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EFL LEARNERS' ATTITUDES AND LEARNING ENGAGEMENT IN COMMUNICATIVE GAME-BASED GRAMMAR TEACHING

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Abstract

Teaching communicative game-based grammar is believed to enhance English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' communicative competence. Nevertheless, EFL learners' learning engagement in communicative game-based grammar teaching (CGBGT) has not been substantially researched. This study investigates the attitudes and learning engagement of EFL learners in communicative game-based grammar teaching at the VE-CE Center in Ho Chi Minh City. Questionnaire data from 100 participants and semi-structured interview responses from 28 participants were analyzed using descriptive statistics and content analysis, respectively. The findings indicate that most EFL learners hold positive attitudes toward communicative game-based grammar teaching in terms of cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions. Participants also demonstrate moderate levels of engagement in behavior, emotions, and cognition during game-based communicative grammar teaching. The results highlight the importance of active participation, meaningful communication, peer collaboration, and learner autonomy. Teachers are encouraged to foster an engaging and error-tolerant atmosphere while promoting cultural understanding and providing constructive criticism. Administrators should support instructors in adopting communicative game-based techniques to create a stimulating learning environment. This research contributes to understanding the benefits and limitations of communicative game-based grammar training and offers suggestions for enhancing language teaching in EFL contexts, specifically at the VE-CE Center and in Vietnam as a whole. (202 words)

Keywords: *Communicative competence, communicative games, grammar, attitudes, learning engagement, EFL learners.*

1. Introduction

English grammar teaching in Vietnam has become a priority due to the recognition of English as a global language and the importance of proficiency in effective communication and integration into global society (Crystal, 2003). Grammar plays a significant role in language acquisition and effective communication by providing guidelines for word choice and sentence construction (Wang, 2010).

In Vietnam, game-based language learning approaches, particularly in English grammar teaching, have gained recognition and popularity among teachers (Pham, 2019). Studies have shown that game-based approaches significantly improve learners' grammar proficiency and motivation (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2020). The shift towards game-based approaches reflects the understanding that learners must grasp proper grammar

to communicate effectively and succeed professionally in an increasingly globalized world (Lam, 2022). Integrating game mechanics into grammar teaching stimulates excitement, competition, motivation, and interest among learners, ultimately leading to improved engagement and educational outcomes (Whitton, 2012; Kapp, 2012).

In conclusion, English grammar teaching in Vietnam is recognized as crucial for language proficiency. Game-based approaches offer numerous benefits, although time constraints remain a challenge. Nevertheless, the growing acceptance of game-based language learning approaches indicates a positive shift in English grammar teaching practices, equipping learners with the necessary skills for successful communication and professional development in the globalized world (Pham, 2019).

The study explores EFL learners' learning engagement in communicative game-based grammar teaching in the context of the Vocational Education and Continuing Education Center in District 3, Ho Chi Minh City. The following specific objectives are:

To find out EFL learners' attitudes toward communicative game-based grammar teaching;

To find out EFL learners' level of learning engagement in communicative game-based grammar teaching.

The research questions are formed as follows:

1. What are EFL learners' attitudes towards communicative game-based grammar teaching at Vocational Education and Continuing Education Center in District 3, Ho Chi Minh City?

2. To what extent do EFL learners get engaged in communicative game-based grammar teaching at Vocational Education and Continuing Education Center in District 3, Ho Chi Minh City?

2. Literature review

2.1 Roles of grammar games in communicative English teaching

Deborah (2012) suggests that learners tend to acquire language more effectively when engaging in enjoyable games and activities. Their proficiency with grammar is not a factor in how well they learn a foreign language. Games are an effective way to teach grammar in an ESL classroom, as demonstrated. They claimed that the best communicative activities include games and problem-solving exercises because they serve purposes other than fostering proper speech. They continue by explaining how grammar games assist learners in learning, but also in applying and using what they have learned.

According to a study by Nguyen et al. (2021), participating in communicative game-based activities frequently can help learners develop team-building skills and an appreciation for the work of others. Nguyen et al. (2021) state that when learners participate in games together, it helps them understand and appreciate the work of others, which in turn promotes the development of team-building skills.

