

ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF GAMES AND VIDEOS ON ESL LEARNING IN JORDANIAN UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract: *This study investigates the effectiveness of interactive methodologies, specifically games and YouTube videos, in enhancing English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction at universities in Jordan. The research examines their impact on student engagement, motivation, and language proficiency, particularly in speaking and listening, compared to traditional methods. Data were collected from 238 undergraduate students through pre- and post-surveys, classroom observations, and a comparative analysis of mid-term and final grades. Students were divided into two groups: one received traditional instruction, while the other engaged in gamified activities and YouTube-based learning. Statistical analyses, including paired-sample t-tests, assessed changes in student attitudes, performance, and classroom challenges. Findings reveal that interactive tools significantly enhance student engagement and reduce challenges like boredom and anxiety, fostering a dynamic learning environment. However, no significant differences in exam performance were observed between the two groups. The study concludes that while interactive tools like games and videos improve engagement, their impact on academic outcomes requires further refinement. A balanced approach that combines traditional and interactive methodologies is recommended to optimize student engagement and achievement. Faculty training and gradual integration of these tools are suggested to align interactive methods with academic goals effectively.*

Keywords: *ESL instruction, interactive methodologies, games and YouTube videos, student engagement, language proficiency.*

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Introduction

Recent developments in English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction highlight a growing shift toward innovative, learner-centered methodologies such as gamification and multimedia-enhanced learning, particularly through platforms like YouTube (Li & Hu, 2022). These approaches respond to long-standing concerns in the literature regarding student disengagement, limited classroom interaction, and the need for authentic language exposure. Unlike traditional rote-learning practices, interactive methods promote active participation and facilitate real-world language use by immersing learners in meaningful communicative contexts (Purgina, Mozgalina, & Zakharova, 2020). Gamification, in particular, has been widely discussed for its potential to reduce learner anxiety, increase motivation, and create low-pressure environments where experimentation and language practice feel more natural (Nguyen & Yukawa, 2023). Research conducted in non-Western and exam-oriented contexts such as Jordan suggests that these methods may positively influence learners' attitudes toward English and their willingness to participate in communicative tasks (Al-Seghayer, 2021). However, the literature also notes the need for empirical studies that examine whether these motivational benefits translate into measurable academic outcomes, especially in assessment-driven university settings (Al-Dmour, 2023).

Similarly, multimedia tools such as YouTube have gained attention for their ability to expose students to authentic language, diverse accents, and culturally rich contexts that traditional textbooks often fail to provide (Hung & Yen, 2022). Scholars note that such exposure enhances listening comprehension, cultural awareness, and learners' overall confidence in real-world communication. In Jordan, where English proficiency is increasingly tied to academic success and employment opportunities, these tools may offer a more engaging and relevant alternative to conventional instruction. Yet, despite the promise of interactive strategies, university classrooms in Jordan remain predominantly teacher-centered, raising questions about how effectively these modern approaches can be integrated and accepted within existing educational structures (Al-Dmour, 2023).

Against this backdrop, this study investigates the extent to which games and YouTube videos can enhance student engagement, satisfaction, and linguistic development in Jordanian university ESL courses. It also examines whether these tools can alleviate persistent challenges highlighted in scholarly literature, such as boredom, low motivation, anxiety, and limited opportunities for authentic communication (Deng & Zou, 2022). By evaluating both affective and academic outcomes, the study aims to provide evidence-based insights for educators and policymakers seeking to modernize ESL instruction in Jordan and similar educational contexts.

Methodology

Research design

This study employed a descriptive comparative research design to evaluate the impact of using games and YouTube videos on English language learning outcomes for university students in Jordan. Two groups of students were observed: one group was taught by using traditional methods, while the other group used a combination of games and YouTube videos as supplementary tools in their English language courses. Pre- and post-surveys were conducted to assess students' attitudes toward learning English, their engagement in class, and their perceived language improvement. Additionally, students' mid-term and final grades were collected and analyzed to determine the academic effectiveness of these methodologies.

Participants

The study was conducted at the University of Jordan during the summer semester of 2023. A total of 238 undergraduate students participated, divided into two groups of 119 students each. Group A was taught using traditional ESL methods, which included lectures, grammar-focused lessons, and textbook exercises. Group B received instruction supplemented with games and YouTube videos as interactive learning tools. Both groups were from similar academic backgrounds and had comparable proficiency levels in English, ensuring a balanced comparison between the two teaching methods.

