

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. Findings

This chapter presents the findings of the research based on the data collected through classroom observation and interviews with two participants. The participants in this study were coded as P1 and P2. The observation was conducted in Cross Cultural Communication classes, namely class 23 C and class 23 A, where the lecturer used Bamboozle as a digital game-based learning medium. Meanwhile, the interview was conducted to explore the participants' personal experiences and strategies in using digital games for English learning.

The findings are organized based on the two research questions of this study. The first research question focuses on how students describe their experiences using digital games for English learning. Therefore, the first theme discusses students' experiences in using Digital Game-Based Language Learning (DGBLL), including their understanding, motivation, types of games used, classroom engagement, anxiety, and perceived benefits. The second research question focuses on what English learning strategies students employ to improve their English language skills while engaging with digital games. Therefore, the second theme discusses the strategies used by the participants,

such as guessing meaning from context, repetition, collaboration, using feedback, managing anxiety, and autonomous learning.

The findings are presented in themes and sub-themes to provide a clear narrative description of the participants' experiences. Direct quotations from the participants are included to strengthen the findings and to show their lived experiences in using digital games for English learning.

1. Students' Experiences in Using Digital Games for English Learning

The first theme describes the participants' experiences in using digital games as a medium for English learning. Based on the interview, both participants had experiences with digital games in different contexts, both inside and outside the classroom. They had used several platforms such as Duolingo, Quizizz, Kahoot, Bamboozle, Quizlet, and other English-based games. Their experiences showed that digital games created a more enjoyable, motivating, and interactive learning atmosphere. However, each participant had a different way of experiencing DGBLL depending on their background, English skill level, and learning needs.

a. Students' First Experiences in Using DGBLL

The researcher found that both participants had experienced Digital Game-Based Language Learning before studying at university. Their first experiences showed that digital games had been used in different

learning contexts. P1 first used digital games for English learning during senior high school through Duolingo, while P2 first experienced digital games at high school through Quizizz and Bamboozle. This finding indicates that both participants were already familiar with digital games as English learning media before they learned the concept of DGBLL more deeply in university courses.

P1 stated that she first used digital games as a medium for learning English when she was in senior high school. She explained:

“I first used digital games as a medium for learning English when I was in senior high school. For example, I often used Duolingo because the visual was enjoyable and the difficulty level could be adjusted, so it was easy to use. However, I learned the concept of DGBLL more deeply when I studied at university. Some young lecturers also used DGBLL as a learning medium.” (P1, interview data)

Based on the statement, P1’s first experience with DGBLL was related to independent learning outside the classroom. She used Duolingo because it was easy to use, visually interesting, and suitable for her learning level. Her statement also shows that although she had used digital games since senior high school, her deeper understanding of DGBLL as a learning approach developed later during university learning. This means that P1 experienced DGBLL in two ways: first as an independent learning medium, and later as part of classroom learning guided by lecturers.

P2 also had experience using digital games before university. He explained:

“I first used digital games when I studied at high school. At that time, we used Quizizz as an online assessment platform. In grade twelve, I also used Bamboozle in groups. Each group chose a number, then a question appeared, and we had to change the sentence structure into present or past tense.” (P2, interview data)

Based on P2’s statement, his first experience with DGBLL was more connected to classroom activities. He used Quizizz as an online assessment platform and Bamboozle as a group-based learning activity. Through Bamboozle, he did not only answer questions individually, but also worked with group members to solve grammar-related tasks. This shows that P2 experienced digital games as a collaborative and formative learning activity that helped him practice English in a more interactive way.

In addition, P2 also explained that he first used Duolingo in grade twelve because he wanted to prepare himself before entering university. He stated:

“I first knew Duolingo when I was in grade twelve because I wanted to prepare myself to continue my study at UIN Antasari Banjarmasin. Since English learning at school was not very intensive and the learning time was limited, I wanted to learn more through Duolingo. When I tried it, learning English through Duolingo was really enjoyable.” (P2, interview data)

Based on the statement, P2 used Duolingo as an additional learning medium outside the classroom. His reason for using Duolingo was related to his personal need to improve his English before continuing to higher education. This shows that DGBLL was not only experienced by P2 through teacher-guided classroom activities, but also through self-directed learning. Overall, the participants' first experiences indicate that DGBLL can be used in both formal and informal learning contexts. P1 mostly started from independent learning through Duolingo, while P2 experienced both classroom-based games such as Quizizz and Bamboozle and independent learning through Duolingo.

b. Students' Initial Understanding and Familiarity with DGBLL

The researcher found that both participants had a basic understanding of Digital Game-Based Language Learning. They understood DGBLL as a learning approach that uses digital games to support English learning. However, their explanations showed slightly different points of view. P1 understood DGBLL not only from personal experience but also from the theoretical explanation she received during her study as an English Education student. Meanwhile, P2 understood DGBLL more from its practical function as a learning method that makes English learning more interesting, formative, and easier to understand.

P1 stated that DGBLL was already familiar to her because she had encountered it in several university courses. She explained:

“DGBLL is a language learning approach that uses digital games as the main medium. As an English Education student, I often find DGBLL from my experience in courses and from theoretical explanations taught and applied by lecturers. DGBLL uses game elements such as challenges, rewards, and interaction, so it can create an enjoyable learning environment, even for university students.”(P1, interview data)

Based on the statement, P1 described DGBLL as a structured learning approach. She did not only see digital games as entertainment, but also as a medium that contains learning elements. Her explanation shows that she connected DGBLL with game elements such as challenge, reward, and interaction. These elements helped her understand that digital games could be used to create an engaging English learning environment.

P2 also had a positive understanding of DGBLL. He explained:

“As far as I know, DGBLL is a digital game-based learning method. It is about how we use games to make learning more formative. The use of games can make English lessons more interesting and can also help us understand English learning more easily through digital games. Game-based learning can also increase students’ motivation to learn.” (P2, interview data)

Based on the interview, P2 understood DGBLL as a method that helps students learn English in a more interesting way. He emphasized that digital games could make English learning easier to understand and

could increase students' motivation. This finding indicates that both participants were familiar with DGBLL, although P1 explained it from a more theoretical and academic perspective, while P2 explained it from a more practical learning experience.

c. Digital Games as Enjoyable and Motivating Learning Media

The researcher found that digital games created a more enjoyable and motivating atmosphere in English learning. Both participants described DGBLL as a learning medium that made them feel more relaxed, engaged, and motivated compared to conventional learning activities. The enjoyable atmosphere came from game elements such as score, level, reward, challenge, ranking, and visual feedback.