2.2 Attitudes toward communicative game-based grammar teaching

Attitude encompasses feelings about an object. Amin and Sundari (2020) define it with cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components. Positive language learning attitudes enhance the process, while unfavorable ones hinder it. Effective teaching methods and classroom environment influence attitudes. Learners' success is influenced by attitudes. The study evaluates how satisfaction with tasks, classroom atmosphere, and teaching affects attitudes in language learning.

2.3 Learning engagement in communicative game-based grammar teaching

Learner engagement involves a student's mental and emotional investment in learning and is linked to important educational results (Wang & Degol, 2014). Lombardi (2015) considers it vital in education due to its correlation with significant outcomes. Conversely, Rumberger and Rotermund (2012) emphasize that

passive education participation reduces interest, motivation, and achievement, contributing to high dropout rates. These findings underscore learner engagement's pivotal role in academic success, necessitating educators to encourage and sustain active engagement in learning. Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004) say that much research is done to describe the three main parts of engagement: behavior, emotion, and cognition.

2.4 Prior studies

Several studies have examined the use of games in English teaching and learning, particularly in the context of grammar instruction in Vietnam. Cheryl and Renee (2017) conducted a two-year investigation on the effects of video games on the communication skills of chemical engineering learners, finding that incorporating game-based homework portals improved writing communication skills. Nguyen (2010) emphasized the importance of games in removing barriers and energizing the classroom environment during grammar lessons in high school. Huynh (2008) explored the advantages of language games, including grammar games, for non-English majors at An Giang University, highlighting their significant impact on learning. Tran and Nguyen (2020) focused on English-major learners' perceptions of mastering grammar for communication at the University of Phan Thiet. Lam (2022) implemented a study on the effects of gamifying English grammar teaching, which demonstrated the positive effects of games on learners' disposition, creating a lighthearted atmosphere and providing opportunities for practice and collaboration.

These studies collectively highlight the challenges of traditional grammar teaching methods and suggest that games can be effective alternatives for engaging learners and improving their grammar skills in both university and high school contexts. These researches have strengthened their confidence in examining how EFL learners engage in communicative grammar teaching at the Vocational Education and Continuing Education Center of District 3 in Ho Chi Minh City.

3. Research methodology

3.1 Research context and participants

This study used a mixed methods research design to determine how EFL learners feel about communicative game-based grammar teaching and how much they are interested in learning from it (Creswell, 2014). This design combined qualitative and quantitative research methods so that the research topic could be looked at more deeply. In particular, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used to collect qualitative and quantitative data, which gave a complete picture of how EFL learners feel about communicative game-based grammar teaching and their degree of engagement towards game-based communicative grammar teaching. The study was conducted in Vocational Education and Continuing Education Center in District 3, Ho Chi Minh City. Convenience sampling was used to choose the participants in this study (Creswell, 2014). This type of sampling was suitable for this study because all 100 learners from three classes (10B1, 10B2, and 10B3) were required to take English classes and had taken at least one year of communicative game-based English teaching.

Among 100 participants, 59 (59%) participants self-reported that their English proficiency was at the elementary level, 28 (28%) participants believed they had an intermediate level of English proficiency, and only 2 (2%) self-evaluate that their English proficiency was at the advanced level. The remaining participants were unsure of their English proficiency. Of the 100 participants who completed the questionnaires, 28 were invited to participate in semi-structured interviews on a voluntary basis.

3.2 Research instruments

The research used two research instruments, a closed-ended questionnaire and semi-structured interviews, to collect data. The questionnaire consisted of three sections, gathering general participant

information, learners' attitudes about game-based communicative grammar teaching, and their levels of learning engagement. Likert scale interviews were conducted with 28 learners who volunteered, providing further insights into their thoughts and opinions. The interviews were conducted in English and orally translated into Vietnamese to ensure comprehension. Each interview lasted approximately 15 minutes, and the participants were seen as representatives of the learner population.

3.3. Procedures for data collection and analysis

In the academic year 2022-2023, the data collection took place at the end of April or the start of May. Since the second semester was concluding and the learners' schoolwork was almost complete, they had an overview of how they had implemented their communicative game-based English grammatical teaching. One hundred questionnaires were distributed to learners in grade 10 at the VE-CE D3 facility to collect data. Six invited, based on their willingness, selected learner groups from three classes that used games to teach English grammar participated in the interview. Each group had five learners. The interview's goal was made evident in advance. Each learner was allotted five to seven minutes to respond to the interview questions. The responses from the learners were recorded for analysis.

