

Research Article

**AN ENHANCEMENT OF THIRD GRADE STUDENTS' ENGLISH VOCABULARY
LEARNING ACHIEVEMENT AND STUDENTS LEARNING SATISFACTION THROUGH
COMMUNICATIVE GAMES AT PATTAMA DARUNWIT SCHOOL**

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Abstract

This study examined the efficacy of communicative games in enhancing English vocabulary learning achievement among third-grade students in Kamphaeng Phet, Thailand. The sample consisted of 36 students selected through cluster sampling. Grounded in language acquisition and pedagogy theories, this research adopts a mixed-methods approach, employing pre-test and post-test assessments to measure vocabulary learning gains. Additionally, a student satisfaction questionnaire was used to evaluate students' perceptions of the learning experience. Results indicate significant improvements in vocabulary learning achievement following instructional lessons structured around communicative games. Students expressed overall satisfaction with the learning content, methods, and classroom atmosphere, highlighting the relevance and engagement of communicative games in enhancing language learning outcomes. While variability in individual experiences was noted, the findings underscore the potential of communicative games as effective tools for promoting language acquisition and proficiency. This study contributed to the growing body of literature on innovative pedagogical approaches and emphasizes the importance of interactive and engaging activities in language education. Moving forward, further research and application of communicative games were considered essential for refining language teaching practices and improving students' English language proficiency.

Keywords: Vocabulary Learning Achievement, Students Learning Satisfaction, Communicative Games

Introduction

English has become a global language, widely recognized and used across different nations. It serves as a lingua franca, bridging diverse communities and playing a crucial role in fields such as science, aviation, and international business. Its prevalence in digital media and online platforms further highlights its importance. In Thailand, a member of influential regional bodies like ASEAN, English holds official language status, emphasizing its importance in the education system. The critical role of English proficiency in the Thai service industry has underscored the high demand for skills in listening and speaking. Across ASEAN countries, English is similarly prioritized as the first foreign language and often introduced at the primary level, reflecting its significance for regional integration and global competitiveness (Emilia et al., 2025). Despite varying outcomes due to teacher proficiency and resource disparities, English remains essential in education policies throughout Southeast Asia, promoting both economic development and cross-cultural communication.

Vocabulary learning achievement, which encompasses both vocabulary retention and oral ability, was pivotal in the process of language acquisition. Effective strategies, such as spaced repetition and contextual learning, were shown to improve vocabulary outcomes (Kang, 2016). Wallace and Leong (2020) highlighted the positive correlation between intrinsic motivation and vocabulary learning achievement, demonstrating that students with strong internal motivation tended to learn more effectively. Additionally, meaningful learning surpassed rote memorization, as emphasized by Badr and Abu-Ayyash (2019), which underscored the need for educators to employ engaging and diverse teaching strategies.

Oral ability, as a critical component of vocabulary learning achievement, involved elements such as pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary usage, grammar, and comprehension. Theoretical frameworks, including Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development and Krashen's Input Hypothesis, emphasized the social and cognitive dimensions of oral language development. These aspects highlighted the role of vocabulary knowledge, confidence, and fluency in effective communication. Research underscored the importance of innovative pedagogical strategies, such as interactive speaking activities and communicative competence-focused methods, for enhancing oral proficiency (Nation & Newton, 2020; Savignon, 2018).

Despite Thailand's commitment to English education, significant challenges persist, as reflected in the EF English Proficiency Index (2024), which ranked Thailand 106th out of 116 countries. Deficiencies in vocabulary learning achievement had implications beyond academics, affecting Thailand's global image. Systemic issues within the educational framework, including unengaging lessons and uninspiring textbooks, exacerbated these challenges (Yuh, 2021). This called for innovative teaching interventions to address these gaps.

Communicative games emerged as a promising solution, offering engaging and interactive approaches to language learning. These games, such as role-play, board games, and word games, were known to enhance vocabulary learning achievement and students' learning satisfaction by actively involving learners in meaningful language practice (Dewi et al., 2017). Rooted in social interactionist theories, communicative games provided

immersive learning experiences that empowered students to use language effectively in real-world contexts (Namaziandost & Nasri, 2019).