P1 stated that learning English through digital games felt more relaxed and less rigid than learning only from textbooks or theoretical explanations. She explained:

“In my opinion, learning English through digital games feels more relaxed and not too rigid compared to learning that is too theoretical or only from textbooks. If I only learn from books or material explanations, sometimes I get bored quickly. But when games are used, the atmosphere becomes more fun and makes me more involved. In games, there are challenges, points, levels, or scores, so indirectly they motivate me to continue and try again. I think digital games can also reduce stress and pressure in learning because learning feels like an enjoyable activity, not something too heavy.” (P1, interview data)

Based on P1's statement, digital games helped her experience English learning in a more enjoyable way. She felt that the game elements encouraged her to continue learning and trying. The presence of challenges and levels made the learning process feel less monotonous. P1 also described that digital games reduced stress and pressure because the learning activity felt lighter and more enjoyable.

P2 also expressed a similar experience. He stated:

"When a lecturer uses this method, I feel that the class becomes more fun. Usually, many games have ranking features, and because of that, we feel motivated to get first place. Indirectly, it triggers our motivation to learn English because there is a feeling of excitement and enjoyment. There is no pressure or stress when we learn English in class. When I use Duolingo, I also feel satisfied because every time I finish a level, I feel that my skill is improving. There is a kind of personal satisfaction because of that. Sometimes, when we finish challenges, we also get rewards or appreciation, and that can increase our motivation to learn English." (P2, interview data)

Based on the statement, P2 experienced digital games as a learning medium that increased his motivation through ranking, score, reward, and level completion. He felt motivated when he saw his progress in the game. The feeling of satisfaction after completing a level also encouraged him to continue learning English. This finding indicates that digital games did not only make learning enjoyable but also encouraged the participants to become more active and motivated in learning.

d. Types of Digital Games Used by Students

The researcher found that the participants used different types of digital games for English learning. P1 used both educational games and commercial games with English content. She mentioned Duolingo, Quizlet, Bamboozle, Quizizz, and English-based RPG or puzzle games. P2 mostly used educational game platforms such as Quizizz, Kahoot, Bamboozle, and Duolingo.

P1 explained:

“Usually, I use Duolingo when I study by myself. In class, sometimes lecturers also use games or platforms like Quizlet, Quizizz, and others for learning. Besides that, I sometimes play English-language games, such as RPG or puzzle games. From those games, I can also learn because I have to understand instructions, dialogues, or texts that appear in the game. So, I think games like that also help increase vocabulary and help me learn English in a more relaxed way. Sometimes it is more impactful and useful.” (P1, interview data)

Based on P1’s statement, she did not limit digital games only to classroom platforms. She also considered Duolingo, RPG, and puzzle games as part of her English learning experience. In those games, she learned English through instructions, dialogue, narrative, and vocabulary that appeared during gameplay. This finding indicates that P1 experienced English learning not only through formal educational games but also through immersive games that contained English input.

Meanwhile, P2 described the use of digital games in class and outside the classroom. He stated:

“In class, the game that is usually used is Quizizz because it is quite easy to access and free. Usually, we enter the game using a code or QR code. Sometimes Kahoot is also used in English learning by one of the lecturers at UIN Antasari Banjarmasin. For independent learning outside the class, I usually use Duolingo because it is easy to access anywhere and anytime. In my opinion, Duolingo has interesting features such as matching English sentences, fill in the blank, and voice features. For example, we are asked to pronounce a sentence, and the application checks how correct our pronunciation is. This also belongs to speaking practice. There is also listening practice, such as listening to a story or podcast, and in the middle of the conversation we are asked to answer fill-in-the-blank questions based on what the native speaker says.” (P2, interview data)

Based on the statement, P2 used Duolingo as his main platform for independent English learning. He mentioned several features that supported language skills, such as matching sentences, fill in the blank, pronunciation practice, speaking practice, listening practice, and grammar practice. This finding shows that P2 experienced digital games as a practical and flexible tool for improving English skills.

Both participants also had experience using games in the classroom. P1 mentioned Quizizz, Quizlet, and Bamboozle, while P2 mentioned Quizizz, Kahoot, and Bamboozle. The classroom games were mostly used for quizzes, practice, discussion, and reviewing material. Outside

the classroom, both participants used Duolingo independently, while P1 also explored narrative-based games and online multiplayer games.

e. Classroom Interaction and Learning Engagement through DGBLL

The researcher found that digital games supported classroom interaction and learning engagement. Based on the observation in Cross Cultural Communication classes 23 C and 23 A, the lecturer used Bamboozle as a digital game-based learning medium. The lecturer began the class by explaining the course contract and giving an introduction to the Cross Cultural Communication course. After that, the lecturer divided the class into two groups and introduced Bamboozle as the learning medium.

During the learning activity, the lecturer gave instructions, explained the rules of the game, and guided the students during the game. The lecturer also consistently asked students to read and translate the English questions before answering. After students answered the questions, the lecturer gave direct feedback and explained the answers in more detail. At the end of the activity, the lecturer gave appreciation and scores as a form of evaluation and motivation.

The observation showed that students were actively involved in the learning process. They listened to the lecturer's explanation, paid attention to the game rules, answered questions displayed through the projector, and discussed with their friends during the game. Students also participated in reading and translating the questions together. They responded positively to the feedback and scores given by the lecturer.

This classroom situation was also reflected in P1's interview. She stated:

"If I learn by myself, I usually use solo games like Duolingo or English-language games that have narratives and texts, so I can understand instructions, stories, or new vocabulary. In class, the interaction is usually more about discussion with friends, especially when the lecturer uses digital games. We can work together, answer questions, and help each other if someone does not understand."
(P1, interview data)

Based on the statement, P1 experienced classroom digital games as a collaborative activity. She did not only answer questions individually, but also worked with friends, discussed answers, and helped each other. This finding is supported by the observation data, which showed that students discussed lightly, read and translated questions, and responded actively during the game.

P2 also explained that classroom digital games depended on the lecturer's learning focus. He stated:

“If it is in class, it depends on what the lecturer teaches. For example, if the topic is grammar, the lecturer will give grammar questions through digital games, whether using Kahoot, Quizizz, and others.” (P2, interview data)

Based on P2’s statement, digital games were used to support the material taught by the lecturer. The game was not separated from the lesson, but was connected to the learning topic. This finding indicates that teacher guidance was important in classroom DGBLL because the lecturer directed the activity, explained the content, gave feedback, and ensured that students understood the material, not only played the game.

f. Reducing Anxiety and Creating a Low-Pressure Learning Environment

The researcher found that DGBLL helped create a more relaxed and low-pressure learning environment. Both participants stated that learning English through digital games made them feel less stressed than formal classroom learning. However, they also experienced anxiety in certain situations, especially when they did not understand the content or when they had to communicate with others in English.

