

STUDENT-ORGANIZED LANGUAGE GAMES IN SPEAKING PRESENTATIONS: A STUDY WITH EFL STUDENTS

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Abstract: This study investigates the perceptions of 50 second-year English major students at the English Faculty of a public university in Central Vietnam, regarding the integration of student-led language games into their oral presentation activities. Data were collected through a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire, followed by semi-structured interviews with 10 students in an English-speaking class. The findings reveal that language games were seen as effective tools for increasing audience engagement, encouraging peer interaction, enhancing motivation, and improving vocabulary acquisition. Nonetheless, challenges such as time constraints and inadequate instructional resources remain. To optimize the effectiveness of language games in language learning and teaching, the study recommends providing students with comprehensive training in designing, organizing, and facilitating language games as part of their oral presentations. This includes equipping them with practical strategies, examples of effective game formats, and guidance on integrating language learning objectives into game-based activities.

Keywords: Language games; oral presentation; speaking skills; interactive learning; EFL students

1. Introduction

In recent years, learning English has gained significant popularity in Vietnam. However, developing speaking skills remains a challenge for many learners, particularly for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. According to Leong and Ahmadi (2017), speaking is one of the most difficult aspects of language learning, and many students struggle to express themselves effectively in spoken English. Speaking proficiency is crucial, as it serves as a primary means of communication and plays a fundamental role in language acquisition. Since spoken language precedes written language, learners at the university level often prioritize speaking skills. In this context, English-majored students are frequently required to deliver oral presentations as part of their academic training, making the development of effective presentation strategies essential. One such strategy is the integration of language games into oral presentation activities.

Language games have been widely recognized as an effective pedagogical tool for developing speaking skills (Chen, 2005; Dewi et al., 2016; Hung, 2018; Marzuki & Kuliahana, 2021; Pham et al., 2019; Salazar & Villamil, 2012; Urrutia León & Vega Cely, 2010). First, they provide a dynamic and interactive learning environment, offering shy students more opportunities to participate while reducing anxiety that may hinder verbal expression (Yükseltürk et al., 2018). Additionally, games serve as a valuable motivational tool, encouraging students to practice English in creative and meaningful contexts (e.g., Barton et al., 2018; Urrutia León & Vega Cely, 2010; Rohmaniyah et al., 2019). Although numerous studies have explored the role of language

and communicative games in language teaching, limited research has specifically examined EFL students' perceptions of integrating student-led language games into their own oral presentation activities.

Built on previous research into the use of language games in speaking instruction, this study investigates the integration of student-led language games into EFL students' oral presentations at the English Faculty of a public university in Central Vietnam. Unlike previous studies where teachers or researchers typically designed and facilitated the games in speaking classes, this research uniquely positions students as the main organizers of the language games. By actively designing and implementing the games themselves, students take on a more autonomous and participatory role in their learning process. The current study explores students' experiences, perceived benefits, and the challenges they face in incorporating these games into their oral presentations. It is anticipated that the findings will offer valuable insights into students' perceptions of integrating student-led language games as a learner-centered strategy for enhancing oral presentation skills in the EFL context.

2. Literature review

2.1 Speaking skills in EFL learning

Speaking is a crucial skill that enables students to interact effectively within academic settings and beyond. Through speaking, learners can express their thoughts, concepts, and ideas, facilitating vocabulary acquisition and the natural development of linguistic structures (Pham et al., 2019). In line with this, Nunan (1991) emphasizes that speaking is one of the essential skills that English language learners must master, requiring both fluency and accuracy for effective communication. Similarly, Burns (2012, p. 166) highlights that speaking is “a highly complex and dynamic skill that involves the use of several simultaneous processes – cognitive, physical and social-cultural – and a speaker's knowledge and skills have to be stimulated rapidly in real-time”. As a result, when students engage in speaking interactions, they refine their thinking processes, articulate their perspectives, and enhance their communicative competence. Moreover, Cameron (2001) stresses that speaking involves the active use of language to convey meaning, playing a key role in making communication comprehensible. Therefore, it can be concluded that speaking not only supports language development but also fosters socialization and cognitive growth by enabling learners to express ideas clearly and effectively.

