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## Level Up Your English: Exploring the Power of Online Games in Indonesian High Schools

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### Abstract

*This systematic literature review investigated the potential of online games to enhance English language learning among Indonesian high school students in the EFL (English as a Foreign Language) context. The review focused on research articles published between 2018 and 2023 that employed qualitative, quantitative, and experimental methodologies. From an initial pool of 103 articles, 18 were ultimately selected for analysis. The research explored four key areas: (1) the pedagogical implications of integrating online games into English language teaching, (2) the types of mobile game applications most suitable for this purpose, (3) the impact of online games on students' English language proficiency, and (4) the potential challenges associated with using online games in the classroom. The review revealed that online games can foster students' motivation, vocabulary acquisition, reading comprehension, writing skills, and grammatical understanding. However, the research also highlights the importance of teachers developing effective strategies for integrating online games into their curriculum to maximize their learning potential.*

**Keywords:** Emotional Intelligence, students' Achievement, Language Learning.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The globalized world necessitates proficiency in English language skills, particularly for Indonesian high school students seeking international opportunities. However, traditional classroom methods often struggle to keep pace with students' evolving learning styles and interests. Recent advancements in technology offer promising alternatives for enhancing language learning. For instance, Online games, with their interactive and engaging nature, have emerged as a potential tool for motivating students and fostering English language acquisition. E-learning can help students become more proficient in language, punctuation, grammar, and spelling, as well as give them a chance to improve their performance in speaking, writing, listening, and reading. Technology integration in the classroom also plays a critical role in facilitating the teaching and learning of English by digitalizing all content to make it available whenever needed. (Haberman et al., 2020). One of the finest methods to convey feelings, thoughts, emotions, and ideas to others is through language, which is a mode of communication. Since English is the most widely spoken foreign language worldwide, it has become the primary means of communication for individuals from all over the world. (A. Hazaymeh, 2021).

English, particularly spoken English, plays a crucial role in everyday communication around the world. However, in Indonesia, English language instruction primarily occurs within the classroom setting. This disconnects between daily life and classroom learning can leave some students struggling to develop their spoken English skills. Effective language learning requires dedicated practice, but traditional methods can sometimes lack the engagement factor needed to motivate students. Here's where technology integration becomes particularly relevant. As (Tarihoran et al., 2022) highlight, information technology currently

dominates the world. For Generation Z, technology plays a vital role in social media development, even influencing language through code-mixing in everyday conversations. This underlines the importance of adapting language learning to the current generation and their preferred learning styles. Studies have shown the potential of technology-based learning for both students and teachers. (Tarihoran & Syafuri, 2021) found that pre-service teachers experienced increased confidence and competence when incorporating technology into their learning. This highlights the adaptability of educators in embracing new approaches. Building on this foundation, online games emerge as promising avenues for foreign language learning. (Prastius et al., 2020) suggest, that these games can provide not only entertainment but also a valuable tool for language acquisition.

Playing video games online can harm a student's academic performance. Teens could easily become corrupted by this habit, particularly if they are trying to define who they are. Once someone becomes dependent on online games, they will perceive the world as consisting solely of these platforms. According to (Aybuka Yalcim, 2019), teenagers may frequently struggle to motivate themselves to manage their time, energy, and other resources to produce high-quality academic work. As per (Nur et al., 2020), students assert that their engagement in online games will facilitate their acquisition of a foreign language more enjoyably.

Students can benefit from playing online games in two ways when learning English. First off, English is the primary language in a wide range of online games. Therefore, we have to learn English before we can play it. Each online game has an objective, and all of the instructions are in English. Secondly, every game has a global server. On the global

server, we are connected to people from all over the world. In our social lives, we have to communicate with others in the same way that we interact with them. Therefore, even though this is just a game, we will need assistance to finish it; we cannot play it alone. According to (Amalia, 2023). Since smartphones evolved into one of the most dependable devices for people to use daily, A significant innovation was made by numerous creators who released a variety of games and apps for mobile devices that were designed to make teaching and learning more enjoyable.

Nisrinafatin (2020) makes the point that there are several advantages to playing online games in addition to their potential drawbacks. The way parents supervise their children at home and how well the students can manage their internet gaming time are what have made a difference. The kids must use intelligence to handle it. Online gaming could develop into a teaching tool. It is important to emphasize that the way students learn in the classroom determines their level of English proficiency. If students can learn well and balance playing online games, they will also perform well. English is an international language that we must speak because we communicate with people all over the world. It also has an impact on pupils' speaking abilities. These days, many students enjoy their hobbies as online game players – the majority approach learning English in a fun way by using online games as learning tools. The majority of students enjoy using video games as a learning medium in this age of globalization and technology, especially online games, claims (Putri Aulia et al., 2024).