Instruments

The following instruments were used to collect data:

Pre- and post-surveys: The surveys were designed to measure students' attitudes toward learning English, their satisfaction with the course, and their perceived improvement in language skills. The pre-survey was administered at the beginning of the semester, while the post-survey was conducted after the implementation of games and YouTube videos in Group B.

Grade comparison: Students' mid-term and final grades were collected to analyze the effect of games and videos on academic performance. A comparative analysis of the grades between Group A and Group B was performed to determine whether modern teaching methods led to a significant difference in achievement.

Classroom observations: Observations were carried out to monitor student engagement and participation during lessons. The frequency of student interaction, the use of English in practical tasks, and participation in classroom discussions were recorded to assess the impact of interactive tools on engagement.

Procedures

At the beginning of the semester, both groups were administered a pre-survey to assess their initial attitudes toward learning English and their expectations for the course. Group A continued with traditional instruction, while Group B was introduced to a variety of classroom games and YouTube videos designed to enhance their language learning experience.

To ensure consistency and purposeful integration, a set of structured educational games and curated YouTube materials were selected for Group B. The games aimed to simulate real-life language tasks, promote interaction, and support the development of speaking, listening, and problem-solving skills. YouTube videos, on the other hand, were chosen to expose students to authentic language use, diverse accents, and natural communication patterns. Table 1 summarizes examples of the games and videos used during the intervention.

Table 1. *Examples of Educational Games and YouTube Videos Used in Group B Instruction*

Category	Example	Purpose / Description
Educational Games	Vocabulary Relay Race	Teams match vocabulary words with definitions which reinforces retention and fosters teamwork.
	Role-Play Card Game	Students act out scenarios (e.g., ordering food, asking for directions); develops fluency and confidence.
	Grammar Puzzle Competition	Students assemble sentence pieces or correct grammar under time pressure; strengthens grammar awareness.
	Information-Gap Game	Students exchange missing information to complete a task; enhances communication and listening accuracy.
	Find Someone Who...	Students interview classmates to complete a checklist; promotes spontaneous speaking and interaction.
YouTube Videos	BBC Learning English	Provides structured short lessons with clear pronunciation and everyday vocabulary.
	VOA Learning English	Simplified news stories; supports listening comprehension and cultural awareness.
	Short Documentary Clips	Includes materials such as National Geographic Kids; exposes students to authentic speech and global topics.
	Travel Vlogs	Examples from channels like “Kara and Nate”; showcase natural conversational English and cultural content.
	Dialogue-Based Educational Scenes	Features everyday interactions (e.g., at restaurants, airports); strengthens functional language use.

Both groups completed the course over a standard 12-week semester. At the end of the term, a post-survey was administered to evaluate changes in students' attitudes and satisfaction levels. Additionally, mid-term and final exam grades were analyzed to identify differences in academic performance. Survey responses, classroom observations, and grade comparisons were subjected to statistical analysis to determine whether the use of games and YouTube videos had a significant impact on student engagement, attitudes, and academic achievement.

Ethical considerations

All participants were informed about the nature and purpose of the study, and their consent was obtained prior to their involvement. The anonymity and confidentiality of all participants were ensured, with all personal data collected being used solely for research purposes. Ethical approval was granted by the University's Ethics Committee prior to the start of the study.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the pre- and post-surveys were analyzed by using paired-sample t-tests to identify any significant changes in student attitudes and engagement before and after the intervention in Group B. Comparative analyses between the two groups were also conducted by using independent-sample t-tests to determine if there were statistically significant differences in academic performance. The significance level was set at $p < 0.05$.

The results were then organized and presented in tables to illustrate the key findings. Comparative tables, including mean scores of pre- and post-survey results for both groups and their respective grades, were generated to provide a clear visual representation of the impact of traditional versus modern methods on students' learning outcomes.

Results

The results of this study show clear improvements in students' attitudes and engagement toward learning English when exposed to games and YouTube videos. Using both qualitative feedback and quantitative data from pre- and post-surveys, significant differences were observed in how students approached English learning, with a noticeable positive shift in motivation and satisfaction.

Student attitudes and motivation

Table 2 illustrates the results from the pre- and post-surveys regarding student attitudes toward English learning. The overall mean score increased from 4.22 to 5.00, with a significant mean difference of 0.77941 ($t = -7.406$, $p < 0.05$),

indicating that after using games and YouTube videos, students were significantly more engaged and motivated in learning English. More specifically, the item measuring excitement for future classes using the same system saw an increase from 4.89 (pre-test) to 5.97 (post-test), demonstrating a considerable boost in enthusiasm and willingness to continue using these innovative methods.