4. Results and discussion

4.1 Results

4.1.1 EFL learners' attitudes towards communicative game-based grammar teaching

Table 1: EFL learners' attitudes towards communicative game-based grammar teaching

		N=100	
No.	Components	M	SD
1	Cognitive attitudes	3.90	.69
2	Affective attitudes	3.69	.75
3	Behavioral attitudes	3.90	.78
	Average	3.83	.65

Note: M: mean; SD: Standard deviation

Table 1 reveals that learners expressed positive attitudes toward communicative game-based grammar teaching across three attitude components (M = 3.83; SD = .65). The learners' attitudes for each element, including cognitive, affective, and behavioral, were relatively high. Despite having high means, learners' responses to each component were different. The learners' reactions to cognitive attitudes (M=3.90; SD=.69) and behavioral attitudes (M=3.90; SD=.78) were the highest of the three attitude components. The components of affective attitudes ranked third (M=3.69; SD=.75) compared to the previously mentioned parts; this suggests that the participants had slightly positive affective attitudes towards communicative game-based grammar teaching.

Cognitive attitudes toward communicative game-based grammar teaching

According to the data in Table 2, participants generally liked the idea of using games for learning English but had reservations about its effectiveness in improving grammar skills (M=3.90, SD=.68). They strongly believed that English grammar was crucial for their studies (item 1.3: M=4.31, SD=.94) and felt that the grammar rules they learned would benefit their everyday English usage (item 1.4: M=3.98, SD=.88). However, they expressed a need for more confidence in the efficacy of game-based grammar teaching to

enhance their grammar skills (item 1.2: M=3.69, SD=.94). Most respondents agreed that games in English grammar lessons could enhance their speaking ability (item 1.1: M=3.77, SD=.93), aid in comprehending grammar rules (item 1.5: M=3.79, SD=.89), and improve their effectiveness in solving grammar exercises (item 1.6: M=3.86, SD=.96).

Table 2: EFL learners' cognitive attitudes toward communicative game-based grammar teaching

		N=100	
No.	Components	M	SD
1.1	Learning communicative English grammar through games can help me improve my English-speaking ability.	3.77	.93
1.2	I think learning communicative English grammar through games can help me be better at English grammar than before.	3.69	.94
1.3	I believe English grammar is essential for my studying.	4.31	.94
1.4	The grammar rules I learn are helpful for me in daily English conversation.	3.98	.88
1.5	I think games in English grammar lessons are a good way for me to understand the grammar rules quickly.	3.79	.89
1.6	I think games in English grammar lessons can help me solve grammar exercises better.	3.86	.96
	Average	3.90	.68

Note: M: mean; SD: Standard deviation

Interview findings showcased diverse perspectives on cognitive attitudes toward communicative game-based grammar teaching. Participants acknowledged the practicality and stimulation of this approach, emphasizing its ability to promote thinking and engagement. Games were noted to enhance curiosity, cognitive processes, and comprehension, fostering vocabulary and grammar improvement while stimulating learners' creativity and innovation. However, a few participants expressed concerns about potential distractions from grammar content and limited application in daily life. Overall, the results indicated positive cognitive attitudes toward communicative game-based grammar teaching, but some skepticism regarding its practical effectiveness.

"The communicative game-based grammar teaching is more practical than traditional teaching methods, and it helps my brain be stimulated, promoting my thinking more than usual." (S2)

"Learning grammar through games helps learners be more creative and have more ideas." (S13)

"Lessons through games are not helpful because learners only focus on the game and do not focus on the grammar content they are learning." (S17)

Affective attitudes toward communicative game-based grammar teaching

The data from Table 3 indicates positive attitudes towards learning English grammar through games, with an overall mean score of 3.69 and a standard deviation of .75. Participants expressed enjoyment in learning grammar through activities (item 1.12: M=3.93, SD=.95) but had a neutral agreement regarding increased confidence in speaking abilities (item 1.9: M=3.34, SD=1.09). They agreed that class enthusiasm increased (item 1.7: M=3.90, SD=1.07) and found learning grammar through games enjoyable (item 1.8: M=3.77, SD=.97). They also expressed curiosity about grammar rules (item 1.10: M=3.59, SD=.97) and satisfaction with their assessment results (item 1.13: M=3.66, SD=1.07).