This systematic literature review investigated the potential of online games to improve the English language proficiency of Indonesian high school students. The review focuses on four key areas: 1) the pedagogical implications of integrating online games into English language teaching,

2) the types of mobile game applications most suitable for this purpose, 3) the impact of online games on students' English language skills, and 4) the potential challenges associated with using online games in the classroom.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Teaching English Using Technology**

According to (Ipek & Ustunbas, 2021) that emerging technologies engage students more holistically in learning and improve the quality of teaching. Refers to (Krishnannair et al., 2022) It cannot be denied that the integration of technology brings many benefits to language learning because learning English has turned into a more practical and entertaining phenomenon through technological developments. With the advancement of technology, and the rise of mobile applications for language learning, EFL teaching has transformed in terms of teaching resources. Apart from computers, mobile phones, and their applications are also gaining benefits in EFL classes these days. A new concept, Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) has been introduced and is a relatively new method in EFL teaching.

The growth of technology has caused a paradigm shift in the educational system, particularly in classrooms. In recent years, technological tools have been used for language instruction, and research has shown that using technology improves teaching and learning experiences (Wah & Hashim, 2021) Teachers are encouraged to take advantage of technological advances and make the most use of digital materials in their classes. They are also integrating web applications into their lessons to aid in the teaching of language skills. These applications have become a ubiquitous resource for teaching or practicing language skills inside or outside of the classroom (Ipek & Ustunbas, 2021). The

rapid advancement of technology benefits teachers, particularly in terms of merging teaching and learning with games, (Reza Fadhilah et al., 2023) stated that the use of technology in education makes a positive contribution to the educational and training experience of students through the various applications created within the scope of many different courses.

## **2.2 Using Computer in Learning**

Today, kids are growing up with technology. They interact with each other through technological devices like cell phones, gaming boxes, or computing machines. One cannot dispute the fact that our lives have hugely been influenced by technology. Technology now assumes a vital place in current human societal developments. Technology is indispensable in facilitating teaching and learning (Bello Nawaila et al., 2020). This was investigated because computers have the possibility of interactivity, personalized learning experiences, and rich use of digital media to facilitate understanding and absorption of subject matter.

## **2.1. Using Mobile Phone in Learning**

Teaching needs to take into account these differences and seek out different and befitting methods by emphasizing developing the student's awareness and use of new learning strategies. (Alshaya, 2020) Identify that by adding digital games into classroom learning, educators may be able to better prepare students for their future careers. This preparation can be achieved because digital games have the potential to increase students' problem-solving skills, as well as spatial and logical reasoning. The upward mobility and learning opportunities in digital games for ELLs are multiplied in fun and engaging ways. (Elaish et al., 2019) describe that Using mobile technology further, m-learning activities can much better engage students in the learning process. Thus, m-learning

activities that use mobile technology can be more effective in driving students' interest and motivation to learn, because they can learn more actively, and responsively, and engage in the learning process. This has the potential to improve learning outcomes and strengthen students' independent learning skills.

## **2.2. Mobile Game in Learning**

According to (Elaish et al., 2019) interactive mobile games built upon impetus technology can be expected to influence the users' attitudes, support students with their studies, and increase their motivation. Interactive games designed with persuasive technology can provide additional support to students in their learning. Based on (Tirén et al., 2021) Younger people have very different minds and preferences than their parents and all preceding generations, which has led to a gap between the younger and older generations. Therefore, with the advancement of technology and the availability of increasingly widespread internet access, people's interest in digital games has increased significantly. Many people from different age groups and backgrounds are interested in playing digital games because of the ease of access and variety of game options available. In this theory, it can be seen that the use of mobile games is very much in demand by various ages, so traditional learning in the realm of online games should be a reference in learning, especially in increasing learning motivation.

Thus, through exciting and challenging gameplay, players are exposed to various communication contexts that include conversations, written texts, and instructions in English. This helps improve English listening, reading, and writing comprehension skills.

## **2.3. Pedagogical Implications of online games**

Online games have become an integral part of today's digital culture. In addition to entertainment, online games also have potential as

learning tools. Student involvement in games can reinforce learning. When students feel engaged and in control of the learning process, they are more likely to understand the material better. (Sofiana & Mubarok, 2020) said that the teacher plays an important role in directing the knowledge of students where he must build and shape his knowledge and character. To make students achieve maximum achievement in the learning process and build their motivation level, teachers must apply various teaching strategies and media.

This is related to the statement by (Ng et al., 2020) that educational mobile games can be a new learning method for students to learn independently and gain knowledge by playing these mobile games. Students can focus more on playing games than reading books. Therefore, educational mobile games can be defined as mobile games that are used for educational purposes. Based on (Elaish et al., 2019) Students enjoy the mobile app in class, and some of them state that they enjoy playing at home during their free time. Since using mobile games to support English language learning it has received little attention compared to other mobile technologies. Related to this, playing online games requires problem-solving, strategy, and critical thinking that can hone students' cognitive skills. Some online games are specifically designed to teach certain concepts so that students can learn while playing.