P1 explained that anxiety could appear when she communicated with foreign players in online games. However, she also felt that the game environment allowed her to make mistakes without feeling too pressured. She stated:

“At first, I sometimes felt anxious when I had to communicate with foreign players because I was afraid my English was wrong or not understood. But over time, I realized that communication in games is more about delivering the message, not about perfect grammar. As long as other people understand what I mean, the communication can still work. So, I became more confident, even though there were still small mistakes.” (P1, interview data)

Based on P1’s statement, the anxiety she experienced was related to communication with foreign players. However, the game environment helped her change her perspective. She learned that mistakes were part of the communication process. This finding indicates that digital games provided a low-risk space where P1 could practice English more naturally.

P2 also experienced anxiety, especially when he did not understand the questions or the material. However, he felt that digital games made the learning atmosphere more relaxed. He stated:

“When learning English through digital games, I feel more relaxed, fun, and enjoy it. There is no pressure that makes me feel too anxious or afraid like in formal classroom learning. The relaxed atmosphere makes me more comfortable to try, more willing to answer, and gradually my confidence appears by itself.” (P2, interview data)

Based on the statement, P2 felt that digital games reduced pressure in English learning. He felt more comfortable trying and answering questions because the atmosphere was fun and less tense. This finding

indicates that DGBLL helped P2 manage anxiety and build confidence, especially in classroom activities.

The observation also supported this finding. During the Bamboozle activity, students appeared enthusiastic and enjoyed the game. They responded to scores and feedback positively. They were also willing to read, translate, and answer questions together. This classroom atmosphere showed that digital games helped create an active and enjoyable learning environment.

g. Technical Readiness and English Content Challenges in DGBLL

Although digital games provided enjoyable and motivating experiences, the participants also faced several challenges when using digital games for English learning. These challenges were mainly related to technical problems and difficulty understanding English content. The challenges appeared both in classroom learning, such as using Quizizz, Kahoot, or Bamboozle, and in independent learning, such as using Duolingo. This finding indicates that Digital Game-Based Language Learning (DGBLL) does not always run smoothly because its effectiveness depends on supporting facilities, stable internet connection, suitable devices, and students' ability to understand English content in the game.

The first challenge was related to technical problems. P1 explained that the use of digital games in the classroom could be interrupted when the internet connection was unstable or when the available facilities did not fully support the learning activity. She mentioned that problems such as limited devices, projector issues, or unavailable cables could make the implementation of digital games less effective. P1 stated:

“In class, the difficulties are sometimes more about technical things and the material itself. For example, the internet connection can be unstable, the device may not really support the activity, or there are limited facilities like no projector or cable. Automatically, learning through digital games can be delayed, or sometimes it cannot be done at all.” (P1, Interview data)

To overcome these technical problems, P1 explained that students usually tried to adjust to the available situation by finding practical solutions. When the classroom facilities were not sufficient, they could take the initiative to move to another classroom with better facilities or borrow another projector from the office. Meanwhile, when the problem was related to mobile phones or internet connection, students usually adjusted by sharing devices with friends or using a device with a more stable connection. P1 stated:

“For technical problems like that, for example limited facilities such as projector or cable issues, we usually take the initiative to find a solution. It can be like moving to another classroom with better facilities or borrowing another projector from the office. But if the problem is about phones or internet connection, we just adjust

to the situation, like joining a friend's device or using a device with a better internet connection.” (P1, Interview data)

This statement shows that technical readiness became an important aspect in implementing digital games for English learning. Digital games usually require stable internet, suitable devices, and supporting classroom facilities. When these elements are not available, students may not be able to participate fully in the activity. However, the participant also showed an adaptive response by taking practical actions, such as moving to a more suitable classroom, borrowing another projector, sharing devices with friends, or using a device with a better internet connection. Therefore, technical problems were not only minor obstacles, but also factors that could influence the continuity and effectiveness of the learning process.

The second challenge was difficulty understanding English content. P1 stated that she sometimes found it difficult when she encountered specific vocabulary, slang, or unfamiliar expressions in English-based games. This difficulty became more challenging when the game narrative moved quickly, making it harder for her to fully understand the text or dialogue. P1 stated:

“Sometimes, when I find vocabulary that is too specific, slang, or terms that are rarely used, it gets a bit confusing. Especially when the game has a fast-moving narrative, sometimes I do not have

enough time to fully understand all the text or dialogue.” (P1, Interview data)

To overcome this problem, P1 used several strategies, such as guessing the meaning from context, using translation tools, using subtitles, and repeating certain parts of the game when possible. She explained:

“Usually, when I find unfamiliar vocabulary, I try to guess the meaning first from the sentence context or the situation in the game. If I still do not get it, then I check the meaning through DeepL or Google Translate. If the text or dialogue is too fast, I usually use subtitles or repeat certain parts if possible.” (P1, Interview data)

P2 also experienced a similar difficulty when using Duolingo, especially in podcast or listening sessions. He explained that he sometimes had difficulty catching the meaning of several words, which made it harder to answer the questions correctly. P2 stated:

“In Duolingo, especially in the podcast session, sometimes I have difficulty catching the meaning or understanding some words. So, it becomes kind of hard to answer the questions if I do not really understand the story or conversation that I listened to before.” (P2, Interview data)

To overcome this difficulty, P2 used the repetition and slower-audio features provided by Duolingo. He stated:

“The good thing about Duolingo is that it already gives a solution. There is an option to slow down or repeat the conversation, so if I still do not understand what they are talking about, I can listen to it more carefully at a slower pace.” (P2, Interview data)

These findings indicate that English content in digital games can become both a learning opportunity and a challenge. On one hand, digital games expose students to vocabulary, pronunciation, dialogues, and contextual English use. On the other hand, when the vocabulary, slang, narrative, or listening input is too difficult, students may feel confused and less able to follow the activity. However, both participants showed that they did not passively face these difficulties. They used several strategies, such as guessing meaning from context, using translation tools, using subtitles, repeating audio, slowing down the conversation, and replaying certain parts to understand the content better.

h. Comparison of Participants' Skill Levels and Perceived Benefits of DGBLL

The researcher found that P1 and P2 had different initial English skill levels before using DGBLL. This difference influenced how they experienced the benefits of digital games in English learning. P1 can be categorized as a participant with a middle-to-high English skill level, while P2 can be categorized as a participant with a low initial English skill level.