Student satisfaction played a crucial role in enhancing vocabulary learning outcomes. Research by Yu (2023) and Thwe (2024) highlighted that when students were engaged and motivated, their learning improved significantly. Gamified learning tools and communicative games created enjoyable, interactive environments that not only boosted students' confidence but also fostered intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, and participation. These methods, which encouraged active involvement and a sense of autonomy, were shown to improve both vocabulary retention and oral proficiency. Thus, integrating fun and purposeful activities into the learning process significantly enhanced student satisfaction and contributed to better language acquisition outcomes.

This study aimed to address these challenges by exploring the potential of communicative games in improving vocabulary learning achievement and students' learning satisfaction. With a focus on overcoming Thailand's persistent deficiencies in English proficiency, the study sought to contribute to the growing literature on innovative pedagogical approaches. By leveraging the unique benefits of communicative games, this research offers a promising pathway for improving English education in Thailand, emphasizing the importance of interactive, engaging, and student-centered learning experiences.

Research Objectives

1. To study students' English vocabulary learning achievement before and after learning through communicative games.
2. To study students' satisfaction with the use of communicative games.

Literature Review

Vocabulary learning achievement: Vocabulary learning achievement encompassed both vocabulary retention and oral proficiency, serving as the foundation of effective communication and language learning. It was rooted in principles of meaningful engagement, learner motivation, and communicative competence. Theoretical frameworks such as Ebbinghaus' work on memory retention (1913), Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1985), the spacing effect, and schema theory (Anderson & Pichert, 1978) emphasized the importance of timely reinforcement and contextual learning. Studies by Wallace and Leong (2020) highlighted how intrinsic motivation positively impacted retention rates, while Enayat and Derakhshan (2021) underscored the relationship between vocabulary size, depth, and speaking abilities. Pedagogical approaches have shifted away from rote memorization toward dynamic, learner-centered strategies that fostered deeper cognitive processing. Meaningful learning, as supported by Badr and Abu-Ayyash (2019), helped students connect new vocabulary to prior knowledge, promoting long-term retention and oral fluency. Additionally, Suzuki and Kormos (2020) emphasized the correlation between vocabulary knowledge and speaking fluency, further illustrating the interconnected nature of vocabulary retention and oral proficiency.

Communicative Language Teaching: The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach emerged in response to traditional grammar-centric methods, prioritizing meaningful communication, fluency, and spontaneity. Daba et al. (2022) demonstrated that vocabulary strategy training—particularly memory-based techniques—significantly enhanced vocabulary retention and supported CLT’s emphasis on learner autonomy and meaningful use of language. Influenced by Chomsky’s theory of universal grammar and Hymes’ communicative competence, CLT emphasized authentic communication and fluency over rigid grammatical accuracy. Aliqulova et al. (2023) reaffirmed CLT’s effectiveness in promoting student-centered learning through real-life scenarios. Task-Based Learning (TBL) and the Presentation, Practice, and Production (PPP) framework aligned with CLT’s focus on communicative competence, offering practical methods for integrating language skills and fostering authentic interaction. Additionally, game-based learning, explored by Tabassum and Naveed (2024), enhanced vocabulary retention and oral ability through gamification and interactive digital tools. These strategies collectively emphasize real-world communication, active engagement, and adaptability, ensuring that language learners acquired the skills needed for meaningful and effective communication.

Communicative Games: Communicative games play a crucial role in language education by creating engaging and interactive learning environments. These activities emphasized language function and speaking skills through enjoyable, rule-based scenarios. Role-playing games (RPGs), as highlighted by Sarwat et al. (2023), immersed students in lifelike situations, significantly improving vocabulary retention and oral proficiency. Board games, as studied by Wong and Yunus (2021), provided structured platforms for practicing grammar, pronunciation, and fluency, while promoting decision-making and active participation. Word games, investigated by Marzuki and Kuliahana (2021), were particularly effective in developing vocabulary and speaking skills through enjoyable and adaptable activities. The theoretical foundations of communicative games lay in Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and Social Interactionist Theory. SDT emphasized motivation through autonomy, competence, and relatedness, while the Interaction Hypothesis posited that meaningful communication drove language acquisition. Namaziandost and Nasri (2019) emphasized the role of social interaction in fostering speaking proficiency, reducing anxiety, and improving confidence. By combining motivation and social interaction, communicative games enhanced vocabulary retention, oral ability, and overall language proficiency.