Table 3: EFL learners' affective attitudes toward communicative game-based grammar teaching

		N=100	
No.	Components	M	SD
1.7	I like the excitement of class when I learn English grammar through games.	3.90	1.07
1.8	I like games of grammar when I learn English grammar through games.	3.77	.97
1.9	I feel proud of my speaking skill when I learn English grammar through games.	3.34	1.09
1.10	I feel curious about grammar rules when I learn English grammar through games.	3.59	.97
1.11	I like English grammar when I learn English grammar through games.	3.67	.95
1.12	I feel happy when I learn English grammar through games.	3.93	.95
1.13	I feel satisfied with my results when taking the quizzes in the English grammar lessons through games.	3.66	1.07
	Average	3.69	.75

Note: M: mean; SD: Standard deviation

Interview findings revealed that EFL learners had diverse affective attitudes toward communicative game-based grammar teaching. Most participants expressed enthusiasm, enjoyment, and a desire to learn more through games. They found games facilitated communication with teachers and created a positive learning environment. However, a few participants found the approach repetitive or distracting, preferring more focused traditional teachings. Overall, communicative game-based grammar teaching fostered positive affective attitudes but faced some criticism due to noise and distractions.

"When I incorporate game-based grammar lessons, I feel happier and more excited, and I find myself wanting to learn more grammar in future game-based lessons." (S9)

"I feel close and easy to communicate with teachers during grammar lessons through games." (S11)

"I would not say I like it. Learning grammar through games is very noisy, making me often distracted." (S17)

"I prefer to participate in traditional lessons because they make me more focused." (S8)

Behavioral attitudes towards communicative game-based grammar teaching

Table 4 highlights learners' positive behavioral dispositions towards game-based communicative grammar teaching. The highest mean score was for item 1.15 (M=3.85, SD=1.08), indicating their interest in learning from classmates who excel in English grammar lessons through games. The lowest mean score was for item 1.14 (M=3.74, SD=1.03), revealing their motivation to practice English-speaking skills when they hear others perform well in game-based lessons. Learners showed willingness to engage in additional practice to improve (item 1.16: M=3.94, SD=.93), exhibited a competitive spirit (item 1.17: M=3.96, SD=.95), and were committed to reviewing grammar rules (item 1.18: M=4.02, SD=0.92) and seeking help from teachers when facing difficulties.

Table 4: EFL learners' behavioral attitudes toward communicative game-based grammar teaching

No.	Components	N=100 M	SD
1.14	When I hear a learner in my class speaking English well in the English grammar lessons through games, I want to practice speaking with them.	3.74	1.03
1.15	When a learner in my class does English grammar well in the English grammar lessons through games, I want to study from them.	3.85	1.08
1.16	I will do much practice if I have many grammar mistakes when playing games in class.	3.94	.93
1.17	I will try to do the tasks better if the other groups have more points than my group in the English grammar lessons through games.	3.96	.95
1.18	I will review grammar rules taught when I need help understanding.	4.02	.92
1.19	I will ask my teacher if I need to know when I learn English grammar through games.	3.92	.98
	Average	3.91	.78

Note: M: mean; SD: Standard deviation

Interview findings revealed that EFL learners exhibited proactive and interactive behaviors when they noticed a classmate excelling in grammar during game-based lessons. Participants sought advice, explanations, and guidance from successful classmates, observed their learning methods, and engaged in collaborative learning and discussions to enhance their English language skills.

"Ask him or her to explain the grammar I have learned if I need help understanding." (S6)

"Ask for tips to learn grammar well, observe how to do the test, and ask about his/her thinking direction to learn from." (S1)

"Through communication and learning from him/her after participating in those lessons, I will ask him/her to guide me so that I can participate the next time in the form of learning English through the games to help me gain experience." (S23)

4.1.2 EFL learners' **engagement** towards communicative game-based grammar teaching

Table 5 shows that overall engagement was lower than attitudes (item 4: M=3.56, SD=.74). Of the three kinds, emotional engagement was the highest (item 2: M=3.69, SD=.89). The second highest was behavioral engagement (item 1: M=3.52, SD=.72). The least was for cognitive engagement (item 3: M=3.47, SD=.83).