#### **2.4. Types of Mobile Game Applications for English Language Teaching**

The use of mobile apps in English language teaching is gaining popularity. Mobile game apps offer an interactive and engaging approach to strengthen language skills. Many studies say that types of mobile game applications can be used in teaching English to improve students' skills. The use of media in learning to read can improve the quality of learning and help students achieve learning goals better. (Sofiana & Mubarok, 2020)



stated that One of the media that can be used in teaching reading is an English game-based mobile application. The game used is under the basis of mobile-assisted language learning (MALL). Developing reading by utilizing learning media in the teaching-learning process is very important. Therefore, it is necessary to use an English game-based mobile application as a learning medium in reading classes to find a significant impact on students' reading skills.

On the other hand, the game concept and gameplay of educational mobile games are designed as well as game interfaces for the development of game prototypes. For example, the number of levels and the total missions in each level. Each level is designed with three missions. Each English word is classified by category and used in the corresponding level of play (Ng et al., 2020). The game concept focuses on vocabulary aspects as found (Elaish et al., 2019) that the vocabulary of the game is extracted from samples of actual course materials and exercises. The idea behind the game is that students can practice the target vocabulary list through a matching quiz first to familiarize themselves with the list of words. Then, students take a series of quizzes that test their knowledge of words, including the spelling of words. With this game, students will strengthen their wording and improve their communication skills (Sukenasa et al., 2020). Therefore, online games in English learning can be concluded to increase motivation, enrich vocabulary, and develop language skills and must be balanced and well-integrated into the curriculum. Because with the right approach, online games can be an effective tool in English language learning.

## **2.5. The Impact of Online Games on Developing Students' English Language Proficiency**

The use of online games in educational contexts has been increasingly recognized for its potential to enhance various learning

outcomes, including English language proficiency. Several studies have highlighted the positive effects of online games on vocabulary learning. Online games provide immersive environments where learners can encounter and practice new words in context. According to (Y. Li et al., 2024), digital educational games significantly enhance students' motivation and engagement, which in turn promotes vocabulary retention and usage. Another study found that games requiring players to solve language-related puzzles or quests help reinforce vocabulary through repetition and contextual usage, leading to better retention compared to traditional methods (Stiller & Schworm, 2019).

Online games that incorporate narrative elements and reading tasks can improve students' reading comprehension skills. Research indicates that games like role-playing and adventure games, which involve substantial reading and decision-making based on text comprehension, help students develop their reading skills in a fun and engaging way. A study by (F. Li et al., 2023) showed that students who engaged with such games demonstrated improved reading comprehension and a higher ability to infer meanings from context.

The integration of online games in language education has been found to support the development of various language skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Games that simulate real-life communication scenarios enable students to practice speaking and listening in a low-pressure environment. A study (Stiller & Schworm, 2019) found that students who regularly played online games showed improvements in their overall language proficiency, including better pronunciation, fluency, and the ability to understand spoken English in different accents and contexts.

## 2.6. Challenges Associated with Using Online Games in The Classroom

Teachers often face pedagogical challenges when integrating online games into their lessons. These include aligning game content with curriculum standards, effectively incorporating games into lesson plans, and assessing student learning outcomes. (Panmei & Waluyo, 2023) points out that many educational games are not specifically designed to align with academic standards, making it difficult for teachers to justify their use within a standardized curriculum. Additionally, teachers may lack the training and expertise needed to effectively integrate and facilitate game-based learning.

Effective use of digital games requires teachers to possess a high level of information literacy and technical skills. Many educators find it challenging to integrate game content with educational objectives due to a lack of technical knowledge and support. (Pan et al., 2021) This integration is crucial for maintaining high learner engagement and ensuring that game activities align with learning outcomes. Additionally, issues such as insufficient hardware, software, and internet access can further complicate the implementation process.

The design of educational games must balance educational content with engaging gameplay. Poorly designed games can distract students from learning objectives and lead to frustration rather than motivation. Ensuring that games are both challenging and accessible is crucial for maintaining student interest and promoting deep learning (Campos et al., 2020).

### 3. METHODS

#### 3.1. Research Design

In this systematic Literature Review, the authors explore the use of online games and their impact on high school students. The study presented can be seen from the pedagogical side, the type of online game type that is suitable for this purpose, the impact of online games on students' proficiency, and the challenges associated with using online games. With the points that have been presented, the authors review existing research that has been quantified to get the targets and objectives of this study.

Systematic review offers a well-established method for objectively evaluating and synthesizing existing research on a specific topic. Their core purpose is to provide a comprehensive picture of current knowledge and identify areas where further research is needed, often focusing on topics with significant policy implications. However, the scope of systematic reviews can vary. Some reviews might assess the effectiveness of treatments, diagnoses, or the spread of diseases (epidemiology). Others might focus on the validity of research methods, or the accuracy of measurement tools used in original studies. Despite these variations, all systematic reviews typically follow a similar eight-step process outlined by (Xiao & Watson, 2019):

1. Formulating a research question: Clearly define the specific topic you want to investigate.
2. Developing and validating a review protocol: Establishing a framework for conducting the review, including search criteria and quality assessment method.
3. Searching for relevant literature: Utilizing various academic databases and search strategies to identify relevant research articles.

