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DIGITAL GAME-BASED LEARNING IN ENHANCING EFL STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILL: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract

Speaking is an essential skill in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. However, many EFL students experience difficulties in developing speaking proficiency due to limited opportunities for oral practice, speaking anxiety, low confidence, and insufficient interaction. Although previous studies have examined Digital Game-Based Learning (DGBL) in English language education, their findings are distributed across different platforms, learning contexts, and outcomes. Therefore, a systematic review is needed to provide a broader understanding of how DGBL contributes to EFL speaking development and how different platforms support this process. This study aims to examine the effects of DGBL on EFL students' speaking skills and identify the digital platforms used in speaking instruction. A Systematic Literature Review (SLR) was conducted by analyzing 20 selected studies through a systematic selection process based on predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. The findings indicate that DGBL can support speaking development by providing opportunities for oral practice, increasing motivation and participation, strengthening confidence, and reducing speaking anxiety. The review also identifies Kahoot!, Quizizz, Wordwall, Duolingo, mobile game-based applications, and other digital game environments as platforms used in EFL learning.

Keywords: *Digital Game-Based Learning, EFL Speaking Skill, Gamification, English Language Learning, Systematic Literature Review*

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Introduction

Oral proficiency is a crucial element of English language acquisition, since it allows learners to convey thoughts, articulate viewpoints, and engage effectively in practical scenarios. Speaking, as a productive language skill, necessitates that learners have not just linguistic knowledge but also the ability to utilise suitable vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, fluency, and interaction techniques in communication. In the realm of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), enhancing speaking proficiency poses a significant obstacle due to learners frequently lacking opportunities for substantive communication in English beyond the classroom. Consequently, proficient speaking education necessitates learning settings that offer ample contact, ongoing practice, and chances for students to actively engage with English. Prior research has highlighted that effective speaking advancement is shaped by both language proficiency and psychological elements, including learners' self-assurance, drive, and eagerness to engage in communication. When learners encounter nurturing and stimulating educational settings, they are more inclined to engage actively and enhance their verbal communication skills.

Notwithstanding its significance, enhancing speaking abilities continues to pose difficulties for several EFL students. In contrast to students in English-speaking contexts, EFL learners frequently encounter restricted exposure to genuine English interactions and diminished chances to engage in speaking practice beyond the classroom. Consequently, numerous students encounter challenges in articulating thoughts, sustaining dialogues, and employing English assertively in verbal exercises. Moreover, emotional elements like speaking apprehension, the dread of errors, and diminished self-assurance may hinder students from engaging in oral discourse. Conventional teacher-centric educational methods may inadequately facilitate meaningful speaking chances for pupils, as classroom discourse is frequently overshadowed by explanations and written tasks instead of interactive communication. Prior research has indicated that minimal engagement, a deficiency in desire, and inadequate feedback are key elements that obstruct pupils' speaking advancement. Consequently, it is essential to establish an engaged, supportive, and stimulating educational atmosphere to motivate learners to engage in speaking practice and enhance their communicative skills.

The incorporation of technology in education has brought forth numerous inventive methods to facilitate more engaging and significant learning experiences. A novel methodology is Digital Game-Based Learning (DGBL), which integrates educational goals with digital gaming components

to promote active engagement of learners. DGBL denotes the implementation of digital games or gamified educational settings aimed at fulfilling pedagogical objectives while ensuring captivating and pleasurable learning experiences. DGBL promotes active learner engagement in the educational process with components like challenges, rewards, competition, instant feedback, cooperation, and problem-solving tasks. In the realm of English language education, DGBL has garnered interest as it offers learners the chance to hone their language abilities in engaging environments instead of depending exclusively on conventional classroom exercises. The gamified setting helps alleviate learners' apprehension over errors, enhance motivation, and promote ongoing practice, all of which are crucial for cultivating speaking proficiency. Consequently, DGBL possesses the capacity to foster conducive learning atmospheres in which EFL students can engage in active communication, collaboration, and enhancement of their spoken English skills.

The use of Digital Game-Based Learning (DGBL) in English language learning can be understood through several theoretical perspectives on second language acquisition and communicative competence. From the perspective of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), language development requires meaningful exposure to the target language and opportunities for learners to use it in communication. Krashen (1985) emphasizes the importance of comprehensible input, in which learners are exposed to language slightly beyond their current level of proficiency. In addition, Swain's (1985) Output Hypothesis highlights that learners need opportunities to produce language because expressing ideas encourages them to recognize gaps in their linguistic knowledge and improve their language use. These perspectives are relevant to DGBL because digital game activities can provide repeated exposure to English, interactive prompts, and opportunities for learners to produce spoken responses.

Furthermore, Long's (1996) Interaction Hypothesis explains that interaction and negotiation of meaning play important roles in second language development. Through interaction, learners can receive feedback, clarify meaning, and adjust their language production. In DGBL environments, activities such as collaborative games, role-playing, and group challenges can create opportunities for learners to interact using English. However, these opportunities depend on how teachers design and implement the activities. A digital game does not automatically develop speaking skills unless learners are encouraged to use spoken language to complete meaningful tasks.

The relationship between DGBL and speaking development can also be explained through the concept of communicative competence. Hymes (1972)

introduced communicative competence as the ability to use language appropriately in different social contexts. This concept extends beyond grammatical knowledge because effective communication also involves understanding when, where, and how language should be used. In speaking instruction, learners therefore need opportunities to develop linguistic knowledge as well as the ability to communicate appropriately and interact with others. Game-based activities involving discussions, dialogues, oral descriptions, and collaborative problem-solving may support these aspects of communicative competence.

In addition, DGBL is closely related to gamification, which involves applying game-design elements in non-game contexts (Deterding et al., 2011). Elements such as points, rewards, challenges, feedback, and leaderboards can encourage participation and maintain learners' interest. Nevertheless, gamification and game-based learning should not be treated as entirely identical concepts. Gamification applies selected game elements to learning activities, whereas game-based learning uses games as part of the learning process. In language education, these approaches can support speaking development when game mechanics are connected to meaningful communication objectives rather than being limited to competition or score collection.

Based on these theoretical perspectives, DGBL can be viewed as a learning approach that potentially supports EFL speaking development through meaningful language exposure, opportunities for language production, interaction, and learner engagement. These theoretical connections also provide a basis for examining not only whether DGBL improves speaking performance but also how its implementation influences learners' motivation, confidence, participation, and willingness to communicate.