Table 5: EFL learners' engagement toward communicative game-based grammar teaching

No.	Components	N=100 M	SD
1	Behavioral engagement	3.52	.72
2	Emotional engagement	3.69	.89
3	Cognitive engagement	3.47	.83
	Overall	3.56	.74

Note: M: mean; SD: Standard deviation

Behavioral engagement toward communicative game-based grammar teaching

Table 6 presents learners' behavioral engagement with game-based communicative grammar teaching, indicating a moderate level of engagement (M=3.52, SD=.72). The highest mean score was for item 2.10 (M=4.10, SD=1.01), indicating learners' commitment to attending class on time. The lowest mean score was for item 2.2 (M=2.92, SD=1.07), suggesting occasional reluctance to share knowledge and collaborate with

classmates during game-based lessons. Items 2.1 and 2.4 showed neutrality, with learners occasionally asking about grammatical issues (M=2.95, SD=1.08) and displaying some preparedness in reviewing grammar rules (M=3.39, SD=1.072). Other items indicated that learners usually engaged in practice (item 2.8: M=3.50, SD=.95) and sought multiple sources for grammar rules (item 2.9: M=3.51, SD=.98). They demonstrated willingness to think critically (item 2.7: M=3.64, SD=1.01), complete assigned tasks (item 2.3: M=3.67, SD=1.01), study diligently (item 2.5: M=3.70, SD=.96), and actively participate (item 2.6: M=3.83, SD=1.05) in game-based grammar lessons.

Table 6: EFL learners' behavioral engagement toward communicative game-based grammar teaching

		N=100	
No.	Components	M	SD
2.1	I try to use English to ask questions related to grammar rules in English lessons based on games.	2.95	1.08
2.2	I try to share my knowledge of grammar rules in game-based lessons with everyone in my class.	2.92	1.07
2.3	I try to complete all the tasks assigned by the teacher about grammar rules that apply in communicative English lessons based on games.	3.67	1.01
2.4	I try to prepare grammar rules before participating in English grammar lessons through games.	3.39	1.07
2.5	I try to study hard in English grammar lessons through games.	3.70	.96
2.6	I try to actively participate in game activities in English grammar lessons through games.	3.83	1.05
2.7	I give them a lot of consideration when I play exams in English language education via games.	3.64	1.01
2.8	I try to do much practice in English grammar to understand how to use grammar rules in communication.	3.50	.95
2.9	I try to search for grammar rules from different sources to ensure I understand them.	3.51	.98
2.10	I try to be at class on time to participate in English grammar lessons through games.	4.10	1.01
	Average	3.52	.72

Note: M: mean; SD: Standard deviation

Numerous participants demonstrated consistent and active engagement, indicating their eagerness to participate in English grammar activities through games. They perceived these activities as opportunities to enhance their grammar knowledge, identify and correct errors, and continuously improve themselves.

"Always. I like to experience new lessons and learn a lot of grammar knowledge from my friends." (S3)

A few participants, however, reported occasional or infrequent participation. As mentioned by Learner 18, "Never." He explained that he disliked participating in these activities because he did not comprehend English grammar and preferred merely observing. Most participants actively participate in such activities, indicating a generally positive and enthusiastic attitude toward participating in English grammar teachings through games.

Emotional engagement toward communicative game-based grammar teaching

Table 7 examines learners' emotional engagement with game-based grammar teaching. The highest mean score was for item 2.12 (M=3.88, SD=1.07), indicating learners' sense of inclusion in activities. The lowest mean score was for item 2.13 (M=3.51, SD=1.20), suggesting less excitement when communicating in English during game-based grammar lessons. Overall, learners' affective engagement (M=3.69, SD=.89)

was moderately high. They exhibited some competitiveness (item 2.17: M=3.56, SD=1.23), enthusiasm for preparing grammar rules (item 2.15: M=3.64, SD=1.03), enjoyment in group work (item 2.11: M=3.72, SD=1.09), engagement with tasks assigned by team leaders (item 2.14: M=3.72, SD=1.12), and positive emotions when receiving peer feedback (item 2.16: M=3.79, SD=1.17) during game-based grammar lessons.