P1 explained that before using DGBLL, she already had a fairly strong English foundation because she had studied in a boarding school environment where she received regular exposure to English. She stated:

“Before using DGBLL, I actually felt that my English ability was already at a mid-to-high level because I studied in a boarding school, so my exposure to English lessons was quite frequent. From there, I was already quite familiar with English, especially in reading, vocabulary, and basic communication. But compared to now, it is still different. Now I feel that my English has developed more and become more flexible, especially after often using digital games in class or learning platforms like Duolingo. Digital games make learning easier, fun, and relaxed. So the skills I already had can be sharpened more, especially in reading, listening, speaking, vocabulary, and confidence in using English.” (P1, interview data)

Based on the statement, P1 used DGBLL to improve and expand the skills she already had. For P1, digital games helped sharpen reading, listening, speaking, vocabulary, confidence, and communication skills. She also used DGBLL to explore game narratives, understand contextual language, and interact with other players. Therefore, the benefit of DGBLL for P1 was not mainly about building English from the beginning, but about deepening and expanding her existing ability.

In contrast, P2 stated that before knowing digital games, his English ability was still low, especially in vocabulary and confidence. He explained:

“Before knowing digital games, I think my English ability was still quite low, especially in vocabulary and confidence when using

English. In the past, when I learned through a method that was too formal, I often got bored quickly and felt pressured, so my motivation to learn also went up and down. But after using digital games for several years, especially when I was already in college, I felt many positive changes. Because learning is done through digital games, the atmosphere becomes more relaxed, fun, and not stressful.” (P2, interview data)

Based on P2’s statement, digital games helped him build the foundation of his English ability. He felt that his vocabulary, confidence, motivation, and participation improved after using digital games. For P2, DGBLL changed his learning experience from feeling bored, pressured, and less confident into becoming more active, motivated, and comfortable in learning English.

The comparison between P1 and P2 shows that DGBLL gave positive impacts to both participants, but the benefits were different based on their initial skill levels. P1 viewed DGBLL as a medium to deepen and broaden her English competence. She emphasized skill development, communication exposure, and contextual understanding through narratives and interaction. Meanwhile, P2 viewed DGBLL as a medium that helped him build basic English ability and increase his motivation to learn. He emphasized changes from low confidence, boredom, and pressure into confidence, active participation, and motivation.

This finding indicates that DGBLL can support students with different levels of English ability. For students who already have a stronger English foundation, digital games can provide broader exposure and more opportunities for communication. For students with lower initial ability, digital games can provide a more enjoyable and less stressful learning environment that helps them develop basic skills and confidence.

2. Students' English Learning Strategies through Digital Games

The second theme describes the English learning strategies employed by the participants while engaging with digital games. Based on the interview and observation, both participants used several strategies to improve their English language skills. These strategies included guessing meaning from context, using translation tools, repeating exercises, practicing through game features, discussing with friends, using feedback and scores, managing anxiety, and learning independently outside the classroom.

a. Guessing Meaning from Context and Using Translation Tools

The researcher found that the participants used context and translation tools to understand unfamiliar vocabulary. P1 used a strategy of guessing meaning first before checking the meaning through DeepL

or Google Translate. This strategy appeared especially when she played narrative-based games or games with English instructions.

P1 stated:

“If we talk about new vocabulary that I just know in the game, of course I try to guess the meaning first from the narrative context before translating it with DeepL or Google Translate. For grammar, honestly grammar is a bit hard to remember, so when using digital games, I rely more on pattern recognition from sentences that often appear in the game. Simply, it comes from repeated exposure.” (P1, interview data)

Based on the statement, P1 did not immediately translate every unfamiliar word. She first tried to understand the meaning based on the context of the sentence, narrative, or situation in the game. After that, she confirmed the meaning using DeepL or Google Translate. This finding indicates that P1 used a contextual guessing strategy combined with translation tools to strengthen her understanding.

P2 also used the features of digital games to understand vocabulary and grammar. He explained:

“For vocabulary, usually before going into grammar, we are introduced to the meaning of words or asked to match English words with their meanings. So it is like a matching exercise. For example, there is an object or a certain word, and we are asked to find its meaning or its English pair. From there, we learn the meaning of the word first, and then move to grammar.” (P2, interview data)

Based on P2’s statement, he learned vocabulary through matching activities provided by Duolingo. The application helped him recognize

words and their meanings before he practiced grammar. This finding indicates that P2's strategy was more guided by the game features, while P1's strategy was more self-directed through context guessing and translation confirmation.

b. Repetition and Practice through Game Features

The researcher found that repetition was one of the main strategies used by both participants. Digital games provided repeated exercises through levels, challenges, fill-in-the-blank tasks, multiple-choice questions, pronunciation practice, listening tasks, and grammar exercises. These features helped the participants practice English repeatedly in a less monotonous way.

P2 explained that Duolingo provided repeated vocabulary and grammar practice. He stated:

“The repetition system in the game is quite helpful because some words appear many times. So, without realizing it, the vocabulary becomes easier to remember and stays more in my mind. From that repetition, we also understand more about how the words are used in sentences.” (P2, interview data)

Based on the statement, P2 experienced repetition as a helpful feature for memorizing vocabulary and understanding sentence structure. The repeated appearance of words helped him remember vocabulary more naturally. The repetition also helped him understand how words were used in context.

P1 also used repetition to understand vocabulary and grammar patterns. She stated:

“For grammar, I rely more on pattern recognition from sentences that often appear in the game. It is basically from repeated exposure.” (P1, interview data)

Based on the statement, P1 used repeated exposure to recognize language patterns. She did not memorize grammar rules only through direct explanation, but also noticed sentence patterns that appeared repeatedly in games. This finding indicates that digital games helped P1 develop grammar awareness through repeated input.

The game features mentioned by the participants also supported different English skills. Fill-in-the-blank and sentence arrangement helped grammar and writing. Pronunciation audio and speaking tasks helped speaking practice. Listening tasks helped students listen to English input from native speakers or application audio. Matching words and sentences helped vocabulary development. Therefore, repetition through digital game features became an important learning strategy for both participants.

c. Collaborative Strategy through Discussion and Teamwork

The researcher found that collaboration was an important strategy in classroom DGBLL. Based on the observation in classes 23 C and 23 A, students worked in groups during the Bamboozle activity. They

discussed answers, read and translated questions, and responded to the lecturer's feedback. The observation showed that students were active, enthusiastic, and involved in the learning process.

P1 described classroom digital games as an activity that encouraged discussion and cooperation. She stated:

"In class, the interaction is usually more about discussion with friends, especially when the lecturer uses digital games. So we can work together, answer questions, and help each other if someone does not understand." (P1, interview data)

Based on P1's statement, collaboration helped students understand the questions and find answers together. The game activity created opportunities for students to exchange ideas and support each other during learning.