Students’ Learning Satisfaction: Students’ learning satisfaction is intrinsically linked to engaging and meaningful language activities that fostered motivation and confidence. Approaches that prioritized student-centered learning, such as CLT, TBL, and game-based methods, contributed to a positive learning experience. Research by Aliqulova et al. (2023) demonstrated that student-centered learning increased engagement and satisfaction by giving learners more control over their learning process. Similarly, Namaziandost and Nasri (2019) found that communicative games enhanced satisfaction by reducing speaking anxiety and creating opportunities for meaningful interaction. Marzuki and Kuliahana (2021) highlighted the enjoyment students experienced when playing word games, which led to higher motivation and improved retention. Furthermore, Wong and Yunus (2021) emphasized that interactive learning methods, such as board games, promoted collaboration and engagement, further enhancing satisfaction. By integrating interactive, student-focused strategies and

emphasizing meaningful communication, educators fostered a sense of achievement, motivation, and enjoyment, thereby increasing students' learning satisfaction and long-term success.

In conclusion, the literature highlighted the strong connection between vocabulary learning achievement, oral proficiency, and students' learning satisfaction. Vocabulary retention and speaking skills were best developed through communicative, task-based, and game-based methods that emphasized meaningful interaction and active student engagement. These approaches, grounded in theories like Krashen's Input Hypothesis and schema theory, showed that contextual learning enhanced both vocabulary acquisition and speaking abilities. Moreover, student-centered strategies helped to foster motivation, reduce anxiety, and create a positive, enjoyable learning environment, ultimately leading to greater student satisfaction and long-term success.

Conceptual Framework

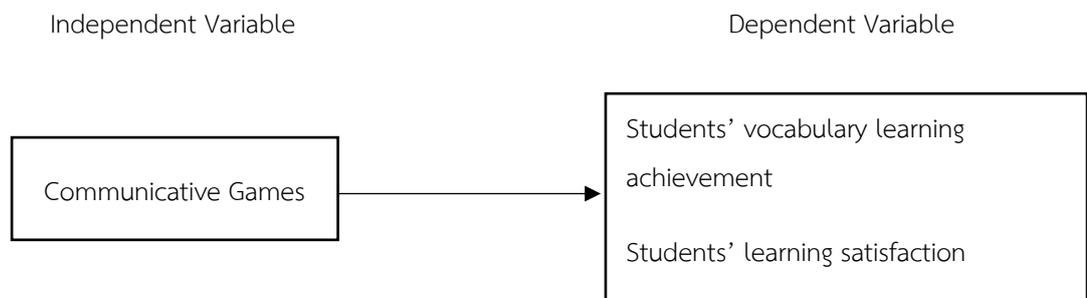


Figure 1 Research Conceptual Framework

Research Methodology

The study was conducted with grade-3 students Kamphaeng Phet, Thailand, with a sample of 36 students selected through cluster sampling. This study employed both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, including lesson plans, vocabulary achievement pre-test and post-test, and a student satisfaction survey. The lesson plans, designed in accordance with the Basic Educational Core English Curriculum 2008, covered topics such as animal names, body parts, diets, food benefits, habitats, and movements. These lessons, each introducing approximately 10 new vocabulary words, were structured using the Presentation, Practice, and Production (PPP) method and incorporated communicative games like bingo, memory games, team tournaments, musical chairs, and charades to reinforce vocabulary. The lesson plans were reviewed by an academic advisor and evaluated by three experts, whose feedback led to revisions for accuracy and relevance. Vocabulary achievement tests were designed based on the vocabulary learned in these games, with a pre-test and post-test consisting of two parts: identifying pictures and constructing sentences using the vocabulary. Tests were administered individually outside the classroom to maintain confidentiality, and students participated in games with a teacher's assistant during testing. Additionally,

a satisfaction questionnaire assessed the impact of the games on vocabulary learning achievement, using a 5-point scale to measure student feedback on various aspects of the learning experience.