Table 7: EFL learners' emotional engagement toward communicative game-based grammar teaching

		N=100	
No.	Components	M	SD
2.11	Working in a group in English grammar lessons through games excites me.	3.72	1.09
2.12	I feel included when I do the activities in English grammar lessons through games.	3.88	1.07
2.13	I feel excited when I communicate in English with others in English grammar lessons through games.	3.51	1.20
2.14	I find it interesting to complete all the tasks the team leader gave regarding grammar rules in the game-based lessons.	3.72	1.12
2.15	I feel excited when participating in preparing grammar rules in groups before every English grammar lesson through games.	3.64	1.03
2.16	I feel happy when my friends give me their ideas about my answers in English grammar lessons through games.	3.79	1.17
2.17	I like competing with my friends in all activities of English grammar lessons through games.	3.56	1.23
	Average	3.69	.89

Note: M: mean; SD: Standard deviation

Participants' experiences in group and pair activities while learning grammar through games evoked various emotions. Many expressed enjoyments, satisfaction, and the ability to absorb ideas from team members. They valued hearing different opinions and forming new friendships. However, some participants had mixed reactions due to conflicts and a lack of control, preferring to work independently. The interview data indicates a range of reactions, both positive and negative, towards collaborative activities in game-based grammar learning.

"I always find teamwork fun, exciting, and interesting. I can absorb the ideas of the team members." (S1)

"I always like working in groups because I can listen to many opinions from the members and refine ideas." (S4)

"I find working in groups well because it helps me have more friends and learn more from my classmates." (S25)

"I sometimes like to work in groups. Sometimes there is disagreement when working in groups, which stagnates the activity." (S5)

Cognitive engagement toward communicative game-based grammar teaching

Table 8 indicates learners' moderate cognitive engagement (M=3.47, SD=.83) with game-based grammar teaching. Most learners were able to complete assigned assignments (item 2.18: M=3.63, SD=1.03) and had a general understanding of the taught grammar principles (item 2.19: M=3.41, SD=1.082). However, there was occasional difficulty in creating complete sentences (item 2.22: M=3.29, SD=1.140) and resorting to additional reading for clearer comprehension (item 2.21: M=3.31, SD=1.169). Learners demonstrated an intention to excel in grammar for university exams (item 2.20: M=3.64, SD=1.202) and engaged in self-reflection when new grammar principles were introduced (item 2.23: M=3.52, SD=1.096). The cognitive

engagement subscale reflected moderate engagement and comprehension, with potential for further self-directed learning and deeper understanding.

Table 8: EFL learners' cognitive engagement toward communicative game-based grammar teaching

No.	Components	N=100 M	SD
2.18	I can do all the tasks the teacher assigned regarding grammar rules based on games.	3.63	1.03
2.19	I understand most of the grammar rules being taught in class.	3.41	1.08
2.20	I plan to learn grammar well to enter the University entrance exam when I learn English grammar through games.	3.64	1.20
2.21	I read different books to learn more about grammar rules to make sure I understand grammar rules clearly after I learn English grammar through games.	3.31	1.17
2.22	I can create complete sentences with the correct grammar after I learn English grammar through games.	3.29	1.14
2.23	When the teacher teaches me different English grammar rules through games in my English grammar lessons, I make sure I understand what they are for what usage.	3.52	1.10
	Average	3.47	.83

Note: M: mean; SD: Standard deviation

Following implementing English grammar lessons through games, participants shared various strategies they employed to improve their grammar skills. Many respondents noted the value of revisiting and practicing what they had learned by doing things like writing down example sentences and using grammar in everyday life, revising before class, and recording and posting lessons on their walls.

"I always write down one or more example sentences about the grammar I have learned. I also regularly apply it in my daily life." (S2)

Some people devised imaginative ways to learn grammar, such as telling themselves stories in English while driving or thinking and chatting in English alone in their cars.

"I often think in English and talk to myself using the grammar I learned while driving." (S11)

Several learners credited using online resources, such as exercises, applications, movies, and videos, with helping them improve their command of grammar.