P2 also described collaboration as a way to overcome difficulties in understanding material or questions. He stated:

"When we are in class and we have difficulty understanding the material or the questions, that becomes our challenge as students. We are required to work together and discuss to solve the answers to the questions given. Maybe that is the indirect impact that can improve our understanding through discussion with friends. When we finish the challenge, there is a feeling of satisfaction and happiness." (P2, interview data)

Based on the statement, P2 used discussion with friends as a strategy to solve questions in classroom games. He felt that collaboration helped improve understanding. The feeling of satisfaction

after completing the challenge also became part of the learning experience. This finding indicates that teamwork in DGBLL supported not only cognitive understanding but also student engagement.

The observation data supported this finding. During Bamboozle, students were seen discussing lightly with their friends, reading and translating questions together, and actively answering the questions. The lecturer also guided the activity by giving instructions and feedback, so the collaboration remained connected to the learning objectives.

d. Using Feedback, Score, Reward, and Leaderboard as Learning Support

The researcher found that feedback, score, reward, and leaderboard were important learning supports in DGBLL. Both participants stated that direct feedback helped them know whether their answers were correct or incorrect. It also helped them understand their mistakes and motivated them to continue learning.

P1 explained:

“In my opinion, feedback from digital games really influences the way I learn English because the response usually appears directly after we answer or complete a challenge. For example, when we use Kahoot or Quizizz in class, the score and ranking usually appear immediately. Sometimes the lecturer also corrects wrong answers, and we discuss the questions together with the lecturer. From there, I can know how far my ability is, which parts are still lacking, and what needs to be improved. So the feedback does not

only make the game more exciting, but the lecturer's feedback also helps me understand the material better.” (P1, interview data)

Based on the statement, P1 experienced feedback as a tool for checking her learning progress. She used score and ranking to see her current ability, while the lecturer's explanation helped her understand the material more clearly. This finding indicates that feedback in DGBLL became more meaningful when it was supported by teacher explanation.

P2 also stated that feedback from digital games helped him learn.

He explained:

“I think feedback from digital games like Kahoot really influences English learning, especially when it is used in class. After answering a question, the score, ranking, and correct or incorrect answer appear immediately. From there, we know directly how far our ability is and which parts are still lacking. I think it becomes a kind of response because every effort we make is immediately responded to by the game through points or ranking. So, it makes us more motivated to answer and participate actively.” (P2, interview data)

Based on P2's statement, direct feedback helped him recognize his mistakes and motivated him to participate. The score and ranking made him feel challenged to answer better. This finding indicates that game elements such as leaderboard, reward, and score supported students' engagement and motivation in English learning.

The observation also showed that students responded positively to feedback and scores given by the lecturer. They appeared happy with the feedback and responded well to the score. This shows that feedback in classroom DGBLL functioned not only as correction, but also as motivation and appreciation.

e. Managing Anxiety and Building Confidence

The researcher found that both participants developed strategies to manage anxiety and build confidence while using English in digital games. P1 managed anxiety by starting from a safe zone, using solo games first, finding supportive communities, and reminding herself that communication does not have to be grammatically perfect. P2 managed anxiety by understanding the game rules, preparing the material, discussing with friends, and learning in a relaxed atmosphere.

P1 stated:

“I start from a safe zone first. I play solo games first or find a supportive community before really entering a competitive and toxic multiplayer environment. I also use positive self-talk and remind myself that the purpose of communication is to deliver the message, not to have perfect grammar. The important thing is that the message is delivered and other people understand. Over time, I became braver to use English, even though there were still small mistakes. The more I tried, the more my confidence increased.”
(P1, interview data)

Based on the statement, P1 used self-management strategies to build confidence. She avoided entering a highly competitive

environment too quickly and chose a safer learning space first. She also used positive self-talk to reduce fear of making mistakes. This finding indicates that P1's confidence developed gradually through practice and repeated exposure.

P2 explained his strategy differently. He stated:

“In my opinion, the first thing is that we have to understand the game, starting from the rules, how to play, and the steps. If we already understand the flow of the game, we usually become calmer, more responsive, and more confident when answering questions. So we do not feel too confused or panic during the game.” (P2, interview data)

P2 also added:

“It is also important to understand the material or the questions that the lecturer will give. If we understand the material, automatically we become more confident to answer or join the discussion. But if we do not really understand the material, our confidence usually decreases because we are afraid of giving the wrong answer.” (P2, interview data)

Based on P2's statements, understanding the rules and the material helped him feel more confident. He managed anxiety by preparing himself before participating in the game. The relaxed atmosphere of digital games also helped him feel more comfortable to answer. This finding indicates that confidence in DGBLL can be built through preparation, peer discussion, and a low-pressure learning atmosphere.

f. Autonomous Learning through Digital Games

The researcher found that both participants used digital games for autonomous learning outside the classroom. Digital games allowed them to learn English independently, choose suitable platforms, repeat exercises, and practice English based on their own pace. Duolingo became the main platform used by both participants for self-learning.

P1 stated that she used Duolingo for independent learning and also explored English-language games with narratives. She explained:

“If I learn by myself, I usually use solo games like Duolingo or English-language games that have narratives and texts, so I can understand instructions, stories, or new vocabulary.” (P1, interview data)

Based on P1’s statement, her autonomous learning was not limited to structured educational applications. She also used narrative-based games to expose herself to English input. Through game narratives, instructions, and dialogues, she developed vocabulary and contextual understanding. P1 also mentioned that multiplayer games allowed her to communicate with players from other countries. This provided her with opportunities to practice English spontaneously.

P2 also used Duolingo independently. He stated:

“For independent learning, I usually use Duolingo three to four times a week to improve my English learning.” (P2, interview data)

P2 also explained why he chose Duolingo:

“I use Duolingo because it is easy to access anywhere and anytime. The features are interesting, such as matching English sentences, fill in the blank, voice features, speaking practice, and listening practice. In my opinion, the four skills, reading, writing, listening, and speaking, are fulfilled in Duolingo. The structure and grammar are also considered.”

(P2, interview data)

Based on the statement, P2 used Duolingo as a flexible tool for self-directed English learning. He used it regularly outside the classroom to improve vocabulary, grammar, listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This finding indicates that digital games supported autonomous learning because students could access the application anytime and repeat exercises according to their needs.

B. Discussion

This section discusses the findings of the study based on the two research questions: (1) how students describe their experiences using digital games for English learning and (2) what English learning strategies students employ to improve their English language skills while engaging with digital games. Based on the findings, the discussion is organized into several themes: students' experiences in using digital games for English learning, English learning strategies used by students in digital game-based learning, feedback, competition, challenges, and motivation in digital game-based English learning, and the meaning of students' narratives in DGBLL. In addition, the

study also revealed several challenges encountered by students during the use of digital games in English learning, including technical problems, difficulty understanding English content, and anxiety related to competition.