In the context of EFL learning, oral presentation activities play a critical role in developing English language learners' speaking skills. Regarding oral presentations, it is important to understand their underlying concepts. For example, Levin and Topping (2006) describe oral presentations as structured and rehearsed talks through which a speaker conveys a topic to an audience. Similarly, Idrus (2016, p.438) describes oral communication as “communicating orally in a manner which is clear, fluent, and to the point, and which holds the audience's attention, both in groups and in one-to-one situations”. These definitions suggest that oral presentations enable students to communicate ideas effectively, enhance their confidence and foster audience engagement. As a result, students who actively participate in oral presentation tasks tend to improve their English-speaking proficiency, boost their self-esteem, and achieve better academic outcomes (Tsang, 2020). Therefore, oral presentation activities are essential for facilitating meaningful and effective communication skills development.

2.2 Definition and usefulness of game-based learning

From birth, play has been an integral part of human development, with children naturally perceiving everyday events as playful activities. Consequently, games have been widely recognized as effective instructional tools in language learning. Scholars have offered various definitions to capture the nature and role of games in educational contexts. For example, Hadfield (1998, p.4) defines a game as “an activity with rules, a goal and an element of fun.” Similarly, Rixon (1981) describes games as rule-based activities with predefined objectives that foster cooperation and competition among learners. In this regard, Wright et al. (2006, p.16) define a game as “an activity which is interesting and engaging, often challenging, and an activity in which the learners play and usually interact with others.” Likewise, Butler (2016, p.3) characterizes a game as “an artificially constructed, competitive activity with a specific goal, a set of rules and constraints that is located in a specific context.”

In the context of language learning, game-based learning came along with many advantages that were highly recognized in previous studies. Regarding its definition, game-based learning (GBL) refers to the application of gaming principles to create psychologically-driven learning experiences that motivate learners to become more actively engaged. Rather than simply incorporating games for entertainment, GBL involves designing learning experiences by adapting gaming concepts alongside game development to achieve specific educational objectives. In terms of its benefits, gaming contexts are potentially rich venues to deliver language learning (Belz & Reinhardt, 2004), as they provide opportunities for real communication and encourage meaningful interaction and helpful feedback among student participants (Thorne et al., 2009). Similarly, Reinhardt and Sykes (2014) and Shadiey et al. (2015) argue that language games help bridge the gap between the classroom and the real world. Secondly, games serve as an effective instructional strategy to create authentic opportunities for speaking the target language in classroom settings (Hwang et al., 2014; Urrutia León & Vega Cely, 2010). Moreover, games are highly motivating, making learning more enjoyable and relaxing for students (Sandberg et al., 2011). Another significant benefit is that language games foster a low-anxiety learning environment, enabling students to practice speaking naturally and confidently. Supporting this view, research suggests that classroom games reduce students’ fear of making mistakes and promote risk-taking in language production (Mahmoud & Tanni, 2014). Therefore, it can be concluded that games benefit language learners by providing a rich context for language learning, enabling students’ communication in the target language, and increasing learning motivation.

2.3 Previous studies on the use of language games in EFL speaking classes

A number of studies have explored the role of language games in enhancing speaking skills across different educational contexts, primarily focusing on young language learners, secondary school students, and high school learners. These studies provide empirical evidence supporting the effectiveness of games in maintaining students’ engagement, enhancing students’ social interaction in a meaningful context, and improving students’ speaking competency (e.g., Chen, 2005; Dewi et al., 2016; Hung, 2018; Marzuki & Kuliahana, 2021; Pham et al., 2019; Salazar & Villamil, 2012; Urrutia León & Vega Cely, 2010).

First, games have been shown to be effective at maintaining students’ engagement throughout speaking classes. For example, Chen’s (2005) study found that incorporating games

into speaking classes promoted a pleasant learning environment that reduced students' nervousness about communication and increased their confidence in speaking. This finding was corroborated by Hung (2018), whose experimental study revealed that games, such as board games, created a stress-free environment in which children were able to overcome their shyness and express their ideas more freely. Similarly, Urrutia León & Vega Cely (2010) extended the investigation to teenage learners in a Colombian public school. Their study involved 40 students, and data were collected through video recordings, teacher journals, and questionnaires. The results confirmed that students felt more at ease and confident when speaking during game activities. The study further emphasized that games provided an effective means of reducing speaking anxiety and fostering a supportive learning atmosphere.