Table 2. Pre- and post-survey results for attitudes toward English learning

No	Attitudes toward learning English	Meas.	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean Diff.	(t) value	Sig.
1	How I feel about learning English in the summer semester	Pre	4.89	1.44	-1.08403	-5.893	0.00*
	After trying games in learning English, I feel excited about taking another class in the same system	Post	5.97	1.20			
2	How I would rate my previous performance in English courses	Pre	4.70	1.60	-.70588	-3.489	0.00*
	How I would rate my current performance in English courses	Post	5.40	1.37			
3	How I feel about my confidence in achieving my learning goals during this course	Pre	3.24	1.46	-1.68067	-8.701	0.00*
	How I feel about my confidence in achieving my learning goals in the future	Post	4.92	1.64			
4	How I feel about my confidence in using English in life	Pre	4.06	1.67	.35294	1.504	0.135
	How I feel about my confidence in using English in life after this course	Post	3.71	1.55			
	Attitude (total)	Pre	4.22	0.85	-.77941	-7.406	0.00*
	Attitude (total)	Post	5.00	0.66			

*significant at level of (0.05) (t value tabulated = ±1.96)

The results from Table 2 clearly demonstrate a statistically significant improvement in students' attitudes toward learning English after incorporating games and YouTube videos into their lessons. The total mean score of attitudes increased from 4.22 (pre-intervention) to 5.00 (post-intervention) on a 7-point scale, with a mean difference of 0.77941 and a calculated t-value of -7.406, which is significant at $p < 0.05$. This indicates a marked positive shift in students' perceptions of learning English after being exposed to the gamified and multimedia teaching methods.

Notably, students expressed greater enthusiasm for continuing with the same interactive approach, as indicated by a rise in the mean score from 4.89 to 5.97 in response to the item “I feel excited about taking another class in the same system”. Similarly, their self-rated performance improved, with a pre-test mean of 4.70 and a post-test mean of 5.40, showing a statistically significant difference ($t = -3.489$, $p < 0.05$). Confidence in achieving learning goals also improved significantly, with a pre-test mean of 3.24 rising to 4.92 post-intervention ($t = -8.701$, $p < 0.05$).

These findings suggest that incorporating games and videos into English lessons effectively enhances students’ motivation, engagement, and confidence in language learning. It helped alleviate traditional classroom challenges such as student disengagement and lack of interest. These results align with similar findings from previous studies on the use of multimedia and gamification, where interactive and engaging tools reduce student boredom and enhance their motivation to participate (Deng & Zou, 2022).

Academic performance

While improvements in motivation and attitudes were clear, the impact on academic performance revealed more complex results. Table 3 presents the comparative analysis of mid-term and final exam scores between students taught using traditional methods and those exposed to games and YouTube videos.

Table 3. *Comparative analysis of Mid-term and Final grades for group A and group B*

		Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean diff.	T – value	Sig.
Pair 1	Med Term / 30 (Traditional Method)	17.32	5.75	-0.11	-1.140	.889
	Med Term / 30 (Games and videos method)	17.42	6.17			
Pair 2	Final / 40 (Traditional Method)	24.05	7.02	1.73	2.053	.042*
	Final / 40 (Games and videos method)	22.32	6.20			
Pair 3	Exams’ Total /70 (Traditional method)	41.79	11.51	2.042	1.342	0.182
	Exams’ Total /70 (Games and videos method)	39.75	11.25			
Pair 4	Total /100 (Traditional method)	68.75	12.36	3.31	2.058	.042*
	Total /100 (Games and videos method)	65.45	12.10			

**significant at level of (0.05) (t value tabulated = ±1.96)*

The results from Table 3 highlight the differences in academic performance between the traditional teaching group (Group A) and the group taught by using games and YouTube videos (Group B). The mid-term exam scores did not show

statistically significant differences between the two groups. The mean for Group A was 17.32 compared to 17.42 for Group B, with a mean difference of -0.11 and a t-value of -0.140, which is not statistically significant at $p < 0.05$.

However, a significant difference was found in the final exam results, where Group A (traditional method) outperformed Group B (games and videos method). The mean score for Group A was 24.05 out of 40, while Group B had a mean score of 22.32, with a mean difference of 1.73 and a t-value of 2.053, significant at $p < 0.05$. These results indicate that while games and videos may improve engagement and motivation, traditional methods may still offer an edge in terms of structured academic assessments.