Prior research has shown that Digital Game-Based Learning offers numerous advantages for English language acquisition, especially in enhancing learners' interest, motivation, and active involvement. Numerous research studies have indicated that the incorporation of digital games fosters more engaging learning atmospheres that motivate students to engage in English tasks. Wang and Han (2021) discovered that language acquisition through gaming facilitated the enhancement of learners' verbal communication skills by offering chances for repetitive speaking exercises and interactive language engagement. In a similar vein, Rachayon and Soontornwipast (2019) demonstrated that digital game-based activities enhanced students' speaking abilities by fostering teamwork, self-assurance, and active engagement in the classroom. Alternative research has

underscored the emotional advantages of Digital Game-Based Learning in English as a Foreign Language settings. Putri (2025) and Fadoli et al. (2026) indicated that gamified applications aided in alleviating learners' speaking anxiety while enhancing their confidence and eagerness to interact in English. Furthermore, research conducted by Nawawi and Regina (2024) alongside Pratiwi et al. (2024) shown that tools like Quizizz and Wordwall improved student involvement via engaging activities, prompt feedback, and pleasurable educational experiences. These results suggest that DGBL serves as both a technological educational tool and a source of psychological and pedagogical assistance that enhances students' proficiency in the English language.

Prior research has underscored the beneficial impact of Digital Game-Based Learning on English language instruction; yet, numerous deficiencies persist in the current body of literature. Numerous prior investigations often focus on assessing the efficacy of singular digital gaming platforms, including Kahoot!, Quizizz, Wordwall, or Duolingo, in particular educational settings. Moreover, numerous research concentrate on overarching English learning results, vocabulary proficiency, motivation, or learner involvement instead of particularly investigating the enhancement of EFL students' speaking abilities. Consequently, the comprehensive insight into the ways various Digital Game-Based Learning platforms facilitate speaking advancement, encompassing factors like speaking proficiency, self-assurance, communication readiness, and anxiety alleviation, is still restricted. Moreover, earlier research is frequently presented independently across several educational tiers and learning contexts, complicating the identification of shared trends about the application and advantages of DGBL in speaking pedagogy. Consequently, a systematic review is essential to amalgamate current information and offer an in-depth comprehension of how Digital Game-Based Learning facilitates the enhancement of speaking skills among EFL students, as well as to identify the platforms frequently utilised in English speaking classrooms.

This systematic literature review seeks to consolidate prior research about the application and impact of Digital Game-Based Learning on improving EFL students' speaking abilities, in light of the recognised research gap. This research adopts a comprehensive approach by investigating multiple Digital Game-Based Learning applications instead of concentrating on a singular digital platform, assessing their impact on students' speaking skills, motivation, engagement, confidence, and communication readiness. This review aims to discern prevalent trends in the implementation of DGBL within English language instruction and the advantages it offers to EFL

students through the examination of chosen empirical research. Consequently, this investigation tackles the following research enquiries:

1. How does Digital Game-Based Learning affect EFL students' speaking skill based on previous studies?
2. What Digital Game-Based Learning platforms are commonly used to enhance EFL students' speaking skill?

Research Methods

Research Design

This research utilized a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) methodology to examine and integrate prior studies about the application of Digital Game-Based Learning (DGBL) in improving EFL learners' speaking abilities. A systematic literature review was chosen due to its organized methodology for discovering, assessing, and integrating pertinent papers to achieve a thorough comprehension of a certain study subject. This research utilized this methodology to analyze empirical data from earlier studies to discern trends related to the impact of DGBL on speaking proficiency and the digital game-based platforms frequently employed in EFL educational settings. The SLR technique was executed through methodical steps that included article identification, screening, eligibility evaluation, and the ultimate selection of pertinent studies. The analysis concentrated on existing research examining the implementation of Digital Game-Based Learning, gamification, or digital gaming apps in the context of English language acquisition, especially with speaking enhancement or elements that facilitate speaking proficiency. This research seeks to summarize the contemporary trends, advantages, and application methods of DGBL in EFL speaking training by integrating results from chosen studies.

Search Strategy

The literature search was conducted using several academic databases and scholarly sources, including Scopus, ERIC, Google Scholar, and relevant journal archives. These sources were selected to identify studies related to digital game-based learning (DGBL), gamification, and English language learning, particularly in the context of speaking skills.

The search was conducted from July 11 to October 30, 2026. Several keywords were used, including "Digital Game-Based Learning," "game-based learning," "gamification," "EFL speaking skill," "English speaking," and "English language learning." Boolean operators, such as AND and OR, were applied to combine the keywords and narrow the search results. The search combinations included:

1. (“Digital Game-Based Learning” OR “game-based learning”) AND (“EFL” OR “English language learning”).
2. (“gamification” OR “digital games”) AND (“English speaking” OR “speaking skill”).
3. (“game-based learning” OR “digital game applications”) AND (“EFL learners”) AND (“speaking”).

No specific publication-year restriction was applied during the initial search. The publication years of the 20 studies included in the final review ranged from 2018 to 2026. This range reflects the publication years of the selected studies rather than a predetermined limitation in the search process.

The selection process involved several stages. Initially, 40 articles were identified from the search results. After duplicate articles were removed, 25 articles remained for further screening. The titles, abstracts, and full texts were then examined based on the established inclusion and exclusion criteria. Five articles were excluded because they did not meet the eligibility requirements, resulting in 20 studies being included in the final review.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To guaranty the pertinence and caliber of the chosen studies, this systematic literature review employed pre-established inclusion and exclusion criteria throughout the article selection procedure. The standards were formulated in accordance with the research aims, emphasizing studies that address the application of Digital Game-Based Learning in EFL environments, especially those pertinent to speaking enhancement and facilitating elements in English language acquisition.

Table 1. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Criteria	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Research Topic	Studies discussing Digital Game-Based Learning, gamification, or digital game applications in English language learning.	Studies unrelated to digital games, gamification, or English language learning.
Language Learning Context	Studies conducted in EFL/ESL contexts involving English language learners.	Studies focusing on non-English language learning contexts.
Research Focus	Studies examining speaking development or factors supporting speaking skills, such as motivation, confidence, engagement, anxiety, and willingness to communicate.	Studies focusing only on unrelated skills without connection to speaking development.
Publication Type	Peer-reviewed journal articles, research articles, and relevant	Non-academic sources, conference abstracts,

	systematic reviews.	unpublished papers, or incomplete publications.
Availability	Studies with accessible full-text versions.	Studies without available full- text access.
Research Evidence	Empirical studies using qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-method approaches.	Studies without clear research methodology or insufficient research information.

Article Selection Process

The article selection procedure in this systematic literature review adhered to the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines. PRISMA was utilized to guaranty a clear and methodical approach in recognizing, evaluating, determining eligibility, and choosing pertinent studies. The selection procedure comprised four phases: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion.

In the identification phase, a cumulative total of 40 papers were gathered from various academic databases. Upon eliminating redundant publications, 25 articles persisted for additional evaluation. The publications were subsequently evaluated according to their titles, abstracts, and the availability of complete texts, utilizing the established inclusion and exclusion criteria. Following the eligibility evaluation, five papers were omitted for failing to satisfy the research criteria. Ultimately, 20 publications were chosen as the studies incorporated in this comprehensive literature review.