"I constantly review the grammar I have learned and search for more related exercises online to practice." (S6)

The interviews' findings show that after participating in game-based grammar classes, EFL learners employed several strategies for cognitive engagement to solidify their grasp of the material and its practical application.

4.2. Discussion

4.2.1 EFL Learners' attitudes towards communicative game-based grammar teaching

The study's findings suggest that most EFL learners have positive attitudes towards communicative game-based grammar teaching, particularly in terms of improving language skills and comprehension. However, there are mixed affective attitudes, with neutral feelings towards speaking abilities. Behavioral attitudes show a willingness to engage in additional practice and seek assistance. Some learners express negative cognitive attitudes, feeling that the approach is not helpful in practice. Limited time and opportunities for practice, as well as a lack of confidence in speaking skills, may contribute to these attitudes. Enhancements in teaching strategies and classroom environments could address these areas.

The studies by Pillai (2014), Tran and Nguyen (2020), Lam (2022), and this current study highlight the cognitive and affective attitudes of EFL learners towards game-based communicative grammar teaching. While there is recognition of the importance of English grammar, there are mixed attitudes towards the efficacy of game-based teaching in enhancing grammar skills. Learners find traditional grammar learning methods monotonous, but when engaged in game-based teaching, they exhibit enthusiasm and enjoyment. Gamification increases learners' confidence and promotes collaborative learning. It is important to consider learners' affective attitudes and incorporate game-based approaches to create an engaging and motivating learning environment for grammar teaching.

4.2.2 EFL learners' engagement towards communicative game-based grammar teaching

The study focuses on behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement in communicative game-based grammar teaching for EFL learners. The results show that participants exhibited moderate levels of engagement in all three aspects. They actively participated, experienced positive emotions, and showed varying degrees of confidence and comprehension. The engagement can be attributed to the active learning and participation promoted by the game-based approach, tapping into learners' intrinsic motivation, fostering social interaction and collaboration, and perceiving the objectives as relevant. However, some learners disliked certain aspects of the activities, such as classroom noise and the need for clarification and a better understanding of grammar.

The findings from Lam (2022), Pillai (2014), and this study provide insights into EFL learners' engagement in game-based grammar teaching. Learners generally showed a positive attitude and moderate behavioral engagement, attending classes and participating in activities. However, there was a need for additional support to encourage language use and confidence. Affective engagement was mostly positive, with learners demonstrating enthusiasm and collaboration but room for improvement in excitement during communication. In terms of cognitive engagement, learners had moderate engagement with games but could benefit from self-directed learning and deeper comprehension. Overall, there is potential for enhancing language use, self-directed learning, and comprehension to improve the effectiveness of game-based grammar teaching.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

The study reveals that EFL learners generally hold moderately positive attitudes towards communicative game-based grammar teaching. They believe that learning grammar through games can enhance language abilities and comprehension. Participants exhibit positive emotions and enjoy class activities, but their attitudes towards practical application and speaking skills are neutral. They engage in additional practice, seek assistance, and respond competitively to improve performance. Learners demonstrate moderate levels of behavioral, affective, and cognitive engagement with game-based teaching. Comparisons with traditional grammar classes show that game-based approaches stimulate interest, reduce apprehension, and foster enthusiasm and enjoyment. However, some learners express reservations and desire increased confidence and comprehension. Further research is needed to optimize the efficacy of game-based teaching and cater to individual learner needs.

Some pedagogical implications are presented to surmount the challenges of implementing game-based communicative grammar teaching in Vietnam's Vocational Education - Continuing Education Centers. For learners, engaging in communicative game-based grammar teaching can help improve speaking skills. They should actively participate, seek assistance, and leverage positive emotional experiences. Competitive activities and additional materials outside class can enhance language abilities. Open communication with teachers about difficulties is important. For teachers, integrating game-based methodologies creates an

exciting learning environment. They should use diversions, group activities, and explanations to ensure understanding and promote self-reflection. Support and encouragement are crucial. Administrators play a role in supporting teachers, providing resources, and fostering an inclusive environment. They should encourage implementation, allocate time for evaluation and improvement, and support research on game-based teaching effectiveness. Overall, these efforts contribute to a positive learning environment and student progress in English grammar.

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