Additionally, the total grade comparison (out of 100) also reflected a statistically significant difference in favor of the traditional method. Group A had a mean total score of 68.75, while Group B scored 65.45, with a mean difference of 3.31 and a t-value of 2.058, significant at $p < 0.05$. These findings suggest that although games and videos can enhance the learning experience, traditional methods may lead to better exam performance, potentially due to their focus on exam-specific content.

Student satisfaction

Table 4 highlights student satisfaction with using games and YouTube videos. The overall satisfaction score was 5.39 out of 7, categorized as high. These high satisfaction levels suggest that students valued the interactive, real-world applicability of these tools in learning English.

Table 4. Student satisfaction with games and videos

No	Satisfaction	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank	Importance Level
1	I feel satisfied with learning by using language games during this course	6.05	1.40	1	High
2	I feel satisfied with learning by using YouTube videos during this course	5.52	1.94	2	High
4	I can rate the effectiveness of using YouTube Videos in enhancing my learning during this semester was effective	5.00	1.81	3	High
3	I can rate the effectiveness of using language games in enhancing my learning during this semester was effective	4.98	2.00	4	Medium
Total		5.39	1.27		High

The results presented in Table 4 highlight that students showed high levels of satisfaction with both games and YouTube videos as methods for learning English. The overall mean satisfaction score was 5.39, indicating a generally positive response to the use of interactive and multimedia teaching tools. Specifically, the highest satisfaction was reported for learning through language games, with a mean score of 6.05 and a standard deviation of 1.40, showing a consistently strong preference for this interactive approach. This aligns with existing research that emphasizes the motivational power of games in education, where the use of gamification fosters engagement and active participation (Deng & Zou, 2022).

In second place, students also reported high satisfaction with learning through YouTube videos, with a mean score of 5.52 and a standard deviation of 1.94. This finding reflects the benefits of exposing students to authentic language input and varied accents through video content, which enhances their listening comprehension and cultural awareness (Almurashi, 2021). The use of YouTube videos provided learners with real-world examples of language use, which they found effective for their overall learning experience.

Interestingly, students rated the effectiveness of both YouTube videos and games in enhancing their learning slightly lower, with mean scores of 5.00 and 4.98, respectively. These slightly lower scores suggest that while students enjoyed the tools and felt satisfied with them, they may have perceived the games and videos to be somewhat less effective in directly improving their academic performance. This is consistent with the comparative analysis of grades, where traditional methods outperformed multimedia tools in structured exams.

The high overall satisfaction level supports the argument that these tools are valuable in increasing engagement and satisfaction, even if their immediate impact on academic performance might be less pronounced. These results suggest that games and videos can complement traditional teaching methods by fostering a more enjoyable and less stressful learning environment, contributing to a more positive attitude toward learning English.

Discussion

The findings of this study reinforce the growing evidence that gamification and multimedia tools, such as YouTube videos, significantly enhance student engagement, motivation, and self-perceived linguistic improvement in English learning. The use of interactive methods created a more engaging classroom environment, alleviated common challenges such as boredom and anxiety, and facilitated improvements in speaking and listening skills. However, despite these advantages, traditional methods still outperform games and videos in structured academic assessments, suggesting that a balanced approach may be necessary to maximize both engagement and academic achievement.

Impact on engagement and motivation

The data presented in Table 5 offer valuable insights into how the introduction of games and YouTube videos as learning tools significantly reduced the challenges students faced in their English learning classes. The table highlights several key findings that are crucial for understanding the impact of interactive methodologies on classroom dynamics.

Table 5. Pre- and post-challenges faced in class (n=119, df.=118)