1. Students' Experiences in Using Digital Games for English Learning

a. Digital Games as Enjoyable and Interactive English Learning Media

The findings of this study show that students described digital games as enjoyable and interactive media for learning English. The students' experiences indicated that platforms such as Bamboozle, Kahoot, Quizizz, Quizlet, and Duolingo created a learning atmosphere that was different from conventional classroom activities. Through these platforms, students did not only receive English materials passively, but also responded to questions, completed tasks, competed, collaborated, and received feedback directly. This shows that digital games functioned not only as entertainment, but also as meaningful learning media that supported students' active involvement in English learning.

This finding is in line with the concept of Digital Game-Based Learning, which refers to the use of digital games as tools to deliver educational content and improve students' learning experiences. Hung et al. (2018) explain that DGBLL provides students with learning

opportunities through interactive activities, challenges, and problem-solving tasks. The idea of integrating games into learning was initially introduced by Prensky (2003), as cited in Rabu & Talib (2017), who emphasized that digital games could be used in educational contexts because they match the characteristics of students who are familiar with digital environments. Therefore, the students' experiences in this study show that digital games can become a relevant medium for English learning because they combine learning materials with interactive and enjoyable activities.

The finding also supports the concept of Digital Game-Based Language Learning, which refers specifically to the use of digital games for language learning purposes. In Chapter II, DGBLL is described as a learning environment that combines digital game elements with language learning activities, allowing students to improve vocabulary, grammar, communication, and comprehension through interactive tasks. Klimova and Kacet (2017), as cited in Tıraşın (2023), explain that DGBLL supports language acquisition by providing visual and auditory input, developing specific language aspects, and increasing students' participation in the learning process. Therefore, when students used digital games, they were not merely playing, but also receiving English

input, responding to language tasks, and practicing language skills in a more contextual way.

The interactive nature of digital games also supports the idea that students learn more effectively when they are directly involved in the learning process. Rahmatika et al. (2025) explain that DGBLL creates interactive and immersive learning experiences that can improve engagement, motivation, and language acquisition. Similarly, Enayat & Haghighatpasand (2019) argue that digital games can be considered simulations that create interactive learning environments where players have certain roles and tasks to complete using available information. In this study, students were involved in answering questions, observing game instructions, remembering vocabulary, and responding to the game system. Thus, digital games encouraged students to become active participants rather than passive receivers of information.

b. Digital Games as a Medium for Motivation and Classroom Participation

The findings also reveal that digital games increased students' motivation and classroom participation. Students felt more interested in learning English because the materials were presented in a game-like format. The presence of points, scores, rankings, rewards, and challenges made the learning process more exciting. This finding shows

that motivation in DGBLL does not only come from the learning material, but also from the way the material is presented through game elements.

This finding is supported by Anastasiadis et al. (2018), who state that serious games and educational games can create motivating and engaging learning experiences. Similarly, Alhebshi & Halabi (2020) found that digital games can increase students' concentration, enjoyment, motivation, and classroom engagement. Yükseltürk et al. (2018) also explain that DGBLL can be used to help students deal with learning problems such as stress, low motivation, and lack of participation. In the context of this study, students became more willing to participate because the game format reduced the formal pressure of classroom learning. The students were encouraged to try answering, compete with classmates, and learn from their mistakes in a more relaxed way.

The motivational role of digital games can also be understood through Self-Determination Theory (SDT) proposed by Ryan & Deci (1985). This theory explains that intrinsic motivation can be supported through autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Zhou (2024) also emphasizes that these three elements are important in explaining why digital games can increase students' motivation. In this study, autonomy

appeared when students could practice independently through platforms such as Duolingo or Quizlet. Competence appeared when students received scores, points, or feedback that showed their progress. Relatedness appeared when students interacted with classmates through teamwork, discussion, or competition. Therefore, digital games can strengthen students' motivation because they support students' psychological needs in the learning process.

d. Digital Games as a Low-Anxiety Learning Environment

The findings of this study indicate that digital games helped reduce students' anxiety in learning English. Students felt that game-based learning was more relaxed and less intimidating than conventional learning activities. In digital games, mistakes were not always perceived as serious failures, but as part of the game process. This condition encouraged students to try again, repeat the activity, and improve their answers.

This finding is in line with Alhebshi & Halabi (2020), who explain that Digital Game-Based Learning can help ESL students overcome anxiety by providing a relaxed atmosphere that supports creative activities. Yükseltürk et al. (2018) also state that DGBLL can reduce students' stress and low participation because it creates a more engaging and less pressured learning experience. In English learning, anxiety

often appears when students are afraid of making mistakes, answering incorrectly, or being judged by others. However, the game-based environment can reduce this pressure because students focus more on the activity and challenge rather than on fear of failure.

Furthermore, Tıraşın (2023) suggests that digital games can increase confidence and encourage students to take risks in using the target language. This is relevant to the findings of this study because students became more confident when they practiced English through digital games. Therefore, digital games can be understood as a low-risk learning environment that allows students to practice English more comfortably.

2. English Learning Strategies Used by Students in Digital Game-Based Learning

The findings of this study reveal that students used various English learning strategies while engaging with digital games. These strategies appeared when students tried to understand English instructions, memorize vocabulary, answer questions, monitor their scores, discuss with friends, and manage their emotions during gameplay. Based on the theory, these strategies can be classified into cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies, social strategies, and affective strategies.

O'Malley and Chamot (1990), as cited in Lee (2010), classify language learning strategies into cognitive, metacognitive, and social-affective strategies. This classification is relevant to this study because it explains how students process information, regulate learning, interact with others, and manage emotions in digital game-based learning. Beeh & Baun (2022) also found that these strategies are commonly used by Indonesian students in learning English. Therefore, the findings of this study strengthen the idea that students need various strategies to maximize their English learning through digital games.

a. Cognitive Strategies in Digital Game-Based Learning

The findings show that students used cognitive strategies when they tried to understand, remember, and apply English materials during gameplay. Cognitive strategies appeared when students memorized vocabulary, guessed the meaning of unfamiliar words, read instructions carefully, repeated answers, translated words, recognized sentence patterns, and corrected mistakes after receiving feedback. These actions show that students actively processed the English input provided by the games.

This finding is in line with O'Malley and Chamot (1990), as cited in Paudel (2019), who explain that cognitive strategies directly involve students in processing and transforming learning materials. In Chapter

II, cognitive strategies are described as mental processes used to understand and practice language materials, such as repetition, translation, summarizing, note-taking, and applying grammatical rules. In the context of digital games, these strategies were reflected in how students dealt with questions, vocabulary, and instructions in English.