Data Collection

The data collection focused on evaluating the effectiveness of a teaching intervention in improving students' vocabulary learning achievement in English. The study followed a two-phase approach, beginning with a pre-test to establish baseline proficiency levels. A six-lesson teaching intervention, totaling 12 hours and incorporating communicative games, was then implemented to enhance vocabulary retention and oral communication skills. Following the intervention, a post-test, mirroring the pre-test, was administered to measure progress. Both tests required students to identify vocabulary related to images and construct sentences, with points awarded for accuracy and meaningful usage. To ensure confidentiality, tests were administered individually outside the classroom. Additionally, a student satisfaction form was included to capture qualitative feedback on their experiences and perceptions of the intervention. Collaborative oversight and expert validation strengthened the reliability of the data collection process.

Results

This section presented the results divided into two parts based on the research objectives. The first part addressed the effectiveness of communicative games in enhancing vocabulary learning by examining changes in students' vocabulary knowledge before and after participating in game-based lessons. The second part focused on students' satisfaction with the use of communicative games, as measured through a satisfaction questionnaire. Together, these results provided insight into both the learning outcomes and the students' perceptions of the learning experience.

1. Vocabulary Learning Achievement Before and After Using Communicative Games

Table 1 Vocabulary learning achievement pre-test and post-test

Assessment	\bar{X}	S.D.	d	S.D. _d	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre-test	3.75	1.79	4.30	1.24	21.46	0.000*
Post-test	8.05	1.31				

*Statistically significant at the .05 level

The findings reveal a significant improvement in students' vocabulary learning from the pre-test to the post-test. The mean pre-test score ($\bar{X} = 3.75$, S.D. = 1.79) increased by 4.30 points (S.D._d = 1.24) in the post-test. This improvement is statistically significant at the .05 level, as indicated by a t-value of 21.46 ($p < 0.000$). The post-test mean score ($\bar{X} = 8.05$, S.D. = 1.31) demonstrated substantial progress, underscoring the efficacy of communicative games in fostering vocabulary learning achievement.

2. Students' Satisfaction with Communicative Games in English Learning

Table 2 Results of studying students' satisfaction with communicative games

	N = 36		Level of satisfaction
	\bar{X}	S.D.	
1. The way we learned was clear, fun, and easy to understand.	4.64	0.54	Highest
2. I improved my speaking skills and became more proficient in using English effectively	4.39	0.77	High
3. What we learned was both relevant to our needs and engaging, making our learning experience enjoyable and effective.	4.63	0.59	Highest
4. The games we played helped me remember words and improve my speaking skills.	4.64	0.54	Highest
5. We had the opportunity to engage in conversations and practice our English language skills through the interactive games.	4.53	0.65	Highest
6. The classroom was nice and calm, and I understood how to join in easily because the rules were clear.	4.72	0.51	Highest
7. The materials we used in class were well-suited to what we were learning and helped us a lot.	4.64	0.72	Highest
8. Communicative games improved my ability to recall English words and enhance my speaking skills.	4.67	0.59	Highest
General Total	4.61	0.32	Highest

The results of the student satisfaction questionnaire, as summarized in Table 2, demonstrated high levels of satisfaction with the use of communicative games in the language learning process. Satisfaction scores were interpreted on a 5-point Likert scale, with averages of 4.5 or above categorized as "Highest" and scores between 4.0 and 4.49 categorized as "High." Across all evaluated aspects, students reported strong positive responses, with scores consistently in the "High" or "Highest" range, indicating the effectiveness and engagement of the teaching intervention.

The highest-rated aspect was the classroom atmosphere, which scored an average of 4.72 (S.D. = 0.51), reflecting a calm and organized environment where clear rules made participation easy. The effectiveness of communicative games in improving vocabulary recall and speaking skills followed closely, with an average score of 4.67 (S.D. = 0.59). Lessons were praised for their clarity and fun delivery (\bar{X} = 4.64, S.D. = 0.54), as were the materials used, which aligned well with learning objectives (\bar{X} = 4.64, S.D. = 0.72). Other highly rated areas included content relevance and engagement (\bar{X} = 4.63, S.D. = 0.59), general satisfaction (\bar{X} = 4.61, S.D. = 0.32), and stimulating learning activities (\bar{X} = 4.58, S.D. = 0.47). Opportunities for practice through the games also received a strong positive rating (\bar{X} = 4.53, S.D. = 0.65).

Overall, the consistently high satisfaction scores reflect the success of communicative games in creating an engaging and effective learning experience, reinforcing their value in enhancing vocabulary learning and language acquisition.