4. Screening for inclusion: Carefully select studies that meet the predetermined criteria for your review.
5. Assessing the quality of studies: Evaluating the methodological rigor and potential biases within selected research.
6. Selecting relevant data: Extracting key information from the chosen studies that address your research question.
7. Analyzing and synthesizing data: Integrating findings from various studies to generate a comprehensive understanding.
8. Reporting the findings: presenting the result of your systematic review clearly and concisely.

Systematic reviews play a vital role in academic research at various levels. Students often use them to demonstrate their understanding of a particular research topic, while funding agencies frequently require them to justify research grant proposals (Siddaway et al., 2019).

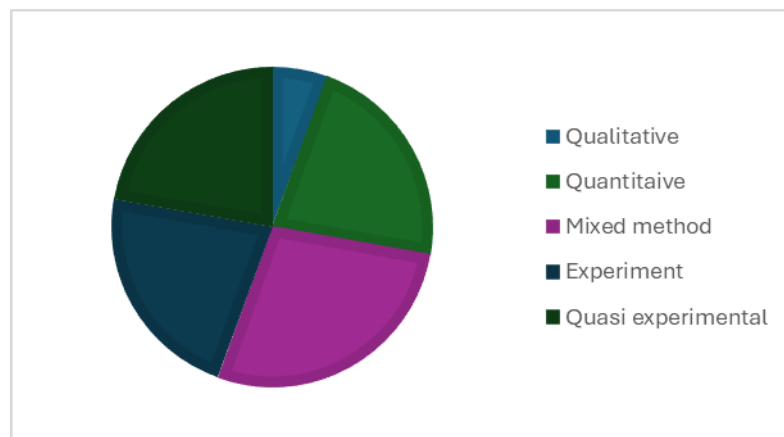
### **3.2. Database search and source selection**

Readers may easily understand the decision to include or omit certain studies because the inclusion and exclusion criteria for the systematic review are clearly described and consistently applied. A researcher applying the same criteria would probably reach a similar conclusion. Instead of adopting the author's methods, conclusions, and presumptions at face value, readers of the review are now able to evaluate them thanks to this clear approach. Additionally, this process enables additional scholars to expand and update the evaluation at a later date. (Siddaway et al., 2019).

In methods used are the Preferred Reporting Item for Systematic Reviews and the Meta-Analytic (PRISMA) method. In the database collection technique, we collect data from several validated sources, namely from Google Scholar, Eric, and Doaj. In all three we look for sources based on article keywords, namely digital games, online games,

and English teaching/learning. In this article, we use research that is not literature review-based, but research-based such as using qualitative, quantitative, mixed method, experiment, and quasi-experimental methods. Then we classified them into several criteria to be used as data in our study.

**Diagram 1.** Research method in the database.



**Table 1.** Criteria for source selection.

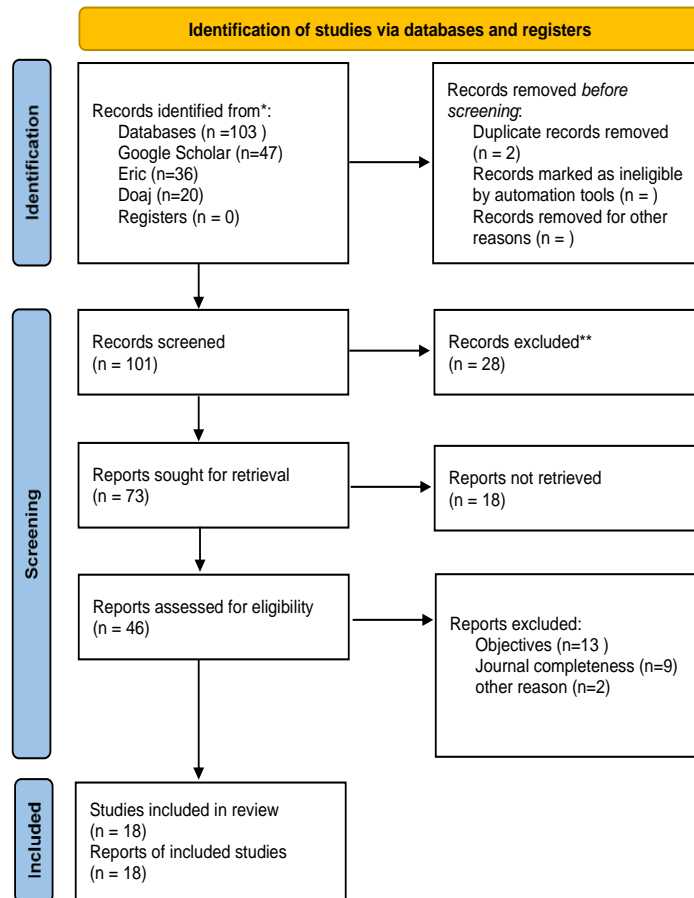
<b>Scope</b>	National and international
<b>Periode</b>	2018-2023
<b>Research focused</b>	Online/ digital games English learning
<b>Research method</b>	Research-based articles
<b>Targeted group</b>	<b>EFL classroom</b>