The use of cognitive strategies in this study is also related to the nature of digital games themselves. Digital games often require students to use problem-solving skills, logical reasoning, strategic planning, pattern recognition, decision-making, and quick responses. These activities are relevant to English learning because students need to interpret rules, understand instructions, match words with meanings, complete sentences, solve language puzzles, and respond to questions. Enayat & Haghighatpasand (2019) explain that digital games can support cognitive and emotional aspects of learning because they require students to think, decide, and respond actively. Therefore, the cognitive activities found in this study show that digital games can stimulate students' mental processes in learning English.

Asari et al. (2023) also state that students use cognitive strategies to organize, review, and connect new information with prior knowledge. This is relevant to the students' experiences in using platforms such as Quizlet and Duolingo, where repeated exposure to vocabulary and

grammar tasks helped students remember language items more effectively. Rahmatika et al. (2025) also explain that repeated exposure to vocabulary and grammar structures in digital games can improve retention and recall. Therefore, cognitive strategies in this study helped students strengthen their understanding of English through repeated practice and direct engagement with language materials.

b. Metacognitive Strategies in Digital Game-Based Learning

The findings also indicate that students used metacognitive strategies when they monitored their learning progress, evaluated their performance, and became aware of their strengths and weaknesses. In digital games, students could see their scores, rankings, correct answers, and mistakes. These features helped students understand whether they had mastered the material or still needed improvement. Therefore, the game system indirectly encouraged students to reflect on their learning process.

This finding is supported by O'Malley and Chamot (1990), as cited in Lee (2010) who describe metacognitive strategies as higher-order processes used to plan, monitor, and evaluate learning. Metacognitive strategies are explained as strategies that help students organize learning activities, set goals, identify difficulties, and assess their progress. In this study, students applied these strategies when they paid attention to

their game results, reviewed incorrect answers, and tried to improve their performance in the next activity.

The metacognitive process in digital game-based learning is also supported by the structure of digital games. Many digital games require players to plan actions, manage time, make decisions, follow rules, and adjust strategies based on the results of their actions. These characteristics are closely related to metacognitive regulation because students need to monitor what they are doing and evaluate whether their strategy works. Hung et al. (2018) state that DGBLL provides learning experiences through tasks, challenges, and interactive problem-solving activities. Therefore, when students monitor their scores or change their strategies after making mistakes, they are not only playing the game but also practicing metacognitive control.

Nisbet and Shucksmith (2017), as cited in Asari et al. (2023), emphasize that students who use metacognitive strategies become more aware of their strengths and weaknesses and are better able to adjust their learning approaches. This idea is reflected in the findings of this study. Through feedback, scores, and repeated gameplay, students could identify which parts of English they had understood and which parts still needed practice. Thus, digital games supported students' metacognitive awareness and encouraged them to become more self-directed learners.

c. Social Strategies in Digital Game-Based Learning

The findings reveal that students used social strategies when they interacted with their classmates during game-based activities. Social strategies appeared when students discussed answers, worked in groups, asked friends for clarification, helped each other understand questions, and shared ideas during the learning process. This shows that digital games supported not only individual learning but also collaborative learning.

This finding is in line with O'Malley and Chamot's classification, as cited in Paudel (2019), which explains that social strategies involve interaction with others in the learning process. Social strategies include asking questions, cooperating with peers, and seeking clarification. These strategies are particularly relevant in game-based environments because many digital games can be played individually, in pairs, or in groups.

Parayil (2023), as cited in Asari et al. (2023), explains that digital platforms enable students to build learning communities where they can exchange ideas and participate actively in discussions. Hung et al. (2018) also argue that digital game-based learning provides opportunities, challenges, and social experiences that foster skill development and meaningful interaction. In this study, students' social

strategies showed that digital games created opportunities for peer learning. Therefore, DGBLL can support students' English learning by encouraging cooperation, communication, and shared problem-solving.

d. Affective Strategies in Digital Game-Based Learning

The findings also show that students used affective strategies to manage their emotions during digital game-based learning. Affective strategies appeared when students tried to reduce nervousness, maintain confidence, control anxiety, motivate themselves, and stay engaged even when they made mistakes. These strategies are important because learning English often involves emotional challenges, especially when students have to answer questions or use English in front of others.

This finding is supported by O'Malley and Chamot (1990), as cited in Paudel (2019), who classify affective strategies as strategies related to emotional management in learning. In Chapter II, affective strategies involve reducing anxiety, encouraging oneself, and maintaining confidence. In this study, digital games helped students manage their emotions because the game atmosphere was more relaxed and enjoyable. Students were more willing to participate because the activity felt less formal and less stressful.

O'Neil et al. (2005), as cited in Janebi Enayat & Haghighatpasand (2019), found that digital games do not only motivate students but also support different learning styles and address both cognitive and emotional aspects of learning. This is relevant to the findings of this study because students' emotional responses were influenced by the game environment. When students felt challenged but still enjoyed the activity, they became more motivated and less afraid of making mistakes. Therefore, affective strategies played an important role in helping students remain motivated, confident, and emotionally prepared during digital game-based English learning.

3. Feedback, Competition, and Motivation in Digital Game-Based English Learning

a. Immediate Feedback as a Tool for Learning Evaluation

The findings of this study indicate that immediate feedback became one of the most important features in digital game-based English learning. Students could directly know whether their answers were correct or incorrect. This feedback helped them recognize mistakes, understand the correct answers, and improve their performance in the next round. Therefore, feedback in digital games functioned not only as a game feature, but also as a learning tool.

This finding is in line with the characteristics of DGBLL discussed in Chapter II. Boulaid & Moubtassime (2019) explain that Kahoot provides direct results after students answer questions, allowing them to know their performance immediately. In this study, immediate feedback helped students become more aware of their English ability. It also supported metacognitive strategies because students could evaluate their understanding through the responses given by the game.

Immediate feedback is important in English learning because it helps students correct misunderstanding in real time. When students receive feedback directly, they do not have to wait for a long time to know their mistakes. This makes learning more efficient and reflective. Therefore, feedback in DGBLL can strengthen students' learning process by connecting action, response, and correction in one continuous activity.

b. Competition, Scores, and Rankings as Motivational Elements

The findings also show that competition, scores, points, and rankings motivated students to participate more actively. Students became more enthusiastic when they competed with classmates or tried to achieve higher scores. This indicates that game elements can encourage students to focus on the activity and become more involved in learning.

This finding is supported by Anastasiadis et al. (2018), who state that serious games and educational games create motivating and engaging experiences through interactive environments. Digital games often include elements such as rewards, challenges, levels, and leaderboards. These elements can increase students' motivation because they provide clear goals and visible achievement. Breien & Wasson (2021) also explain that the impact of video games has expanded into educational settings, leading educators and instructional designers to explore how games can support students' academic development. In this study, students were motivated not only because they wanted to win, but also because they wanted to improve their English performance.