Discussion

1. Vocabulary Learning Achievement Before and After Using Communicative Games

The findings demonstrated a significant improvement in students' vocabulary learning achievement from the pre-test to the post-test, with the increase in scores statistically significant at the .05 level. This result highlighted the effectiveness of combining Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), the Presentation, Practice, Production (PPP) model, and game-based approaches. The PPP model provided a structured sequence in which vocabulary was introduced clearly, practiced systematically, and applied meaningfully, enabling students to internalize and retain new words more effectively. Communicative games, rooted in CLT principles, further enhanced the learning process by fostering authentic communication and active participation in real-life scenarios. The findings of the study were aligned with Rumbouw's (2021) research on CLT and vocabulary, which showed that integrating multiple language skills and contextualized communication enhanced vocabulary learning achievement. These games created an engaging and dynamic classroom atmosphere, transforming vocabulary practice into an enjoyable experience. The repetitive exposure to vocabulary within meaningful contexts reinforced retention through the spacing effect, which contributed to long-term learning. By addressing the limitations of traditional methods, such as rote memorization and translation, and by promoting active engagement and real-world application, the integration of these strategies enhanced vocabulary retention and oral communication skills. These outcomes showcased the potential of this combined approach as a holistic method of language instruction. Additionally, Katemba's (2022) research supported these findings by showing that the PPP model significantly improved vocabulary achievement, reinforcing the effectiveness of a structured and interactive learning approach in promoting long-term vocabulary retention.

2. Students' Satisfaction with Communicative Games in English Learning

The consistently high levels of student satisfaction highlight the effectiveness of the teaching approach in fostering an engaging learning environment. Students found the games clear, relevant, and interactive, which enhanced their motivation and participation. These findings align with Yuh (2021), who emphasized the shortcomings of traditional language instruction in maintaining student engagement. By incorporating communicative games into the lessons, the study introduced a sense of fun and enjoyment that transformed the classroom into a more positive and stimulating environment. The competitive and interactive aspects of the games likely contributed to students' sense of accomplishment, which further reinforced their learning. High satisfaction with the clarity and ease of understanding of the activities suggested that the games were well-structured and provided students with a clear and accessible framework for practicing their language skills. Research by Ngiwline and Haruansong (2020) similarly found that communicative games

increased students' confidence, reduced anxiety, and enhanced their overall satisfaction with learning. Overall, game-based approaches not only improved learning outcomes but also made the language learning experience more enjoyable and rewarding for the students.

Limitation of the Study

The findings from the classroom observations reveal several limitations that influenced the effectiveness of the lessons and the overall learning outcomes. One of the primary challenges observed across multiple lessons was the time management issue, particularly in activities that required students to write or draw. For instance, during the animal names bingo lesson, students spent a significant amount of time filling in their bingo sheets, which reduced the time available for actual gameplay. Similarly, in the lesson on animal body parts, students were delayed by the task of drawing and labeling, which left less time for interactive practice. These time constraints highlight the need for streamlined materials, such as pre-printed resources, to maximize engagement and minimize preparation time during lessons.

Another limitation observed was the unequal participation of students in certain activities. In the musical chairs variation used to teach animal habitats, some students were repeatedly selected due to the mechanics of the game, leaving others less engaged. Similarly, in the "Around the World" game focused on food vocabulary, stronger speakers dominated the activity, while lower-level students had fewer opportunities to participate. These observations suggest that modifications are necessary to create a more inclusive and balanced participation structure, ensuring that all students, regardless of skill level, can benefit from the activities.

Student comfort and personality differences also posed challenges in some lessons. For example, while the charades activity on animal movements was highly engaging for outgoing students, shyer students were reluctant to participate. This disparity underscores the importance of offering alternative options or adjusting the activity structure to better accommodate students with varying levels of confidence and comfort in interactive settings.

Despite the overall success of some lessons, logistical issues occasionally hindered their effectiveness. For instance, the animal habitats lesson experienced repetitive outcomes due to dice mechanics, which limited the randomness and fairness of the activity. Addressing such logistical shortcomings in future planning could improve the fairness and engagement of these types of games.

These limitations underscore the importance of careful planning and adaptability in classroom activities. By addressing time management issues, promoting balanced participation, accommodating diverse student needs, and refining logistical elements, future lessons can be more effective in fostering student engagement and achieving language learning objectives.