Secondly, games enhance students' social interaction in meaningful contexts. For instance, an action research project by Urrutia León & Vega Cely (2010) highlighted the collaboration, solidarity, and interaction among students when they performed in small groups. Similarly, both a qualitative study by Barton et al. (2018) and a quantitative study by Rohmaniyah et al. (2019) found that games in the classroom improved students' social skills by encouraging them to listen to and respond to different viewpoints. Moreover, games provide students with opportunities to practice speaking English in real-life, meaningful contexts. Several studies, such as those by Ng et al. (2021) and Surayatika (2017), have demonstrated how games connect students to real-life situations, offering valuable opportunities for self-expression.

Thirdly, games help to improve students' speaking competency in terms of vocabulary, accuracy, and fluency. For example, Salazar and Villamil (2012) investigated the use of games in a speaking classroom with four young learners using an observational approach. Data collected through field notes, checklists, and videotapes indicated that games facilitated natural language use and improved both speaking and listening skills. The researchers concluded that games serve as fundamental tools for triggering language production in young learners, reinforcing their communicative ability in an engaging manner. Similarly, Hwang et al. (2014) conducted a study to facilitate speaking skills through game-based activities in a situational context in a girl's school. They found that students in the experimental group performed better in speaking than the control group and positively changed the perception towards game-based teaching.

More recent research has examined language games in higher education. For example, Pham et al. (2019) investigated the effects of games on university students' speaking performance in Vietnam. The study involved 74 non-English major students, with the control group following the traditional Presentation-Practice-Production method, while the experimental group integrated selective games into the learning process. Pre- and post-test results, along with questionnaire and interview analyses, indicated that games significantly enhanced students' motivation and speaking performance. This study provided empirical support for the effectiveness of game-based learning at the tertiary level, though it did not explore students' perspectives as facilitators of the games. Furthermore, Marzuki and Kuliahana (2021) examined the role of language games in enhancing EFL students' speaking skills, confirming that games positively impacted fluency and interaction. However, the study primarily focused on the outcomes of game-based learning rather than the process, leaving gaps in understanding how students manage and facilitate game activities.

While numerous studies have examined the role of language games in language teaching, most existing research has primarily focused on teacher-led implementation in speaking classes, exploring the perceptions of teachers and students regarding games designed and facilitated by instructors. These studies often highlight the effectiveness of language games as pedagogical tools used by teachers to enhance language learning. However, there is limited research investigating how EFL learners themselves perceive and experience language games that they independently design and integrate into their own oral presentation activities. In particular, the challenges students face when organizing and implementing these games have received little attention, leaving a gap in understanding the pedagogical value and practical implications of student-led language games in oral presentation activities.

Addressing this gap, the present study seeks to examine EFL students' reflections on the integration of student-led language games in their oral presentation activities. It aims to explore their engagement in oral presentation activities, their perceptions of the usefulness of language games, and the difficulties they may face during implementation. By focusing on students' perspectives as game organizers, this research provides a more comprehensive understanding of how EFL students integrate language games into their own oral presentation activities, as well as their perceived impact and the challenges they face in this process.

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What are students' experiences with using language games during their oral presentations?
2. What are students' perceptions of the impact of using language games during their oral presentations?
3. What challenges do students encounter when using language games during their oral presentations?

3. Methodology

3.1 Context

This study investigates the responses of second-year EFL students from the English Faculty of a public university in Central Vietnam, regarding the use of student-led language games in oral presentations. The research aims to evaluate the students' reflections on integrating language games into their own presentation activities and to identify the challenges they face in using these student-led games in their presentations. The study was conducted within the English Faculty, spanning from January to December 2024. Given the increasing emphasis on interactive and student-centered learning approaches, this research contributes to the understanding of game-based learning in EFL contexts, particularly in higher education settings.

3.2 Participants

This study was conducted within the context of the *Speaking 4* course, a core component of the English major curriculum for second-year students at the English Faculty of a public university in Central Vietnam. To enrol in this course, the students must have successfully completed *Speaking 1*, *Speaking 2*, and *Speaking 3*, which are sequentially designed to build foundational knowledge and support students' gradual progress towards more advanced speaking skills. Each course requires the students to attend two-hour classes per week, with a strong

emphasis on communicative competence and fluency. Across the four speaking courses, the students were regularly engaged in preparing and delivering group oral presentations on a wide range of topics. These presentations provided them with repeated opportunities to develop essential skills such as speaking proficiency, collaboration, and the ability to organize and implement student-led language games.