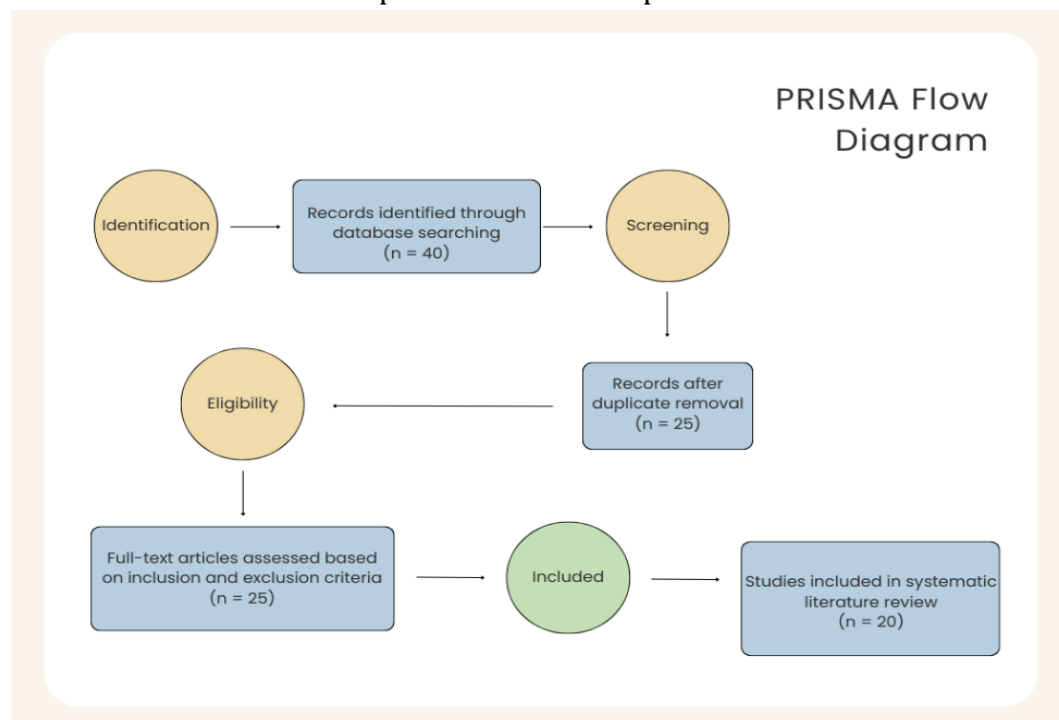


Figure 1. Prisma flow diagram

Data Analysis

The chosen studies were examined through a theme synthesis method to discern trends, commonalities, and discrepancies in prior research results. The analytical procedure encompassed the extraction of critical data from each chosen article, such as authorship, publication year, study aims, participant demographics, methodologies, Digital Game-Based Learning platforms, execution protocols, and research outcomes.

Subsequent to the data extraction phase, the results from the chosen studies were classified according to the research inquiries. The initial research inquiry concentrated on examining the impact of Digital Game-Based Learning on the speaking advancement of EFL students, encompassing enhancements in speaking proficiency, motivation, engagement, self-assurance, readiness to communicate, and alleviation of speaking apprehension. The investigation for the second study question scrutinized the varieties of Digital Game-Based Learning platforms frequently utilized in English language acquisition and their pedagogical roles.

The recognized themes were subsequently amalgamated by contrasting results from several studies to ascertain prevalent patterns and discrepancies concerning the application and impact of Digital Game-Based Learning in EFL speaking pedagogy. The review yielded an extensive insight into the ways DGBL facilitates speaking advancement and identifies the digital platforms commonly employed in English language education settings.

Results and Discussion

Results

Characteristics of Selected Studies

The comprehensive literature evaluation encompassed 20 chosen studies examining the application of Digital Game-Based Learning (DGBL) within English language education settings. The chosen research was released from 2018 to 2026, reflecting the growing focus on incorporating digital games and gamification in EFL education. The analyzed research was performed in diverse educational settings, encompassing primary schools, high schools, vocational colleges, universities, and English language centers in several nations, including Indonesia, Thailand, Iran, Turkey, China, and other global environments..

Concerning research methodology, the chosen studies utilized diverse study designs, such as quantitative experimental studies, qualitative analyzes, mixed-method strategies, and systematic reviews. Quantitative research was the predominant methodology employed, especially studies investigating the efficacy of particular digital game-based platforms on

students' educational results, motivation, engagement, and speaking performance. Conversely, qualitative and mixed-method research offered profound understanding of students' experiences, attitudes, and difficulties encountered during the implementation of DGBL.

The analyzed research investigated multiple Digital Game-Based Learning platforms and gamified programs, such as Kahoot!, Quizizz, Wordwall, Duolingo, Liulishuo, mobile gaming apps, and more digital gaming settings. These platforms were established via activities including interactive quizzes, speaking exercises, vocabulary games, collaborative tasks, challenges, and feedback-oriented activities. In the reviewed research, DGBL was typically found to foster more dynamic and learner-focused settings by integrating game components such prizes, competition, challenges, instant feedback, and cooperation.

Overall, the features of the chosen research show that digital game-based learning has been extensively investigated as a cutting-edge method in EFL instruction. The results of these research demonstrate that DGBL serves as a pedagogical strategy that promotes students' motivation, engagement, self-assurance, and active participation in English learning activities in addition to being utilized as a technology tool.

The Effects of Digital Game-Based Learning on EFL Students' Speaking Skill

Theme 1: Improving Speaking Performance and Communication Practice

According to the reviewed research, digital game-based learning enhances EFL students' speaking abilities by giving them more chances to practice their language skills and engage in meaningful conversation. DGBL develops dynamic environments where students can frequently practice English through game-based tasks, challenges, and collaborative activities, in contrast to traditional classroom activities that might restrict students' speaking opportunities. By incorporating digital games, students are encouraged to use English in more interesting and real-world situations, which enables them to continuously improve their oral communication abilities.

Numerous research showed that once DGBL was implemented, pupils' speaking abilities improved. Wang and Han (2021) discovered that by offering chances for repeated speaking practice and interaction through game activities, digital game-based language learning aided students' oral communication growth. In a similar vein, Rachayon and Soontornwipast (2019) found that by promoting cooperative communication and active classroom involvement, digital game-based activities improved students' speaking abilities. Additionally, Pratiwi et al. (2024) demonstrated that

Wordwall-based exercises enhanced students' speaking abilities by offering dynamic assignments that necessitated responses, concept expression, and active participation throughout class.