In addition to the pedagogical and logistical challenges noted, the study also faced limitations related to sample size and data collection. The observations were based on a small number of classes within a single school context, which restricted the generalizability of the findings. The behavior and outcomes observed might

not have reflected those of other classrooms with different student demographics, English proficiency levels, or teaching environments. Moreover, the study relied solely on the teacher's observations, which introduced the possibility of observer and confirmation bias. Without triangulation from additional data sources such as student feedback, peer observation, or video recordings, the findings may have reflected subjective interpretations influenced by the teacher's expectations or prior experiences. These methodological constraints should have been carefully considered when interpreting the study's implications.

Conclusion

This research examined the role of communicative games in enhancing vocabulary learning among third-grade students. Through carefully designed lesson plans and systematic data analysis, the study revealed a significant improvement in vocabulary achievement, as evidenced by higher post-test scores compared to pre-test results. Students also reported high levels of satisfaction, emphasizing the engaging and enjoyable nature of the games and their positive influence on learning motivation.

The success of communicative games was attributed to their structured approach to vocabulary teaching, the reinforcement provided by interactive activities, and the inherent motivation of game-based learning. These outcomes aligned with established principles in language acquisition and cognitive development, offering valuable insights into effective pedagogical strategies. Future research can build on these findings by exploring the long-term impact of communicative games, comparing them with traditional teaching methods, and optimizing their design for diverse learning contexts. The study highlighted the potential of communicative games as a dynamic and impactful tool for supporting young learners' language acquisition.

Recommendation of Further Research

1. Explore Effectiveness and Optimization of Communicative Games in Vocabulary Learning Achievement

1.1 Longitudinal studies should investigate the durability of vocabulary learning achieved through communicative games over an extended period.

1.2 Future research should compare the efficacy of communicative games with traditional teaching methods or alternative game-based strategies.

1.3 Studies should explore how communicative games affect learners with varying proficiency levels, learning styles, and cultural backgrounds, with attention to sampling diversity to reduce potential bias and increase generalizability.

1.4 Comparative studies are encouraged to evaluate how technology-enhanced communicative games (e.g., Kahoot!, Quizizz) perform relative to traditional, non-digital game formats in promoting vocabulary acquisition, learner engagement, and classroom interaction.

1.5 Research should examine the effects of game design elements, such as format, duration, and frequency, to determine the optimal conditions for maximizing learning outcomes.

1.6 Investigating the role of technology-enhanced communicative games could uncover innovative ways to increase engagement and effectiveness in vocabulary instruction.

1.7 Larger-scale studies employing stratified sampling techniques are recommended to improve the representativeness of the sample and minimize selection bias.

1.8 Future research should also consider triangulating data collection methods (e.g., combining test scores, observations, and interviews) to mitigate bias and enhance the validity and reliability of the findings.

1.9 To ensure relevance to educational practice, future studies should be grounded in specific challenges observed in the classroom, such as low vocabulary retention, limited student participation, or difficulty applying new words in context. Identifying these issues through classroom observations or teacher feedback will help researchers design interventions that address authentic needs.

1.10 Action research or classroom-based studies are recommended to strengthen the connection between theory and practice, ensuring the research findings are applicable and beneficial to real teaching environments.

2. Enhance Student Engagement and Teacher Readiness for Game-Based Learning

2.1 Studies should examine how different game formats, including digital tools like Kahoot! and Quizizz, impact student engagement, participation, and attitudes toward language learning.

2.2 Research should examine the effects of game design elements, such as format, duration, and frequency, to determine the optimal conditions for maximizing student engagement.

2.3 Investigating the role of technology-enhanced communicative games could uncover innovative ways to increase engagement, inclusivity, and accessibility.

2.4 Future studies should also focus on identifying best practices for teacher training and pedagogical support to effectively implement communicative game-based activities in the classroom.

2.5 To ensure robust and transferable results, future studies should aim for larger, more varied sample populations and report detailed demographic and contextual information.

2.6 Future research should explore how communicative games can help solve specific engagement challenges encountered in real classrooms, such as student reluctance to participate in English speaking activities or lack of motivation. Classroom-based interventions can provide insights into how games can be adapted to suit diverse teaching conditions and learner needs.

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