The participants of this study were 50 second-year EFL students who enrolled in a speaking course in the English Faculty of a public university in Central Vietnam. A screening process was employed to ensure the validity of the data and confirm that participants had actual experience using language games in their oral presentations. A Google Forms survey was initially distributed to all 178 students taking the course. The first section of the form included a filter question asking whether they had implemented language games in their presentations. Only students who confirmed having such experience were allowed to proceed with completing the full questionnaire. As a result, 50 valid responses were collected and analyzed for the study. In addition to the survey, 10 students from this group were randomly selected for in-depth interviews to explore their personal practice, perceived impact, and challenges regarding the use of language games in speaking activities.

3.3 Data collection

A mixed-methods research design was employed, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. The quantitative data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered via Google Forms. The questionnaire consisted of a total of 20 items, organized into two main sections. The first section included three screening questions (e.g., being a second-year EFL student and having experience in organizing language games in oral presentations) to ensure participant eligibility, while the second was divided into three sub-sections. Sub-section A contained four multiple-choice questions assessing students' experiences with language games in speaking presentations. Sub-section B featured eight 5-point Likert-scale statements measuring the perceived impact of language games on students' speaking skills and overall English proficiency. Sub-section C consisted of five Likert-scale statements examining the challenges students encountered when organizing language games.

For qualitative data collection, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 randomly selected students. Each interview, lasting approximately 30 to 45 minutes per participant, aimed to elicit in-depth responses regarding students' perceptions, challenges, and suggestions related to the use of student-led language games.

3.4 Data analysis

The collected data were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The questionnaire responses were processed and analyzed using SPSS software to generate descriptive statistics, identify trends, and determine the overall impact of language games on students' speaking performance. The interview transcripts were reviewed using thematic analysis, identifying key themes related to students' experiences, challenges, and attitudes towards language games. The combination of statistical analysis and qualitative insights provided a holistic understanding of the research problem, allowing for a more nuanced discussion of findings. Moreover, select interview responses were quoted in the analysis to support and contextualize the quantitative results.

4. Findings

4.1 Students' experiences with using language games in oral presentations

4.1.1 Purposes for integrating language games in oral presentations

Table 1

Purposes for Integrating Language Games in Oral Presentations

Purposes	Number	Percentage
Reinforcing key concepts or vocabulary	6	12%
Enhancing audience interaction	27	54%
Summarizing key information or knowledge in the presentation	17	34%
Total	50	100%

As shown in Table 1, the most common reason selected by 27 participants (54%) for using student-led language games in oral presentations was to enhance audience interaction. This suggests that students primarily view language games as a tool to engage listeners and foster a more interactive learning environment. One interviewee shared that she used a game in her oral presentation not only to increase audience engagement but also to encourage active participation, “The audiences are more excited and willing to speak when we use fun activities like games, especially in group and competitive settings” (S7, Interview).

Summarizing key information or knowledge is the second most frequent purpose for using language games, as reported by 17 participants (34%). Meanwhile, 6 participants (12%) indicated that they used games to reinforce key concepts or vocabulary, highlighting the role of language games in supporting memory and comprehension. This is reinforced by a student's comment, which highlights the dual function of language games – engaging the audience while consolidating content in a memorable way, “We use games to help our audience remember the main ideas and important words. It makes learning easier and more fun.” (S2, Interview).

4.1.2 Time to use language games in oral presentations

Table 2

Time to Use Language Games in Oral Presentations

Timing	Number	Percentage
Introduction	16	32%
Main content	9	18%
Conclusion	25	50%
Total	50	100%

Table 2 shows students' preferences regarding when to integrate language games during their oral presentations. The conclusion was the most preferred timing, with half of the students (50%) choosing to use games at the end of their presentations. Meanwhile, 32% of students favored using games in the introduction to capture attention, and only 18% preferred placing them in the main content to maintain audience engagement. Interview responses further support these quantitative findings. Five out of ten students preferred using games at the end of their presentations to effectively summarize key points and sustain audience engagement. One student explained that organizing games at the conclusion helps enhance the coherence of the presentation and aids audience retention, “I often organize games at the end to enhance the logic of the

presentation because they help reinforce what I've presented and make the audience remember it better" (S4, Interview).