The interactive elements offered by digital game settings are also linked to DGBL's efficacy in promoting speaking development. Students are taught to actively produce language rather than passively absorb information through challenges, group projects, and prompt feedback. Through repeated exposure to English usage through game-based activities, students can practice spoken answers, sentence construction, vocabulary, and pronunciation in a less intimidating setting. As a result, DGBL functions as a teaching strategy that promotes communication practice and the steady improvement of EFL students' speaking proficiency.

The results of these research show a recurring pattern: by exposing students to more English communication tasks, DGBL promotes speaking growth. According to research by Wang and Han (2021), Rachayon and Soontornwipast (2019), Pratiwi et al. (2024), and Karomi Safari (2025), digital game-based activities give students the chance to practice oral communication, engage with others, and get feedback while they are learning. Consequently, DGBL can be viewed as a method that promotes active language use and meaningful speaking practice for EFL learners.

Theme 2: Increasing Motivation, Engagement, and Willingness to Communicate

Digital game-based learning increases EFL students' motivation, engagement, and desire to participate in English learning activities, according to the evaluated studies. DGBL offers engaging and interactive learning experiences with game aspects like challenges, prizes, competition, feedback, and teamwork, in contrast to typical learning settings that could encourage passive involvement. These components boost students' propensity to utilize English during learning processes and encourage them to participate more actively in class activities.

According to a number of research, gamified learning environments have a good impact on students' engagement and motivation. According to Ahmed et al. (2022), game-based learning greatly boosted the motivation of EFL students while fostering a more pleasurable learning environment that promoted involvement. Similarly, Gamlo (2019b) showed that learners' enthusiasm and desire to participate in English language learning activities were enhanced by mobile game-based language learning applications. According to Zhou et al. (2024), digital game-based learning encouraged students to stay interested throughout the learning process by offering interactive tasks, challenges, incentives, and instant feedback

By fostering possibilities for engagement and teamwork, DGBL not only boosts motivation but also encourages students to communicate. Research by Nawawi and Regina (2024) and Lukinosa (2024) revealed that interactive assignments, competitive quizzes, and quick answers on websites like Quizizz encouraged students to actively participate. These exercises encouraged students to participate more actively in class discussions and decreased passive learning practices. Because motivated learners are more likely to join, practice English, and actively communicate with others, DGBL's engaging and motivating features are crucial in promoting speaking progress.

The results of these research show that DGBL uses interactive game elements to increase motivation and engagement. According to Ahmed et al. (2022), Gamlo (2019), and Zhou et al. (2024), game-based activities boost students' engagement and interest by offering fun learning opportunities. Additionally, Nawawi and Regina (2024) and Lukinosa (2024) showed how interactive platforms like Quizizz motivate students to engage in class activities. These results imply that students' willingness to practice speaking English is supported by motivation and engagement.

Theme 3: Reducing Speaking Anxiety and Building Confidence

The evaluated studies also showed that digital game-based learning helps students feel more confident while speaking English and less anxious. One of the biggest issues faced by EFL students is speaking anxiety, since they frequently hesitate to speak out of fear of making mistakes, inadequate language proficiency, and worries about receiving a poor grade. Students can practice English through fun activities without undue pressure in a more laid-back and encouraging learning environment thanks to the application of DGBL. As a result, students are more inclined to take part in speaking exercises and share their opinions.

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A number of features of digital games, such as instantaneous feedback, frequent practice opportunities, and a low-risk learning environment, are strongly linked to the reduction of anxiety in DGBL contexts. With the help of

these characteristics, students can enhance their performance and make mistakes without feeling as pressured as they would in more conventional speaking exercises. As a result, DGBL overcomes psychological obstacles that frequently keep EFL learners from actively communicating in English in addition to promoting the growth of speaking proficiency.

According to research by Putri (2025), Fadoli et al. (2026), Ahmed et al. (2022), and Öden et al. (2021), DGBL helps students feel more confident and less nervous when speaking. Students can participate in digital games without being overly afraid of making mistakes because to frequent practice, instant feedback, and encouraging learning environments. As a result, students are more inclined to converse and participate in speaking exercises.

Theme 4: Limited and Uneven Outcomes of Digital Game-Based Learning

Although most of the reviewed studies reported positive contributions of Digital Game-Based Learning, the findings also indicate that its effects are not always consistent across different aspects of speaking development. Wang and Han (2021), for example, found improvements in several aspects of learners' oral production, including complexity, accuracy, and speech pace. However, not all fluency-related measures showed the same degree of improvement. This finding suggests that the benefits of DGBL may vary depending on the specific speaking components being assessed.

Furthermore, positive outcomes in motivation, engagement, and confidence should not automatically be interpreted as direct improvements in speaking proficiency. Studies such as Gamlo (2019) and Ahmed et al. (2022) primarily examined motivational and anxiety-related outcomes. Although these factors may encourage learners to participate in speaking activities, they represent supporting conditions rather than direct measurements of oral performance.

The findings also indicate that certain game elements may produce different responses among learners. Competition, for instance, can encourage participation and increase motivation, but it may also create pressure for students who are less confident or frequently achieve lower scores. Therefore, the effects of DGBL depend not only on the use of digital platforms but also on learners' characteristics, instructional design, and the specific learning outcomes being measured.

Overall Findings of RQ1

The results show that Digital Game-Based Learning has three primary effects on EFL students' speaking abilities based on the three themes that were identified. First, through interactive exercises, DGBL offers more chances for communication and speaking practice. Second, gaming

components boost students' enthusiasm and engagement, which promotes active involvement in learning English. Third, DGBL fosters a supportive communication environment by lowering speaking anxiety and boosting learners' confidence. These results show that DGBL promotes speaking growth through psychological and motivational support in addition to language practice.

Digital Game-Based Learning Platforms Used in EFL Speaking Instruction

Several digital game-based learning platforms used in EFL contexts to assist students' speaking development and related language learning outcomes were found in the evaluated studies. The chosen studies demonstrate that these platforms typically use interactive activities, instant feedback, competition, teamwork, and repeated practice to promote students' active engagement in English learning, despite the fact that each platform has unique characteristics and instructional functions.

Table 2. Digital Game-Based Learning Platforms Identified in Previous Studies

Digital Game-Based Learning Platform	Supporting Studies	Main Implementation Function
Kahoot!	Yürük (2020); Öden et al. (2021)	Used to support pronunciation practice, increase motivation and classroom participation, and reduce language anxiety through interactive quizzes and immediate feedback.
Quizizz	Nawawi and Regina (2024); Lukinosa (2024)	Used through interactive quizzes and classroom activities to encourage student participation and engagement in English-speaking instruction.
Wordwall	Pratiwi et al. (2024); Meifia et al. (2025)	Used for interactive speaking-related activities and vocabulary practice. Its contribution to speaking development depends on whether learners are encouraged to use vocabulary in oral communication.
Mobile Game-Based Applications	Wang and Han (2021); Gamlo (2019); Ahmed et al. (2022)	Used to provide mobile-based language practice and support motivation and engagement. Wang and Han (2021) specifically examined oral production outcomes.
Other Digital Game-Based Learning Applications	Putri (2025); Fadoli et al. (2026)	Used to support speaking development and address speaking-related anxiety among EFL learners.
Other Digital Game	Zhou et al. (2024);	Used through gamified activities involving

Environments	Karomi Safari (2025)	challenges, rewards, feedback, and opportunities for language practice.
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Comparative Analysis of Digital Game-Based Learning Platforms

The reviewed studies indicate that different Digital Game-Based Learning platforms contribute to EFL speaking development in different ways. Their contributions depend on the activities provided, the language skills targeted, and how teachers integrate the platforms into classroom instruction. Therefore, the platforms should not be considered equally effective for every aspect of speaking development.