**Table 2.** Articles downloaded and analysis

No.	Journals	No. of articles	References
1.	Journals of English Challenge Mobile Game Application as The Media of English Language Learning	1	Vito Pratama et al. (2020)
2.	ReCALL	3	Shawn Loewen (2019)

3.	English Language Teaching	4	Nada Gamlo (2019)
4.	Participatory Educational Research	2	Kadir Kabak (2021)
5.	Bogor English Students and Teachers BEST Conference	2	Nuraeni & Winda Yanthi (2020)
6.	International Journal of Education and Digital Learning	5	Muhammad Reza Fadhillah (2023)
7.	Journal of English Language, Literature, and Teaching	2	Adil Dananjaya (2019)
8.	Educatia 21 Journal	12	Esin Hazar (2020)
9.	Jurnal Teknik Informatika	3	Devi Afriyantari et al. (2023)
10.	Knowledge Management and E-Learning	3	Ufuk Bakan et al. (2022)
11.	Arab English Journal	1	Amal Abdullah (2022)
12.	Interactive Learning Environment	5	Nezih Onal et al. (2022)
13.	Journal of Linguistic and English Teaching	2	Niluh Putu (2020)
14.	Eternal	2	Angie & Caroline (2022)
15.	Maxtesol Journal	1	David Malcolm et al. (2021)
16.	Journal of English Language Teaching and Learning (JELTL)	2	Hafidz Yudha & Berlinda Mandasari (2021)
17.	International Online Journal of Education and Teaching	2	Sezen & Huseyin (2021)
18.	Language and Art	1	Arik Diantoro et al. (2020)

**Figure. 1** PRISMA flow chart followed while selecting sources analysis in this review



#### 4. RESULTS

Perspectives on the use of online games in teaching students at the secondary school level have been examined in previous studies. There are various perspectives from the authors on this subject, there are studies that show positive aspects and benefits, but the studies also mention shortcomings, notes, and evaluations. The findings of each author are tabulated in Table 3.



**Table 3.** The findings of the research

No.	Authors	Discussions
1.	Abdullah Alhebshi, Amal and Gamlo, N (2022)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobile apps that focus on gaming characteristics have gained positive attitudes from EFL learners as tools for English vocabulary learning.</li> <li>• Gamified mobile apps have been integrated into English language teaching and learning due to their positive impact on students' attitudes and performance.</li> </ul>
2.	Esin Hazar (2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The mean score of the children in the experimental group was significantly higher than those in the control group, indicating the positive effect of using digital games in teaching English vocabulary to children.</li> <li>• Studies carried out with young learners of English as a foreign language show that using digital games during classes has a positive impact on the acquisition of vocabulary.</li> <li>• The use of online game learning outside of the classroom can pose potential negative problems.</li> </ul>
3.	Ufuk Bakan et al. (2020).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaboration and synchronization of actions are key factors in winning a round or passing an episode of a game.</li> <li>• The conversation between game characters plays a crucial role in the accomplishment of game objectives.</li> </ul>
4.	Putri, D. A.P., Priyawati, D., Arrizka, N. K., Khasanah, F. S., & Litaswari, I. (2023).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Majority of children showed an increase in scores in answering sets of questions about vocabulary that were given.</li> <li>• This Endugame application has a significant impact on children to enhance their vocabulary in English, especially in terms of fruits and animals.</li> <li>• The use of online games without teacher supervision also has a negative impact because it can reduce involvement in educational activities.</li> </ul>
5.	Dananjaya, A., & Kusumastuti, D. (2019).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Playing games is fun, decreases learning achievement, and could learn some thoughts by playing games online.</li> <li>• Playing Game online is spending a lot of time.</li> </ul>
6.	Arik Diantoro, Tri Mulyati, Abdul Halim (2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The English teacher could use Mobile</li> </ul>