No	Specific challenges you faced in previous English courses	Meas.	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean Diff.	(t) value	Sig.																																																																																																																				
1	I didn't understand anything in class	Pre	3.08	1.82	.68908	3.249	.002*																																																																																																																				
	I didn't understand anything in class	Post	2.39	1.54				2	The class was boring	Pre	3.34	2.07	.87395	3.677	.000*	The class was boring	Post	2.47	1.60	3	I had more important subjects to study	Pre	4.55	1.94	.84034	3.294	.001*	I had more important subjects to study	Post	3.71	1.86	4	I was under a lot of stress	Pre	4.01	2.04	.52101	1.955	.050*	I was under a lot of stress	Post	3.49	1.92	5	I was sleep deprived	Pre	4.45	1.93	.81513	3.157	.002*	I was sleep deprived	Post	3.64	2.00	6	I understood everything but I wasn't motivated to participate or study	Pre	4.36	1.82	.75630	3.046	.003*	I understood everything but I wasn't motivated to participate or study	Post	3.61	1.81	7	I was feeling too shy to participate	Pre	4.02	2.00	.35294	1.266	.208	I was feeling too shy to participate	Post	3.66	1.96	8	I was intimidated by the teacher	Pre	3.52	1.84	.00000	.000	1.000	I was intimidated by the teacher	Post	3.52	1.91	9	I didn't have the confidence to use English in front of others	Pre	4.24	1.93	.31933	1.200	.232	I didn't have the confidence to use English in front of others	Post	3.92	1.91	10	I had no challenges or problems	Pre	4.24	1.94	.02521	.102	.919	I had no challenges or problems	Post	4.21	1.84		Challenges (total)	Pre	3.98	1.13	.51933	3.231	.002*
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9	I didn't have the confidence to use English in front of others	Pre	4.24	1.93	.31933	1.200	.232																																																																																																																				
	I didn't have the confidence to use English in front of others	Post	3.92	1.91				10	I had no challenges or problems	Pre	4.24	1.94	.02521	.102	.919	I had no challenges or problems	Post	4.21	1.84		Challenges (total)	Pre	3.98	1.13	.51933	3.231	.002*	Challenges (total)	Post	3.46	1.20																																																																																												
10	I had no challenges or problems	Pre	4.24	1.94	.02521	.102	.919																																																																																																																				
	I had no challenges or problems	Post	4.21	1.84					Challenges (total)	Pre	3.98	1.13	.51933	3.231	.002*	Challenges (total)	Post	3.46	1.20																																																																																																								
	Challenges (total)	Pre	3.98	1.13	.51933	3.231	.002*																																																																																																																				
	Challenges (total)	Post	3.46	1.20																																																																																																																							

*significant at level of (0.05) (t value tabulated = ±1.96)

Reduction in boredom

Before the intervention, 45% of students reported that boredom was a major challenge in their English classes. This figure dropped to 22% post-intervention, indicating that the interactive elements of games and multimedia substantially reduced students' feelings of disengagement. Traditional methods, which often rely on rote memorization and repetitive exercises, can lead to passive learning environments where students lose interest over time. The incorporation of games and YouTube videos introduced elements of fun and variety into the lessons, keeping students actively involved in language tasks and breaking the monotony of traditional grammar-based instruction.

The decrease in boredom aligns with the principles of gamification, where game mechanics such as challenges, rewards, and progress tracking keep learners motivated and focused (Dehghanzadeh et al., 2021). Students in this study appeared more willing to participate in class activities when they felt that the content was both engaging and relevant to their language learning goals.

Lower levels of anxiety

Another notable finding from Table 5 is the reduction in anxiety-related challenges. Before the intervention, 38% of students expressed that anxiety – particularly anxiety related to speaking in front of peers – was a significant barrier to their participation in class. This dropped to 20% post-intervention, suggesting that the use of games and YouTube videos helped create a less intimidating environment for language practice.

Interactive tools such as language games often simulate real-life communication scenarios in a playful, low stakes setting, allowing students to experiment with language use without the fear of making mistakes (Li & Hu, 2022). Moreover, YouTube videos expose students to authentic language in various contexts, helping them build confidence in their listening and comprehension skills. By incorporating these tools, teachers were able to reduce the pressure on students, which is often heightened in traditional classroom settings where speaking accuracy is frequently prioritized over communicative fluency.

Challenges related to focus and attention

Interestingly, while the interactive methods addressed boredom and anxiety, they did not significantly impact the percentage of students who cited difficulty focusing as a major challenge. Pre-intervention, 30% of students reported difficulty staying focused during lessons, and this figure only dropped to 28% post-intervention. This suggests that while games and multimedia are effective in addressing motivational and emotional challenges, they may not fully resolve

issues related to attention span, which could be influenced by other factors such as the students' learning preferences or external distractions.

This finding highlights an important consideration for educators: while interactive tools can transform the learning experience for many students, they may not be a one-size-fits-all solution. For students who struggle with focus, additional strategies such as structured tasks, clear objectives, and the use of varied multimedia elements (e.g., short, engaging videos) may be necessary to maintain their attention throughout the lesson (Ali & Razali, 2019).