Kahoot! and Quiz-Based Platforms

Kahoot! and other quiz-based platforms, such as Quizizz, primarily support speaking instruction through interactive questions, time limits, scores, rankings, and immediate feedback. However, their contributions are not limited to the development of speaking proficiency. Yürük (2020) examined the use of Kahoot! in pronunciation improvement, indicating its potential to support a specific component of oral communication. Meanwhile, Öden et al. (2021) highlighted improvements in students' attitudes, motivation, and anxiety-related experiences in EFL learning. These findings suggest that Kahoot! can support pronunciation practice while also creating a more engaging learning environment.

Similarly, Nawawi and Regina (2024) and Lukinosa (2024) discussed the use of Quizizz and quiz applications in English speaking instruction. These platforms can encourage students to participate in classroom activities and respond to language-related questions. Nevertheless, participation in quizzes does not automatically demonstrate improvement in oral production. Their contribution to speaking development becomes more meaningful when teachers ask students to explain answers, describe situations, or respond orally rather than only select written answers. Thus, quiz-based platforms appear particularly useful for stimulating participation, reinforcing language knowledge, and supporting pronunciation or speaking-related practice when accompanied by communicative tasks.

Wordwall as an Interactive Speaking Practice Platform

Compared with quiz-based platforms, Wordwall offers various activity formats that teachers can adapt to specific language-learning objectives. Pratiwi et al. (2024) reported the use of Wordwall to enhance students' speaking skills through classroom activities. These studies provide a more direct connection between Wordwall-based activities and speaking instruction.

Wordwall can support speaking practice through matching activities, vocabulary exercises, and interactive challenges. However, the speaking benefits depend on whether students are required to use the language orally during or after completing the activities. For example, matching vocabulary items may strengthen word recognition, but it does not necessarily develop students' ability to produce spoken language. Teachers can extend these activities by asking learners to describe matched items, construct sentences, or engage in short conversations using the target vocabulary. Therefore, Wordwall is particularly adaptable for preparing and reinforcing language resources that students can subsequently use in oral communication.

Mobile-Based Game Applications and Other Digital Game Environments

Mobile-based game applications provide opportunities for learners to practice English beyond regular classroom activities. Wang and Han (2021) demonstrated the potential of a digital game-based mobile application to support learners' oral production. Their findings showed improvements in several aspects of oral performance, including complexity, accuracy, and speech pace, although not all fluency-related measures improved equally. This suggests that mobile-based learning can provide opportunities for repeated language practice, but its effects may differ across speaking components.

Other studies emphasize the motivational and psychological contributions of mobile game-based learning. Gamlo (2019a,2019b) examined the impact of mobile game-based language learning applications on EFL learners' motivation, while Ahmed et al. (2022) investigated the relationship between game-based learning, motivation, and anxiety. These findings indicate that mobile applications may support the conditions needed for language learning, although improvements in motivation or reduced anxiety should not be interpreted as direct evidence of increased speaking proficiency.

The reviewed studies also include other digital game environments, such as those discussed by Zhou et al. (2024) and Karomi Safari (2025). These environments incorporate game-based activities to encourage learner engagement and language practice. Their instructional value depends on the extent to which the activities require students to produce spoken language and interact with others.

Overall Comparison of Platform Contributions

The comparison shows that each platform has different instructional strengths. Kahoot! and Quizizz are useful for encouraging participation, providing immediate feedback, and supporting pronunciation or speaking-related classroom activities. Wordwall offers adaptable activities for

reinforcing vocabulary and preparing learners for oral production. Meanwhile, mobile-based applications provide opportunities for repeated and independent practice, with Wang and Han (2021) presenting evidence of improvements in several aspects of oral production. Other digital game environments offer additional ways to integrate challenges, interaction, and language practice.

Nevertheless, the findings do not establish that one platform is universally more effective than another. Some studies examine speaking performance directly, whereas others focus on motivation, engagement, confidence, or anxiety. These outcomes represent different dimensions of learning and should not be treated as equivalent measures of speaking proficiency. Consequently, the effectiveness of a platform should be evaluated according to its learning objectives and the extent to which its activities facilitate meaningful oral production. The teacher's instructional design remains essential in transforming digital game activities into effective speaking practice.

Discussion

Digital Game-Based Learning as a Supportive Environment for Speaking Development

The results of this comprehensive evaluation of the literature show that Digital Game-Based Learning (DGBL) offers a helpful setting for improving the speaking abilities of EFL students. Through interactive exercises, repeated practice, group activities, and game-based challenges, DGBL gave students more chances to use English throughout the evaluated courses. This conclusion is significant because speaking development necessitates active language production rather than passive language acquisition. For instance, Wang and Han (2021) showed that by offering frequent opportunities to practice English, a digital game-based mobile application might aid in the development of oral production. Although not all fluency-related variables increased to the same degree, their findings demonstrated improvements in a number of oral production features, most notably complexity, accuracy, and speech pace. This finding implies that DGBL can aid in the development of speaking, albeit its benefits might vary depending on particular oral proficiency components.

The current analysis also shows that one of the key ways DGBL can promote speaking development is through frequent exposure. EFL students often have few opportunities to utilize English outside of the classroom, which can limit their exposure to spoken communication that is relevant. Digital games can give students more opportunities to regularly come across vocabulary, sentence structures, pronunciation models, and communicative

cues. Repetition in a game setting is different from mechanical repetition because learners frequently come across language while trying to accomplish a job, solve an issue, get a reward, or finish a challenge. As a result, rather than viewing repeated language practice as a stand-alone drilling exercise, learners may view it as a component of an activity. This situation may gradually boost learners' experience with oral language output and encourage them to engage with English more.

Additionally, the results show that DGBL can change the pattern of classroom interactions from teacher-dominated instruction to more student participation. In traditional speaking exercises, a teacher would ask one student to respond to a question while the others listen. Each student's output of English during a class may be constrained by such an arrangement. On the other hand, game-based activities, such as quizzes, challenges, pair activities, group competitions, and cooperative tasks, can engage several students at once. Research by Lukinosa (2024), Nawawi and Regina (2024), and Pratiwi et al. (2024) shows how interactive platforms might motivate students to engage more fully in English language learning activities. As a result, DGBL's impact to speaking development is not solely reliant on the digital platform. Whether the platform genuinely gives students significant possibilities to develop and negotiate meaning in English depends on the instructional design.