		<p>Legends in Teaching Vocabulary mastery.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students suggested using Mobile Legend to increase their vocabulary.</li> </ul>
7.	David Malcolm et al. (2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Playing mobile games increased significantly students' pronunciation skills.</li> <li>• Mobile gameplay can be considered an effective instructional tool.</li> <li>• Can be used as an alternative resource in the EFL class.</li> <li>• Wifi and Bluetooth setting It should be noted in this type of learning.</li> </ul>
8.	Angie S. Suryali, & Croline V. Katemba (2022).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The adaption of GTM utilizing the Crossword Puzzle has a good and statistically significant impact on vocabulary.</li> <li>• Teachers could use this Crossword Puzzle Link app to teach English.</li> </ul>
9.	Sezen Korkmaz, & Huseyim Oz (2021).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using Kahoot has given a significant increase in students' reading competency.</li> <li>• There were positive attitudes toward the Kahoot game.</li> <li>• Using Kahoot fosters students' motivation and their vocabulary.</li> </ul>
10.	Hafidz Tresna Yudha, & Berlinda Mandasari (2021).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using games online in learning English is very effective.</li> <li>• Using games matches the characteristics of learners.</li> <li>• Encourage students to have long-term memory in vocabulary by using games online in ELT.</li> </ul>
11.	Nuraeni, & Winda Yanthi (2020).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cake application is an excellent app to be used for speaking classes.</li> </ul>
12.	Fadhilah, Andriyani, & Putra (2023)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online games especially Kahoot are effective in increasing vocabulary memorization skills for teachers in MGMP or KKG forums.</li> <li>• Online games have an advantageous side like bringing happiness and, a joyful atmosphere and making teachers feel comfortable</li> <li>• The barriers of online games are lacking the ability to operate technology, difficulty finding qualified tutors leading the forum, lack of resources, subject fit, students' apathy, and classroom dynamic.</li> </ul>
13.	Kadir Kabak (2021).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This method can enable us to obtain more beneficial results than the</li> </ul>

		<p>traditional method in increasing the motivation and learning of students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The digital content design and game development study is effective in creating positive attitudes toward the English course and computer-aided teaching.</li> <li>• The innovative method used in this study is a beneficial application that will positively affect the academic achievement and attitudes of the students, provided that the necessary preparations are made for all stakeholders of the education.</li> </ul>
14.	Nada Gamlo (2019).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The majority of students believed using MGBLLAs was beneficial as a way to motivate them to learn English and an interesting and memorable experience.</li> </ul>
15.	Iryanti Setyadharma, & Nugraha (2020).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The English challenge game application is quite accepted by the community, especially junior high school students who are still studying English language material in their schools.</li> </ul>
16.	Sukenasa et al (2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The implementation of technology in language learning through educational games is important to have effective teaching practices in achieving learning objectives.</li> <li>• The use of game scenarios in real-life learning contexts can immerse learners in situations that encourage students to have a better understanding and remember vocabulary words through social interaction.</li> <li>• The use of role-playing as an activity in games also helps students memorize vocabulary which affects learning achievement.</li> </ul>
17.	Önal et al., (2022)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The mobile game called SOS Table developed within the scope of this study has a positive effect on participant participation in Mobile Learning, Motivation in English Language Learning, and Mobile Learning Attitudes in English.</li> <li>• It was found that participants positively influenced the Motivation and Attitude of English Mobile Learning in the Acceptance of Mobile Learning Tools, in English Language Learning.</li> </ul>

18.	Shawn Loewen et al. (2019).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Duolingo is flexible and shows positive aspects such as students' motivation</li> <li>• The language learning features in it are GTM, listening, speaking, and language structure.</li> <li>• Note that the pedagogical shortcomings such as the reliance on decontextualized grammar translation and audiolingual exercises can be adapted if developers consider ISLA theory and research.</li> <li>• There needs to be more meaning-focused or task-based activities so that learners engage in the language beyond the language.</li> </ul>
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## 5. DISCUSSION

### 5.1 The Pedagogical Implications of Integrating Online Games into English Language Teaching

In the study of Mobile Games Based Language Learning Apps (MGBLLA) to support L2 students' language learning and increase their enthusiasm, teachers should incorporate MGBLLAs into their lessons and encourage their use. To obtain effective learning outcomes, these applications should undoubtedly be chosen based on the needs and level of the students as well as their interests (Gamlo, 2019). The results of the study (Kabak & Korucu, 2021) state that in learning computer-based games online, teachers have to adapt and be full of a lot of practice to plunge into the world of online games.

For them to decide which games would be appropriate for their educational setting and when to use them, teachers must be aware of the advantages and worth of games in the classroom. Gamification, or game-based tactics, has the same potential to enlighten, inspire, engage, and educate when used appropriately as everything else. The research's most important educational implication is that, because the material that must

be presented in class might occasionally be overwhelming, it is important to encourage students to read more books outside of class this statement conducted by the result of the research (Korkmaz & Öz, 2021). Most problems stem from their lack of interest rather than from something that needs more attention.

Furthermore, other result research states that English teachers should be given support to effectively design gamification to naturally build competence among students in learning. This is so that students have a high level of motivation in learning English. If English language learning based on online games is effective, it will provide an atmosphere of comfort, enjoyment, fun, and interest between both teachers and students (Reza Fadhilah et al., 2023). Based on the results of the study, (Yanthi, 2020) states that teachers need to find appropriate learning strategies to increase student motivation and their ability to learn English. One of them is to use cake application which is considered an excellent medium, especially for learning speaking skills. The results of research conducted on high school students in Lampung (Yudha & Mandasari, 2021) stated that they need enjoyable learning techniques to acquire a new language, one of which is online games. Therefore, teachers need to make English learning more desirable by presenting the right vocabulary exercises to avoid boredom.

