الاستخدام المحتمل لـ GBL لتعزيز كفاءة القواعد لدى طلاب السنة الأولى في اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية بجامعة بسكرة. وتهدف إلى تحديد ما إذا كان دمج الألعاب في تدريس القواعد يمكن أن يدعم فهم المتعلمين للقواعد النحوية وحفظها وتطبيقها بشكل أكثر فعالية من الطرق التقليدية أم لا. ولهذا الغرض، أُجريت دراسة وصفية، وُجمعت البيانات من خلال استبيان شبه منظم صُمم وأُجري على عينة (ن = 70) طالبًا من طلاب السنة الأولى في اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية بجامعة محمد خيضر بسكرة، بالإضافة إلى مقابلة منظمة أُجريت مع (ن = 4) من مدرسي قواعد اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية من نفس الجامعة. أظهرت النتائج أن كلاً من المعلمين والطلاب أبدوا مواقف إيجابية تجاه استخدام الألعاب، مما يُبرز فعاليتها في تبسيط مفاهيم القواعد المعقدة وخلق بيئة تعليمية أكثر تفاعلية. ووفقًا لها، فإن دمج الألعاب في دروس القواعد يؤثر إيجابًا على إتقان الطلاب لها؛ فهي لا تزيد من دافعتهم ومشاركتهم فحسب، بل توفر أيضًا فرصًا قيّمة وتفاعلية لممارسة القواعد في سياقها. بناءً على هذه النتائج، تُقدم مجموعة من التوصيات التربوية للمعلمين والمتعلمين وواضعي المناهج، من أجل دمج مدروس للأنشطة القائمة على الألعاب في تدريس القواعد.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** تعليم القواعد النحوية، إتقان القواعد النحوية، الألعاب، النهج القائم على الألعاب،

مشاركة الطلاب