The connection between DGBL and communicative practice is another significant conclusion. The mere fact that a digital game has game characteristics does not inevitably make it a speaking activity. Teachers must link game mechanics to communicative tasks and clear language objectives. When students employ the target vocabulary in oral descriptions, dialogs, role plays, or problem-solving talks, for instance, a vocabulary game can help with speaking development. In a similar vein, when teachers convert quiz questions into prompts that call for students to explain, defend, compare, or provide an oral response, a quiz platform can facilitate speaking. This distinction is crucial since certain digital games evaluate recognition skills more than productive language proficiency. Therefore, the degree to which teachers incorporate gaming activities with real-world oral language output has a significant impact on the pedagogical value of DGBL for speaking.

The evidence that has been reviewed also indicates that DGBL can concurrently assist multiple aspects of speaking development, but the degree of the contribution may differ. While other research in the current review focused on involvement, confidence, communication practice, and willingness to speak, Wang and Han (2021) found improvements in complexity, correctness, and speech pace. These results imply that a single test score

should not be used to understand speaking development. Linguistic and affective aspects of speaking skill interact throughout communication. Before demonstrating a significant improvement in language accuracy or fluency, a learner who gains confidence and willingness to communicate may first exhibit increasing involvement. As a result, DGBL may have an impact on speaking development through a progressive process where psychological preparedness and involvement provide the conditions for longer-term language practice.

The Role of Game Elements in Increasing Motivation and Engagement

The second significant conclusion relates to how gaming components can boost students' motivation and involvement. Digital game-based learning environments frequently feature rewards, challenges, competitiveness, points, scores, instant feedback, and interactive tasks, according to the evaluated research. According to Ahmed et al. (2022), Gamlo (2019a, 2019b), and Zhou et al. (2024), game-based learning can boost students' motivation and engagement by producing engaging and dynamic learning opportunities. These results suggest that by altering students' perceptions of learning tasks, gaming aspects can affect their willingness to participate.

Since students must initiate and maintain oral communication, motivation becomes especially important in speaking training. Speaking exercises frequently force students to reveal their language barriers in front of classmates, which might make students who lack confidence hesitant. By offering pupils immediate objectives and observable success, game features can offer an alternative motivational framework. For example, a challenge gives students a specific goal to strive for. While instant feedback enables students to determine whether their answers satisfy the assignment requirements, points and awards can serve as indicators of success. Instead than stopping the exercise after making a mistake, these elements can motivate pupils to carry on.

Competition also appears as an important but complex component of DGBL. Competitive elements can increase participation because students may feel motivated to achieve higher scores or complete challenges before other participants. Nawawi and Regina (2024) and Lukinosa (2024) reported that Quizizz-based activities encouraged students to participate through interactive and competitive tasks. However, competition does not necessarily benefit every learner in the same way. Some students may perceive competition as enjoyable, whereas others may experience pressure when they repeatedly receive lower scores. Zhang and Hasim (2023) also identified competition as both a potentially useful gamification element and a possible source of negative effects in EFL/ESL learning. Therefore, teachers should

consider learner characteristics and classroom conditions when implementing competitive game mechanics.

These contrasting findings demonstrate that the implementation of DGBL requires consideration of individual learner differences. Although competitive elements may encourage active participation, they do not necessarily create a positive learning experience for every student. Similarly, increased motivation and engagement do not always result in immediate improvements in speaking proficiency. The findings of Wang and Han (2021), which showed different levels of improvement across oral production measures, further indicate that speaking development involves several components that may respond differently to game-based activities. Therefore, the effectiveness of DGBL should be evaluated through both learners' participation and measurable changes in their speaking performance.

Another factor that could account for DGBL's motivational value is immediate feedback. In traditional classroom exercises, students might have to wait to find out how accurate their answers were. Instantaneous responses, scores, corrections, or task completion indicators can be obtained using digital systems. While the learning activity is ongoing, such feedback can assist students in identifying their progress. After giving a wrong answer, the feedback system may also motivate students to try the assignment again. Because of this, pupils are able to link errors to chances for growth rather than to ultimate failure. When the game enables students to repeat tasks and enhance their performance, this process can support long-term engagement.

Thus, it seems that motivation and speaking growth are related both directly and indirectly. DGBL's usage of game dynamics may not be the only reason it improves speaking proficiency. Rather, incorporating game aspects can boost students' engagement, leading to greater chances for language practice. Increased exposure to English, recurrent production, interaction, and feedback can all result from increased participation. Over time, speaking growth may benefit from the ensuing learning process. This explanation contributes to the understanding of why motivation and engagement were often found with speaking-related results in the studies included in this analysis. Motivation serves as a prerequisite for the learning behaviors necessary for the development of speaking.

Digital Game-Based Learning in Reducing Speaking Anxiety and Building Confidence

The third significant finding illustrates the connection between learner confidence, speaking anxiety, and DGBL. Even when EFL students

have enough language skills to finish a job, speaking fear can keep them from engaging. Learners may hesitate because they are afraid of making grammar or pronunciation problems, receiving a poor grade, or seeming foolish in front of their peers. According to the reviewed studies, by fostering more laid-back and engaging learning environments, digital game-based environments may help lower some of these psychological obstacles.

Positive correlations between game-based learning and learners' confidence or anxiety-related outcomes have been documented by Putri (2025), Fadoli et al. (2026), and Öden et al. (2021). A number of features of digital learning environments may contribute to the possible decrease in anxiety. First, students can get feedback right away without having to wait for the teacher to make a public correction. Second, by repeating tasks, students can progressively gain proficiency in the target language. Third, rather than concentrating solely on each learner's language performance, game-based activities can divide attention among the task, game mechanics, and interaction. These qualities could lessen the impression that each speech attempt is a high-stakes assessment.

In the connection between DGBL and confidence, repeated practice seems to be especially crucial. Speaking confidence seldom grows through explanation alone because students require opportunities to engage in effective communication. Learners can get more comfortable with vocabulary, pronunciation patterns, and sentence structures when they consistently accomplish reasonable speaking tasks. After completing the exercise successfully, individuals may feel more confident in their ability to communicate in English. As a result, DGBL may boost confidence through recurring experiences of involvement and success.

The idea that every type of DGBL inherently lessens speaking anxiety, however, is not supported by the review. The impact is contingent upon how educators craft the task and how students understand game dynamics. Students who have a significant fear of public comparison may feel more pressure in highly competitive circumstances. In a similar vein, time constraints may inspire some students while making others more anxious. Teachers should so strike a balance between psychological safety and challenge. Game activities should be challenging enough to keep students interested while giving them enough chances to practice without being overly afraid of failing.