However, competition should be managed carefully. Although competition can increase motivation, it may also create anxiety if students feel pressured by scores or rankings. Therefore, competition in digital game-based learning should remain friendly and supportive. Teachers or facilitators need to ensure that competition does not make students afraid of making mistakes. Thus, competition can become a positive element when it is used to encourage participation rather than to create excessive pressure.

c. Motivation through Autonomy, Competence, and Relatedness

The findings indicate that digital games supported students' motivation through autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Students experienced autonomy when they could repeat tasks, choose learning activities, or learn independently through platforms such as Duolingo and Quizlet. They experienced competence when they saw their scores, corrected mistakes, and improved their performance. They experienced relatedness when they interacted with classmates through discussion, teamwork, or competition.

This finding is related to Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by Ryan & Deci (1985), which emphasizes autonomy, competence, and relatedness as important aspects of intrinsic motivation. Zhou (2024) explains that SDT can be used to understand the motivational effects of DGBLL because digital games often provide opportunities for students to make choices, feel capable, and interact with others. Rahmatika et al. (2025) also explain that digital games can support autonomy by allowing students to control their learning pace, develop competence through challenges and feedback, and build relatedness through collaborative activities. Therefore, students' motivation in DGBLL was not only caused by fun activities, but also by the psychological support provided by game-based learning experiences.

4. Challenges in Digital Game-Based English Learning

Although digital games provided positive experiences, the findings also reveal several challenges faced by students in digital game-based English learning. These challenges included technical problems, difficulty understanding English content, and anxiety or competition. These challenges show that the effectiveness of DGBLL depends on several supporting factors, such as technological readiness, suitable learning objectives, appropriate game design, students' English proficiency, and learning guidance.

a. Technical Problems

The findings show that technical problems became one of the challenges in using digital games for English learning. These problems included unstable internet connection, limited access to devices, application errors, low battery, and difficulty accessing online platforms. Since platforms such as Kahoot, Quizizz, Quizlet, and Duolingo require internet access and digital devices, technical problems can interrupt the learning process.

This finding is in line with Rahmatika et al. (2025), who explain that technological limitations, lack of digital tools, and insufficient infrastructure can hinder the implementation of DGBLL in language classrooms. Taufik et al. (2019), as cited in Rahmatika et al. (2025), also

state that poor internet connection in Indonesia can make teachers hesitant to use digital-based games in the classroom. In this study, technical problems affected students' participation because they could miss questions, fail to submit answers, or lose concentration during the activity.

Therefore, technical readiness is an important factor in DGBLL implementation. Students need stable internet access, suitable devices, and clear instructions on how to use the platforms. In addition, students may develop practical strategies to overcome technical problems, such as reconnecting to the internet, asking friends for help, using another device, or reviewing the material after the game session. Thus, technical problems are not only obstacles, but also situations that require students to become adaptive and problem-solving learners.

b. Difficulty Understanding English Content

The findings indicate that some students experienced difficulty understanding English content in digital games. This difficulty appeared when students encountered unfamiliar vocabulary, English instructions, dialogues, questions, or feedback. For students with limited vocabulary or grammar mastery, these elements could make the game more challenging.

English Foreign Language (EFL) students often face challenges such as limited vocabulary, unfamiliar grammatical structures, and limited opportunities to use English in authentic communication. Beeh & Baun (2022) state that appropriate learning strategies help students become more successful and autonomous in learning English. In this study, students tried to overcome difficulty by guessing meaning, asking friends, repeating tasks, translating words, or learning from feedback.

This challenge shows that digital games can provide meaningful language input, but the level of difficulty must be suitable for students' proficiency. If the content is too difficult, students may feel confused or discouraged. However, if the content is appropriate, digital games can help students develop vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension through repeated exposure. Therefore, game selection and material adjustment are important in DGBLL.

c. Anxiety and Competition

The findings reveal that competition in digital games had both positive and negative effects. On one hand, competition motivated students to answer questions, achieve higher scores, and participate actively. On the other hand, competition could create anxiety for some students, especially when they had to answer quickly or when their scores were compared with others.

Affective strategies help students manage anxiety, maintain confidence, and encourage themselves during learning. Alhebshi & Halabi (2020) explain that digital games can reduce anxiety by creating a relaxed learning atmosphere. However, when competition becomes too intense, students may feel pressured. Therefore, students need affective strategies to manage their emotions during game-based activities.

The role of competition in DGBLL should be understood carefully. Competition can be useful when it creates enthusiasm and engagement. However, it should not make students feel afraid, embarrassed, or discouraged. Therefore, the learning atmosphere must remain supportive. Teachers or facilitators need to emphasize that mistakes are part of learning and that the purpose of the game is not only to win, but also to improve English skills.

5. The Meaning of Students' Narratives in Digital Game-Based English Learning

The findings of this study reveal that students' narratives provide important insights into how digital games support English learning. Through narrative inquiry, the study does not only show whether digital games are effective, but also explains how students experience, interpret, and use digital games to improve their English skills. This is important because

students' personal stories reveal learning processes that may not be visible through quantitative data.

Narrative inquiry is relevant to this study because it explores students' lived experiences in digital game-based English learning. Narrative inquiry is described as a qualitative approach that captures students' personal learning journeys, including their strategies, challenges, and responses to the DGBLL environment. Through students' narratives, the researcher can understand how digital games influence students' motivation, confidence, learning strategies, and problem-solving processes.

This finding is in line with Kucher (2021), who states that many studies on DGBLL focus on effectiveness or design principles, while students' specific strategies and lived experiences remain underexplored. Esteban (2024) also emphasizes the importance of game elements such as feedback and immersive learning experiences, but students' perspectives still need further attention. Therefore, this study contributes to the discussion of DGBLL by presenting students' voices and showing how they personally make meaning from digital game-based learning.

The students' narratives also show that digital games support both independent and collaborative learning. Students can learn independently through platforms such as Duolingo and Quizlet, where they can repeat

tasks, practice vocabulary, and monitor progress. At the same time, students can learn collaboratively through classroom games such as Kahoot, Quizizz, and Bamboozle, where they discuss answers, compete, and interact with classmates. Therefore, DGBLL provides flexible learning opportunities both inside and outside the classroom.

Overall, the findings of this study indicate that digital games are not merely supplementary tools in English learning. They can become meaningful learning environments when students actively use strategies to understand, practice, monitor, and evaluate their English learning. Digital games provide enjoyable experiences, immediate feedback, motivation, social interaction, and opportunities for reflection. However, their effectiveness depends on technological readiness, appropriate learning objectives, suitable game content, and sufficient guidance. Thus, Digital Game-Based Language Learning can support students' English learning strategies when it is implemented thoughtfully and connected to students' learning needs.