In contrast, three students shared that they used games at the beginning of their presentations to capture the audience's attention and create a relaxed atmosphere. As one student described, "Starting with a simple game helps me draw the audiences' interest right away and makes them more curious about the content of the presentation" (S6, Interview). Meanwhile, two students preferred incorporating games into the main content to avoid monotony and keep the audience engaged throughout. One participant noted: "Presentations can get boring if it's just talking, so I put a game in the middle to keep everyone involved" (S3, Interview).

4.1.3 Types of language games in oral presentations

Table 3

Types of Language Games in Oral Presentations

Types of Language Games	Number	Percentage
Crossword Puzzle	7	14%
Fill in the Blanks	3	6%
Matching Information	3	6%
Multiple Choice	32	64%
Short Answer Questions	5	10%
Total	50	100%

Table 3 illustrates the types of language games students used in their oral presentations. *Multiple Choice* was by far the most preferred game, selected by 64% of participants. This strong preference suggests that students valued its simplicity and effectiveness in encouraging audience participation. One student shared, "Even though multiple choice is simple, it's quick and people like answering them. It's also less stressful for the presenter" (S8, Interview).

In contrast, *Crossword Puzzles* were used in 14% of the cases, followed by *Short Answer Questions* (10%), *Fill in the Blanks* (6%), and *Matching Information* (6%). While less frequently chosen, "*Fill in the Blanks*" still showed its value through qualitative data. Despite the low usage rate, interview data revealed that some students still favored *Fill-in-the-blank* due to its pedagogical value in supporting content retention and maintaining audience engagement. As one student explained, "Fill-in-the-blank games are easy to create and help the audience stay focused on the important content of my presentation" (S1, Interview).

4.1.4 Resources for language games in oral presentations

Table 4

Resources for Language Games in Oral Presentations

Resources	Number	Percentage
Classroom materials (e.g., whiteboard, markers, etc.)	12	19.4%
Printed materials (e.g., handouts, worksheets)	7	11.3%
Online resources (e.g. language learning apps, websites)	42	67.8%
Others	1	1.5%
Total	62	100%

Table 4 illustrates the types of resources used for implementing language games in speaking skill presentations. It is important to note that participants were allowed to choose more

than one type of resources. Online resources emerged as the most preferred, with 67.8% of participants using websites, language learning apps, and other digital tools. This strong preference reflects the accessibility and effectiveness of digital tools in modern language learning environments. One student highlighted the time-saving benefits and ease of accessing ready-made online materials, stating, “I usually use online tools because they save a lot of time and I can find ready-made games with colorful visuals that attract attention” (S5, Interview). Another interviewee emphasized the collaborative nature of online resources, noting their usefulness in group work and shared preparation, “Online resources are more convenient, especially when we work in groups. Everyone can prepare and access the materials easily” (S10, Interview). In contrast, traditional classroom materials (19.4%) and printed resources (11.3%) were used far less frequently.

4.2. Perceived impact of integrating language games in oral presentations

Table 5

Perceived Impact of Integrating Language Games in Oral Presentations

Impact <i>5-point Likert-scale questions</i> <i>(1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree)</i>	Mean	SD
Creating an enjoyable learning atmosphere	4.24	1.06
Enhancing students' interest in learning English	4.28	1.05
Improving students' English communication skills	4.16	0.84
Enhancing students' pronunciation	4.04	0.90
Reinforcing students' grammar knowledge	4.04	0.88
Expanding students' vocabulary	4.24	0.93
Increasing student interaction	4.32	0.95
Boosting students' confidence in presenting	4.10	0.95

Table 5 presents the perceived impact of integrating language games into students' oral presentations. The most highly rated benefit was the increase in student interaction ($M = 4.32$, $SD = 0.95$), emphasizing the role of games in fostering classroom engagement. This was supported by interview data, with 9 out of 10 students agreeing that language games encouraged active participation and motivation of the audience. One student commented, “When we organize games during presentations, the audience pays more attention and joins in. It makes the classroom feel more alive” (S1, Interview). Other notable impacts included enhancing students' interest in learning English ($M = 4.28$, $SD = 1.05$) and creating a more enjoyable learning atmosphere ($M = 4.24$, $SD = 1.06$). These findings suggest that language games contribute to a more relaxed and engaging learning environment. As one participant noted that games made the presentation more enjoyable and helped reduce monotony, “The audience don't feel bored or pressured when games were organized; it actually makes our presentation and English learning more fun and less pressure” (S3, Interview).