Attention should also be paid to the connection between communication willingness and confidence. More self-assured students may be more inclined to start conversations, answer inquiries, work with classmates, and try new expressions. More possibilities for speaking practice follow from an increased readiness to communicate. In this way, confidence

might serve as a mediator between speaking growth and the affective advantages of DGBL. According to the results of the analyzed studies, DGBL promotes speaking by changing learners' psychological circumstances in addition to offering language exercises.

The Role of Immediate Feedback and Repeated Practice

A cross-cutting element found in a number of the DGBL platforms under examination is immediate feedback. While the exercise is still relevant, feedback gives students information about their responses and enables them to see mistakes or effective performance. Feedback in speaking instruction might focus on task accomplishment, sentence composition, vocabulary selection, and pronunciation. According to the reviewed literature, feedback is more valuable when students are given the chance to apply what they have learned in later attempts.

Repetition and feedback together can provide an ongoing cycle of learning. After completing a task, learners get feedback, pinpoint areas that need work, and try again. In contrast to a one-time speaking performance, this cycle gives students the chance to improve their performance. Wang and Han (2021) offer pertinent data since their participants showed improvements in multiple aspects of oral production after using a digital game-based mobile application for a considerable amount of time. However, their results also revealed that other measures did not significantly improve, suggesting that repeated digital practice does not yield consistent impacts in all speech domains.

This discovery has a significant impact on the application of DGBL. Teachers shouldn't believe that playing a computer game on a regular basis would result in proficient speaking. Teachers must choose feedback methods that align with the desired learning objectives. The exercise should give participants the chance to hear and make the target sounds if pronunciation is the goal. The task should offer chances for prolonged oral production rather than just brief answers if the goal is fluency. Teachers must therefore match speech goals, game mechanisms, and feedback.

Differences in the Instructional Functions of DGBL Platforms

Kahoot!, Quizizz, Wordwall, Duolingo, mobile game-based apps, and other digital gaming settings were found in the examined studies. Despite having similar game-based features, these platforms don't serve the same educational purposes. Knowing these distinctions is crucial because educators should choose a platform based on the learning purpose rather than presuming that all digital games offer the same educational advantages.

Interactive quiz-based learning is the main focus of Kahoot! and Quizizz. With questions, points, time limitations, rankings, and instant answers, their features can promote involvement. Positive results in terms of involvement, motivation, confidence, or language acquisition were reported by Yürük (2020), Öden et al. (2021), Nawawi and Regina (2024), and Lukinosa (2024). However, when speech production is the main goal of the quiz, teachers must prolong the activities. Instructors might use quiz questions as a starting point for follow-up questions, pair discussions, oral explanations, or justifications. This method turns an activity that is mostly recognition-based into a speaking task that is more productive.

Because Wordwall enables educators to design a variety of interactive game formats, it offers an alternative educational purpose. Its potential for vocabulary and language practice is demonstrated by Pratiwi et al. (2024) and Meifia et al. (2025). Wordwall exercises can be used by teachers to prepare students for oral production during speaking lessons. For instance, after completing a vocabulary matching exercise, students can utilize the chosen words in sentences or brief conversations. Thus, by preparing language resources that students might utilize in communicative activities later on, the platform can indirectly assist speaking.

Mobile game-based applications and other digital learning platforms provide different opportunities for EFL learners to practice English. Wang and Han (2021) demonstrated the potential of a mobile application to support oral production, while Putri (2025) and Fadoli et al. (2026) highlighted the contribution of digital game-based learning to speaking development and the reduction of speaking anxiety. These findings suggest that digital applications can support language learning through different instructional approaches. However, independent digital practice cannot completely replace interpersonal communication, which remains essential for developing speaking skills.

The comparison of platforms shows that DGBL should not be assessed solely based on the application's popularity. The connection between platform affordances and learning objectives is the more pertinent factor. While a mobile speaking app can offer longer-term individual practice, a quiz-based platform might be suitable for vocabulary activation or comprehension testing. While cooperative gaming settings could encourage peer connection, wordwalls might offer adaptable practice forms. As a result, pedagogical needs should take precedence over technological innovation when choosing a platform.

DGBL as a Pedagogical Approach Rather Than Merely a Technological Tool

DGBL should serve as a teaching approach rather than only a technology instrument, according to the synthesis of the examined studies.

Meaningful learning results are not automatically produced by a digital platform. Through task design, instructional sequencing, feedback, interaction patterns, and alignment with learning objectives, teachers assess the platform's educational usefulness. This interpretation is consistent with more extensive systematic review data demonstrating that when teachers include game aspects with suitable pedagogical techniques, gamification can result in favorable language learning outcomes.

In speaking teaching, the distinction between pedagogy and technology becomes very crucial. For a few minutes, a teacher can engage in a digital game without fostering meaningful oral communication. Students might, for instance, choose multiple-choice answers without saying anything. In this case, there are game elements in the exercise, but there aren't many chances to talk well. On the other hand, when a teacher asks students to complete oral tasks, negotiate options, explain answers, or ask follow-up questions, a straightforward digital game can effectively enhance speaking. Therefore, whether DGBL actually aids in the development of speaking is determined by the instructional task.

Because digital games cannot assess the quality of classroom engagement on their own, teacher facilitation is still crucial. Instructors must keep an eye on student participation, spot silent kids, offer more scaffolding, and modify the difficulty level. Additionally, educators must make sure that the language learning goal is not overshadowed by game elements. Students may provide brief or incorrect answers if they are solely concerned with earning points or finishing assignments fast. Therefore, in addition to helping students finish the game successfully, teachers should highlight the use of meaningful language.

Recommendations for EFL Speaking Instruction and Future Research

The findings of this systematic literature review provide several recommendations for the implementation of Digital Game-Based Learning in EFL speaking instruction. First, teachers should select digital game-based platforms according to specific learning objectives rather than their popularity or technological features. Kahoot! and Quizizz can be used to encourage participation, reinforce language knowledge, and support pronunciation-related activities. Wordwall can provide interactive vocabulary practice that prepares students for oral communication, while mobile-based applications can offer additional opportunities for independent and repeated language practice. However, teachers should ensure that these activities are connected to actual speaking tasks.

Second, digital game-based activities should involve meaningful oral production. The reviewed studies indicate that participation in quizzes or vocabulary games does not necessarily demonstrate improvement in speaking proficiency. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to extend game activities by asking students to explain their answers, describe objects or situations, construct dialogues, participate in role-plays, and engage in collaborative discussions. These activities can help transform language recognition exercises into opportunities for spoken communication.