On the pedagogical side, learning English using online games is considered effective according to some of the studies that have been presented above, because teaching English based on online games eliminates boredom in students while learning, increases student learning motivation, improves students' language proficiency and with online games also students can facilitate by learning independently. Nevertheless, there are some notes in this regard. Because teaching

English using online games cannot be done without supervision from teachers. Teachers in this case are required to understand the concept of teaching through online games and do a lot of research about the disadvantages and advantages of online games used. Likewise with the adjustment of teaching materials, in achieving the necessary language competence, teachers must also adjust the material that is suitable for the use of online games. So, teacher creativity is needed here by being able to combine English teaching using online games with the students' proficiency needs.

### **5.2 The Types of Mobile Game Applications Most Suitable English for This Purpose**

In an increasingly digital world, mobile game applications have emerged as valuable tools in supporting English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. These applications offer a range of interactive and engaging experiences tailored to enhance various aspects of language acquisition. The review identified several types of mobile game applications supporting EFL learning, including vocabulary-building games, grammar practice games, listening and speaking games, and reading comprehension games, each type of game offers unique features and pedagogical approaches tailored to enhance different aspects of language acquisition.

Most of the games used in these studies as vocabulary-building games (n=10;55%) that is Quizziz, BPVS, Crossword Puzzle, Mobile Legend (n=2;11%), Edugame, EBA (education-based adventure), Garden Island board game, Kahoot, learn English vocabulary pop quiz. At the same time, speaking and listening building games (n=6;33%) are MMORPG (11%), SOS table, First Person Shooter, Spaceteam, and Duolingo. Games that improve reading comprehension and writing (n=5; 27%) are game books: Great Reader, Duolingo, Kahoot, FPS (First Person Shooter), and

MMORPG (Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games). In these studies, there is only one game that improves understanding of grammar namely game to learn English- English Tracker (5%).

Vocabulary-building games employ techniques such as word puzzles and flashcards to reinforce vocabulary acquisition, while grammar practice games focus on grammar rules and usage through interactive exercises. Listening and speaking games facilitate pronunciation practice and communication skills development through audio-based activities and role-playing scenarios. Reading comprehension games provide learners with interactive stories and comprehension exercises to improve reading skills and language comprehension.

### **5.3 The Impact of Online Games on Students' English Language Proficiency**

This section contains several findings from studies on how online games affect students' ability to master English, including:

The result was conducted in the research of (Önal et al., 2022) that students can repeat sentence structures, tenses, and high-frequency words in everyday language with the help of the SOS Table app, which was created for use on mobile devices. Students are supposed to use this application to create positive, negative, or correct sentences using words in a race against time. Future research can look at how this game affects other psychometric traits like achievement, perseverance, and English-speaking abilities.

Online role-playing games with a large number of players (MMORPGs). In MMORPGs, the universal language is used to practice writing and speaking in communities where English is not the native tongue. These games give players lots of opportunities for interaction, and the game itself could be seen as a source for learning the English

language. They help players develop their vocabulary, particularly with everyday expressions, in addition to honing their speaking and writing abilities this statement is based on the research of (Bakan et al., 2022). Another factor influencing this application is that massively multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPGs) create productive settings in which users can hone their basic language abilities in a variety of contexts without experiencing anxiety and enhance their affective responses, such as motivation and interest. Throughout the game, learners can assess their language skills through communication with native English speakers.

Suryali & Katemba, (2023) their research posits that students can effectively utilize GTM to expand their vocabulary by using crossword puzzles, as the puzzles have a significant impact on the student's vocabulary growth. However, they stated in a different article that playing Mobile Legends is helping them increase their vocabulary. In addition to having fun, this game teaches the students English. This statement is reinforced by the agreement of other researchers with equal research objectives because the results of research conducted by (Dananjaya & Kusumastuti, 2019) pointed to the same point, he argued as follows: "Aside from that, playing games online has benefits like creating a happy environment, making teachers feel at ease, and bringing happiness."

Other research results sourced from (Gamlo, 2019) stated "The Edugame application is another online game that we discovered to have a big impact on students' English proficiency. It helps kids improve their vocabulary in English, particularly when it comes to fruits and animals. The Garden Island Game is one tool that can help elementary school pupils increase their vocabulary and become highly motivated to learn. Moreover, how MGBLLA integration affects the motivation of Saudi EFL



learners and how valuable they think they are to learning English". This research examines the application of digital games for learning in the Saudi Arabian context of English as a foreign language (EFL) and highlights the effect of MGBLLAs on raising the motivation of EFL students in higher education.

Another study that states the influence of online games on students' language skills is research from (Yanthi, 2020) in its research states that cake applications can support students' English learning in speaking skills. In this application, students do not need to worry about their mistakes in speaking because in this application students provide direct feedback. This is proven because, in research conducted on high school students, they get active and fun learning.