In terms of language learning, vocabulary expansion received a high rating ($M = 4.24$, $SD = 0.93$), with 7 out of 10 students indicating that games helped reinforce new words or new key concepts. One student explained, “Games help not only the audience but also the presenter remember new words better because we need to recall them quickly while playing” (S6, Interview). In contrast, the perceived impact of language games on pronunciation and grammar

was rated lower ($M = 4.04$ for both), suggesting these aspects were less emphasized. Although some students acknowledged that games could support pronunciation and grammar development, they noted that limited and inconsistent use of such games made it difficult to see clear improvements, as one interviewee reflected, “We don’t focus much on grammar or pronunciation when organizing games. It’s more about speed and having fun, so maybe that’s why the improvement isn’t obvious” (S4, Interview).

The impact on students’ confidence in presenting received a moderate rating ($M = 4.10$, $SD = 0.95$), with mixed responses from interviewees. Some felt that games helped ease nervousness, while others believed more practice was needed to build confidence. One student remarked, “I feel less nervous when using games because it shifts attention away from me and makes the whole thing more interactive” (S7, Interview). Another noted, “Games are fun, but I still need more practice to feel confident speaking in front of a class” (S8, Interview).

4.3. Challenges of integrating language games in oral presentations

The survey results highlight several challenges students faced when using language games in their speaking presentations. While these games bring notable benefits, their implementation still encounters limitations. The mean values for all questions range from 3.32 to 3.62 on a 5-point Likert scale, indicating that students perceive certain difficulties when using language games in their presentations. Additionally, the relatively low standard deviation values (ranging from 0.886 to 1.039) suggest that student responses were fairly consistent.

Table 6

Challenges of Integrating Language Games in Oral Presentations

Challenges 5-point Likert-scale questions (1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree)	Mean	SD
Limited time	3.50	0.88
Limited content	3.42	0.90
Lack of experience	3.62	0.90
Lack of confidence	3.42	0.90
Lack of interaction with peers	3.32	1.04

Table 6 presents the challenges students encountered when integrating language games into their speaking skill presentations. The most significant challenge reported was a lack of experience in organizing and conducting games ($M = 3.62$, $SD = 0.90$). Interview data revealed that eight out of ten students found it difficult to design and manage games effectively due to limited prior exposure. This lack of familiarity made it challenging to balance gameplay with the delivery of core content. One student expressed this concern, “At first, I didn’t know how to organize the game properly or how to control the class, so it was quite stressful” (S2, Interview). Another prominent challenge was time constraint ($M = 3.50$, $SD = 0.88$). All interviewed participants agreed that the 15–20-minute time limit for the whole presentation often forced them to shorten game segments to just 3–10 minutes or omit them altogether. As one student noted, “Sometimes we spent too much time preparing the game and then didn’t have enough time to present the main content” (S9, Interview).

Additional difficulties included a lack of diversity in game content ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 0.90$) and limited confidence in leading games ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 0.90$). One student shared, “I keep using

the same game formats because I don't have enough ideas or examples to try something new" (S4, Interview). Confidence in facilitating games was another concern, particularly among more introverted students. Half of the interviewees reported feeling nervous when tasked with leading game activities. As one student explained, "I get nervous when I have to run a game, especially if it's something I created myself" (S7, Interview). The lowest-rated challenge was limited peer interaction during games ($M = 3.32$, $SD = 1.04$), suggesting this issue was relatively minor compared to others. However, six out of ten students noted that maintaining audience engagement during gameplay could still be difficult. One participant reflected, "Sometimes the class didn't respond much to the game, so it feels like I was talking to myself" (S1, Interview).

5. Discussion and implications

5.1 Students' experiences with using language games in oral presentations

Regarding students' experiences, the findings are organized into four main dimensions: preferred purposes, time to use language games, types of language games, and game resources. First, the participants chose to integrate student-led language games into their oral presentations with the primary aim of enhancing audience interaction and summarizing key information. This finding can be explained by previous research highlighting that one of the common sources of anxiety in oral presentations is the fear of negative evaluation (Al-Khasawneh, 2016) or judgment from the audience (Riaz & Riaz, 2022). Thus, it is understandable that students tended to prioritize activities that addressed audience engagement.