Third, teachers should combine individual and collaborative game-based learning activities. Mobile applications can support self-paced practice, whereas classroom-based games can encourage interaction among students. Combining these approaches may provide learners with opportunities to prepare independently before using English in interpersonal communication. This recommendation is particularly relevant because speaking development involves not only individual language practice but also interaction and the ability to respond to other speakers.

Fourth, teachers should consider students' emotional responses when designing game-based activities. Although competition, scores, and rankings may encourage participation, excessive competition can create pressure for learners who experience speaking anxiety or lack confidence. Teachers should therefore balance competitive activities with cooperative tasks, provide opportunities to repeat activities, and emphasize learning progress rather than rankings. Immediate feedback should also be used constructively to help students recognize areas for improvement without discouraging their participation.

For future research, further investigations should examine the effects of DGBL on specific components of speaking proficiency, including pronunciation, fluency, accuracy, complexity, and interaction. This recommendation is supported by Wang and Han (2021), whose findings showed that improvements were not equally observed across all oral production measures. Researchers should also distinguish direct speaking outcomes from supporting factors such as motivation, engagement, confidence, and anxiety to provide a clearer understanding of the actual contribution of DGBL to speaking development.

Furthermore, future studies should consider longer intervention periods and more consistent speaking assessment procedures. Differences in research settings, participants, platforms, methodologies, and outcome measurements among the reviewed studies make it difficult to compare their findings directly. Future research may also investigate how learner characteristics, digital accessibility, and different game mechanics influence learning outcomes. Qualitative approaches can complement speaking

assessments by exploring students' experiences, perceptions, and challenges during the implementation of DGBL.

Challenges and Limitations in DGBL Implementation

Despite the encouraging results, there are a number of difficulties in putting DGBL into practice. Because digital games rely on gadgets, internet connectivity, software availability, and digital literacy, technical issues are a significant challenge. Technical issues might cause students to lose learning time and lose interest in the task. Therefore, before implementing the chosen platform, educators must take accessibility into account.

The potential for gaming mechanisms to take precedence over learning objectives presents another difficulty. Instead of focusing on meaningful communication, students may prioritize speed, rewards, rankings, or scores. In their systematic review, Zhang and Hasim (2023) found that several gamification components, especially competition, had both potential benefits and drawbacks. This data suggests that careful pedagogical management is necessary for game-based learning. Instead of letting game mechanics become the main focus of the class, teachers should use them to enhance learning.

It is also difficult to make generalizations about the efficacy of DGBL due to the differences between the reviewed trials. Various age groups, educational levels, nations, platforms, study methodologies, intervention durations, and outcome measures were used in the investigations. While some research examined motivation, engagement, anxiety, or communication willingness, others tested speaking performance directly. As a result, while the results show a general good trend, they do not prove that all DGBL interventions will result in the same speaking outcomes. Future research should disclose intervention characteristics in more detail and using more precise and consistent measures of speaking proficiency.

Overall Synthesis of the Findings

The results of this comprehensive literature review can be summarized as follows: DGBL affects speaking development through behavioral, affective, linguistic, and motivational factors. First, game-based settings give students the chance to interact with and practice English. Second, interactive game features boost students' interest and engagement, which motivates them to participate more regularly. Third, learners have the chance to enhance their language proficiency through frequent engagement and prompt feedback. Fourth, effective engagement can boost self-esteem and lower anxiety, which could lead to an increase in communication

willingness. In addition to fostering a learning environment that encourages consistent speaking practice, these procedures can reinforce one another.

Additionally, the synthesis shows that DGBL is not a singular teaching strategy that works in all situation. Teachers employ various instructional designs to take advantage of the affordances offered by various platforms. Depending on whether teachers utilize the same platform for evaluation, oral output, vocabulary recognition, pronunciation practice, or collaborative communication, the results may differ. Therefore, the mix of technology, pedagogy, learner engagement, and meaningful language use-rather than just the existence of game elements-is what makes DGBL so important.

Overall, the data suggests that DGBL can aid in the development of EFL speaking by tackling two interrelated issues: psychological communication barriers and a lack of oral practice opportunities. The analyzed research show that playing digital games can improve practice and engagement while also fostering more stimulating and encouraging learning environments. However, educators must maintain specific communication goals, offer suitable scaffolding, and choose game mechanics that meet the needs of students. Therefore, when teachers strategically include DGBL with communicative learning principles, it can be a useful part of EFL speaking training.

Conclusion

This systematic literature review concludes that Digital Game-Based Learning (DGBL) provides meaningful support for EFL students' speaking development through interconnected linguistic, motivational, behavioral, and affective mechanisms. The synthesis of 20 selected studies indicates that DGBL can increase opportunities for English practice, encourage active classroom participation, strengthen motivation and engagement, support confidence, and reduce speaking-related anxiety. These findings suggest that digital games can create learning environments in which learners receive more opportunities to use English and participate in communicative activities.

The results also suggest that the impact of DGBL is not exclusively derived from digital technology. Game components like challenges, rewards, competition, scores, instant feedback, and repetitive practice can enhance learner engagement. Nonetheless, educators assess the educational significance of these components via instructional design. DGBL activities gain greater relevance for speaking proficiency when educators link them to oral production, interaction, explanation, discussion, role-playing, and other significant communicative tasks.

Regarding the second research question, the review identified Kahoot!, Quizizz, Wordwall, Duolingo, mobile game-based applications, and other digital game environments as platforms used in EFL learning. These platforms provide different instructional affordances, including interactive quizzes, vocabulary practice, self-paced learning, feedback, challenges, and collaborative activities. Therefore, teachers should select platforms according to specific learning objectives and learner characteristics rather than assuming that one platform provides identical benefits across contexts.

Notwithstanding the predominantly favourable results, the research also highlights weaknesses that necessitate attention. Variations in participants, educational environments, intervention lengths, research methodologies, platforms, and outcome metrics complicate direct comparisons between studies. Technical accessibility, digital proficiency, intense rivalry, and a disconnect between game mechanics and educational goals can diminish the instructional efficacy of DGBL. Thus, subsequent studies ought to explore extended intervention durations, employ more uniform assessments of speaking competence, and analyse the impact of unique game mechanics on distinct aspects of verbal communication.

Future research should also study the interplay between technological design and communicative pedagogy. Researchers can investigate how different platforms influence pronunciation, fluency, accuracy, complexity, interaction, and willingness to communicate. Qualitative research can complement quantitative evidence by examining learners' experiences, perceptions, emotional responses, and challenges during DGBL implementation. Such research can provide a deeper understanding of the conditions under which DGBL effectively supports EFL speaking development.

In summary, DGBL can serve purposes beyond only being a recreational educational tool. When educators incorporate digital games alongside clear learning goals, significant speaking exercises, constructive feedback, and encouraging classroom engagement, DGBL can offer enhanced chances for EFL students to practice and converse in English. The efficacy of this method is contingent upon the congruence of game design, educational intent, learner requirements, and communication goals.

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