In terms of language processing through online games, research has also been conducted (Yudha & Mandasari, 2021) where in the study 74% of students often play online games on their smartphones, 30 respondents from those who are classified as often playing online games using English in the games they play or worth 74% and the remaining 24% use Indonesian. Furthermore, the researcher underlined the question of "whether online games in English increase your vocabulary?" 74% of students answered yes, and the remaining 24% answered no. This is because students tend to use their creativity and imagination in their activities as well as playing games. Therefore, students who agree with the statement are motivated to learn.

The studies that have been mentioned state that the impact of online games can explore student learning motivation, and improve English proficiency such as language acquisition, writing skills, reading, grammar mastery, and speaking. The use of online games can also make students

think more creatively, create relaxing learning, or avoid their boredom in ELT while also facilitating students' independent learning.

#### **5.4 The Potential Challenges Associated with Using Online Games in The Classroom**

This point examines several articles in which there are problems using online games to support learning EFL, one of the most frequent technical challenges such as slow or unstable internet connections can certainly interfere with students' learning experience in using online games. A study conducted by (Kabak & Korucu, 2021) shows that the problem of internet disconnection is the most frequently mentioned with the use of gamification methods, including online games. Similarly, research has been conducted. They, (2021) also reveals that there is a possibility of technological barriers to using Spaceteam games effectively in the classroom. This barrier arises from the need for a stable WiFi or Bluetooth signal for students to play games, which may not always be available in all classroom settings. In terms of device accessibility and internet connection, it is also needed and an important issue that must be considered to achieve effective use of online games and support learning EFL.

In addition, the relevance of language content in the game must certainly be ensured to suit the needs of students' English learning which is no less important. Research (Putri et al., 2023) states that the lack of innovative teaching materials and books for early childhood English learning causes reduced motivation and confidence in learning English also students will have difficulty understanding English vocabulary caused by a shrinkage of innovation in learning media resulting in boredom, This study also mentions that the negative impact of excessive smartphone use for less useful activities, such as playing online games, leads to reduced involvement in educational activities. Another study

(Hazar, 2020) that also highlights digital game-based language learning conducted outside the classroom shows potential problems with the limited integration of digital games into English classrooms, which can hinder their effectiveness in supporting EFL. Sometimes students perceive learning as a burden when using flexible learning platforms, as was also found in research (Loewen et al., 2019) that found that despite the flexibility of learning platforms, learning is sometimes seen as a burden, and using Duolingo whenever free time is available often contrasts with personal desires, indicating problems with learner motivation and persistence. Other game problems are problems that occur in the context of using block-based applications to design games in English, as well as time constraints faced by some students in participating effectively in online game design activities, such as research (Kabak & Korucu, 2021), states that lack of practical knowledge, students will experience technical and usage problems due to lack of practical knowledge and time constraints when designing games in English with this block-based application that will make some students feel that their time is not enough to engage in game design activities fully with that, It shows that the potential challenge in integrating online game-based learning into the curriculum is without adequate allocation of time and support for students to participate effectively.

The integration of games with existing English learning curricula is also a challenge in optimizing the use of online games as a support tool. However, the other articles do not address concerns regarding the effectiveness of online gaming applications in supporting EFL learning and do not explicitly mention any issues related to online gaming applications to support EFL. It is important to note that the absence of explicit discussion in the article may not represent the actual problems

identified in the study. However, some points reflect the challenges and difficulties in learning English that online game applications want to overcome. The article shows that traditional methods of learning English may not be effective for all of these people (Pratama et al., 2020) mentioned that many people find it difficult to learn English, especially in understanding tenses and distinguishing between writing, reading, and pronunciation. Learners may have difficulty pronouncing English words correctly, which is an important aspect of language learning. The article (Gamlo, 2019) does not discuss the comparison of the use of online game applications with traditional teaching methods. This lack of comparison makes it difficult to assess the effectiveness of online gaming apps about other instructional approaches to EFL learning, also comparing the impact of online gaming apps to traditional methods can provide valuable insight into their efficacy and potential limitations. Finally, the importance of activating student engagement following the learning objectives set so that learning outcomes can be achieved more effectively.

## 6. CONCLUSION

This systematic literature review explored the potential of online game-based learning for enhancing English language proficiency among Indonesian high school students in EFL contexts. The review examined existing research on the pedagogical implications of online games, suitable game types, their impact on student learning, and potential challenges associated with their use in the classroom. The findings highlight the potential of online games to foster student motivation, vocabulary acquisition, reading comprehension, writing skills, and grammatical understanding. They offer engaging and interactive environments that can make language learning more enjoyable and effective. However, the review also underscores the importance of teacher

involvement in selecting and integrating online games strategically into the curriculum. Teachers require training and support to utilize these games effectively and address potential challenges such as limited internet access, and lack of integration strategies for integrating online games into different EFL teaching approaches. Overall, this review suggests that online games can be a valuable tool in the EFL classroom, but their success depends on thoughtful implementation and teacher guidance.

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