In addition, the participants often organized games either at the beginning or at the end of their presentations to meet these purposes. For example, games introduced at the beginning served to capture audience attention and games placed at the conclusion effectively reinforced key content. This strategic use of language games underscores the importance of aligning the pedagogical purpose of each game with the appropriate stage of the presentation, as the timing of activities can significantly influence audience focus and the overall effectiveness of learning (Harris, 2006; Mackenty, 2006).

Based on these findings, instructors should guide students in aligning the timing of game integration with their intended presentation goals. Specifically, training sessions could provide examples illustrating how games function differently depending on their placement within a presentation. Such training would help students structure audience engagement more effectively and deliver their content more purposefully. Ultimately, better alignment between the purposes and timing of language games can enhance message delivery, promote structured engagement, and make language games a more powerful instructional tool in oral presentation activities.

Another significant finding of the current study is that participants, acting as game organizers and facilitators, preferred to integrate Multiple-Choice Games or Fill-in-the-Blank activities due to their simplicity, pedagogical value, and ease of access. It can be inferred that students tended to choose simpler games because they were easier to manage, presented less risk of failure, and were particularly useful when students had limited resources or experience. However, according to students' reflections, the tendency to repeatedly adapt familiar game formats was sometimes perceived as a challenge, as it negatively affected both the quality of their presentations and audience engagement. Therefore, this finding highlights the need for greater creativity in organizing games, as well as the exploration of a wider range of creative resources.

Moreover, online resources were preferred over traditional, paper-based materials. Such strong preference for online resources highlighted the perceived benefits of visual appeal, accessibility, and the collaborative potential of multiplayer functions compared to traditional formats. In the digital age, these findings suggest that language educators should integrate training on how to effectively utilize and adapt online game resources for classroom use. While traditional materials can still serve as valuable supplements, the increasing reliance on digital tools points to a pedagogical shift that should be embraced rather than resisted.

5.2 Perceived impact of using language games in oral presentations

Regarding the perceived impact of student-led language games in oral presentations, the findings show that the participants positively perceived the role of language games in increasing audience interaction and enhancing students' interest in learning English, followed by their impact on creating an enjoyable learning atmosphere, expanding vocabulary, and improving English communication skills. These findings support previous studies that concluded games not only encourage student interaction and feedback (Griva et al., 2010) but also increase students' attention, interest, and effort in the language learning process (Liu & Chu, 2010). The present study further builds on previous research into the use of communicative games in language classrooms by demonstrating that they not only enhance students' vocabulary (Berns et al., 2016) but also create meaningful social experiences among learners and foster greater enjoyment in language exchange (Crocco et al., 2016), even when the games are student-led during oral presentations.

Compared to the aforementioned benefits, the perceived impacts related to pronunciation and grammar knowledge received relatively lower mean scores. This finding indicates that students perceived the impact of language games on pronunciation and grammar knowledge as less significant compared to other factors. Such perceptions can be explained by the students' view of oral presentations as being more oriented toward audience engagement, content consolidation, and enjoyment rather than accuracy in pronunciation and grammatical structures. However, as Nunan (1991) emphasized, effective speaking skills require a balance between fluency and accuracy. Therefore, accuracy in pronunciation and language use should not be overlooked in speaking skill development. Instructors should encourage the intentional integration of games targeting specific language sub-skills, including pronunciation and grammar, possibly through sustained or iterative practice. For instance, pronunciation games could be embedded into weekly routines to reinforce articulation over time. Additionally, instructors should emphasize the importance of pronunciation and grammar criteria in the assessment process to raise students' awareness and promote balanced language development.

5.3 Students' challenges when using language games in oral presentations

Regarding students' challenges, the participants perceived a relatively equal level of difficulty, as reflected in mean scores ranging from 3.42 to 3.62. When using language games in their oral presentations, participants encountered several challenges, including a lack of experience, limited time, limited content, low confidence, and, to a lesser extent, lack of interaction with peers. These findings suggest that the main sources of difficulty stemmed both from the students themselves (e.g., lack of experience, confidence, and peer interaction) and from the game design process (e.g., limited content and time constraints).

To address these challenges and promote more effective implementation in the future, the following pedagogical suggestions are proposed:

- Educators should provide structured training on game facilitation, time management strategies, and creative game design. This could include peer demonstrations, the use of clear rubrics, and opportunities to rehearse game delivery in a supportive environment.
- Educators should also encourage experimentation and offer formative feedback to empower students to diversify their game formats and strengthen their self-efficacy as presenters.

6. Conclusions

This study examined second-year English major students' perceptions and experiences regarding the integration of language games in oral presentation activities at the English Faculty of a public university in Central Vietnam. First, the findings indicated that students' experiences with the game organization and implementation centered around four main dimensions: preferred purposes, time to use language games, types of language games, and sources of language games. Perceiving the main purposes of games in oral presentations as enhancing audience interaction and summarizing key information, participants preferred to organize games either at the beginning or at the end of their presentations. They also favored using Multiple-Choice and Fill-in-the-Blank games sourced from online platforms due to their simplicity and pedagogical value in promoting audience engagement. Secondly, the findings revealed several perceived benefits. Most notably, language games were seen as effective tools for increasing audience engagement, encouraging peer interaction, enhancing motivation, and improving vocabulary acquisition. Their integration contributed to a more dynamic and communicative learning environment, helping students feel more confident and enthusiastic about presenting in English. However, despite these advantages, students also encountered various challenges when organizing language games. A lack of experience in game design and facilitation emerged as the most common difficulty, alongside time constraints, low confidence, repetitive game formats, and limited access to diverse resources. These barriers often hindered the smooth execution and overall impact of the games.

Despite these insights, the study had several limitations. The participant sample was limited to second-year students from a single institution, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, data collection was constrained by some superficial questionnaire responses and potential biases arising from self-reported data. Another limitation lies in the study's exclusive focus on students' perceptions as game organizers, without capturing the perspectives of their peers as audience members. This one-sided view limits a fuller understanding of the impact and reception of student-led language games during oral presentations.

Future research should therefore aim to diversify the participant pool, including students from different academic levels and institutions. It should also consider employing more interactive and qualitative methods—such as observations or video-stimulated recall—to gather richer data. Importantly, future studies should investigate the effectiveness of student-led language games from the audience's perspective, exploring how such activities influence peer engagement, comprehension, and enjoyment. Additionally, longitudinal studies using advanced statistical techniques could offer deeper insights into the sustained impact of language games on speaking proficiency across varied educational contexts. By addressing these limitations and

broadening the research scope, educators and researchers can more effectively refine instructional strategies and maximize the pedagogical value of language games in language learning.

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TRÒ CHƠI NGÔN NGỮ DO SINH VIÊN TỔ CHỨC TRONG BÀI THUYẾT TRÌNH NÓI: NGHIÊN CỨU TỪ GÓC NHÌN CỦA SINH VIÊN

Tóm tắt: Nghiên cứu này khảo sát nhận thức của 50 sinh viên chuyên ngành tiếng Anh một trường đại học công lập ở miền Trung Việt Nam về việc tích hợp các trò chơi ngôn ngữ do sinh viên tổ chức vào hoạt động thuyết trình nói. Dữ liệu được thu thập thông qua bảng câu hỏi thang điểm Likert 5 mức và phỏng vấn bán cấu trúc với 10 sinh viên trong một lớp học nói tiếng Anh. Kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy trò chơi ngôn ngữ được xem là công cụ hiệu quả trong việc tăng cường sự tham gia của người học, thúc đẩy sự tương tác giữa các bạn cùng lớp, nâng cao động lực học tập và cải thiện việc tiếp thu từ vựng. Tuy nhiên, vẫn tồn tại một số khó khăn như hạn chế về thời gian và thiếu tài liệu hướng dẫn. Để nâng cao hiệu quả của trò chơi ngôn ngữ trong dạy và học ngoại ngữ, nghiên cứu đề xuất cung cấp cho sinh viên các khóa tập huấn toàn diện về cách thiết kế, tổ chức và điều phối trò chơi ngôn ngữ như một phần trong bài thuyết trình nói. Điều này bao gồm việc trang bị cho sinh viên các chiến lược thực tiễn, ví dụ về các hình thức trò chơi hiệu quả và hướng dẫn cách lồng ghép mục tiêu học ngôn ngữ vào các hoạt động dựa trên trò chơi.

Từ khóa: Trò chơi ngôn ngữ; thuyết trình; kỹ năng nói; học tập tương tác; sinh viên học tiếng Anh như một ngoại ngữ