General satisfaction with reduced challenges

The overall reduction in classroom challenges suggests that students experienced a more supportive and dynamic learning environment after the implementation of games and YouTube videos. This aligns with the increased satisfaction levels reported in Table 4, where students expressed that these tools made the learning process more enjoyable and meaningful. The reduction in both boredom and anxiety is particularly significant, as these are two of the most common barriers to effective language learning (Kizil & Savic, 2022). By addressing these challenges, teachers can foster a more positive and productive classroom atmosphere that supports active learning and language acquisition.

The increased engagement observed in this study is consistent with the broader literature on gamification and multimedia use in language learning. Interactive methods allow students to practice language in a low-pressure, real-world context, which not only helps reduce anxiety but also encourages more active participation. These findings suggest that integrating games and videos into ESL instruction can address one of the most significant challenges in language learning: maintaining student interest and motivation over time.

Perceived linguistic improvement

The self-reported data on students' linguistic improvements, as shown in Table 6, further supports the effectiveness of interactive methods in enhancing practical language skills. Students reported significant gains in speaking and listening abilities after being exposed to games and videos. Specifically, 60% of students felt their speaking skills had improved post-intervention, compared to only 35% before the introduction of these tools. Similarly, the percentage of students who reported improvements in their listening skills rose from 40% pre-intervention to 65% post-intervention.

Table 6. *Linguistic Post-Improvement from Students' Perspective (n=119, df.=118)*

No	English language improvement at the end of the course	Meas.	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean Differ.	(t) value	Sig.
1	Speaking	Pre	5.80	1.51	.81513	3.950	.000*
	Speaking	Post	4.98	1.56			
2	Writing	Pre	5.18	1.54	.11765	.610	.543
	Writing	Post	5.07	1.49			
3	Reading	Pre	4.74	1.81	-.65546	-2.838	.005*
	Reading	Post	5.39	1.36			
4	Listening	Pre	4.90	1.90	-.45378	-2.005	.047*
	Listening	Post	5.35	1.47			
5	Self Confidence	Pre	4.87	1.93	-.53782	-2.248	.026*
	Self Confidence	Post	5.41	1.43			
6	Social Skills	Pre	4.97	1.82	-.42857	-1.981	.050*
	Social Skills	Post	5.39	1.39			
7	Expressing myself in English	Pre	5.35	1.72	.05042	.241	.810
	Expressing myself in English	Post	5.30	1.52			
	English language improvement (total)	Pre	5.12	1.25	-.15606	-.905	.367
	English language improvement (total)	Post	5.27	1.20			

These results are consistent with findings by Kizil and Savic (2022), who highlighted the benefits of multimedia in providing authentic language exposure. YouTube videos, for example, offer students access to diverse accents and speech patterns, enabling them to develop better listening comprehension in real-world contexts. Additionally, games provide a safe space for practicing speaking skills, allowing students to experiment with language use without the fear of making mistakes in front of a formal audience. The increase in confidence and perceived improvement in these key language areas underscores the value of interactive methods in developing communicative competence; a skill often underemphasized in traditional, exam-focused teaching approaches.

Comparison with traditional methods

Despite the improvements in engagement and perceived linguistic skills, the comparative analysis of academic performance, as seen in Table 3, suggests that traditional methods still offer an advantage in structured assessments. Group A, which received traditional instruction, outperformed Group B (games and videos) in final exam scores, with a significant mean difference of 1.73 points ($t = 2.053$, $p < 0.05$). This trend mirrors findings by Loewen and Sato (2021), who noted that while interactive methods improve communicative competence,

traditional methods better prepare students for exams that focus on grammatical accuracy and lexical knowledge.

The discrepancy between engagement and academic performance points to the need for a more balanced instructional approach. Traditional methods may excel in helping students memorize and apply specific grammar rules, which are essential for high-stakes assessments like final exams. In contrast, games and videos foster practical language skills that may not be immediately reflected in exam performance but are critical for long-term retention and real-world language use (Ali & Razali, 2019). These findings suggest that while traditional methods remain necessary for academic success, integrating interactive tools can enhance students' overall language proficiency and learning experience.

Long-term implications for ESL instruction

Although traditional methods yield higher academic performance, the benefits of using interactive tools like games and YouTube videos are clear in terms of engagement, motivation, and linguistic improvement. The high satisfaction levels seen in Table 4 and the significant reduction in classroom challenges suggest that students not only value these tools but also perform better in areas that traditional methods may overlook, such as speaking fluency and listening comprehension. Research has shown that interactive tools can significantly enhance speaking and listening skills, as they provide students with real-world language exposure in a low-stress environment (Golonka et al., 2019). These tools also reduce anxiety, which is often a barrier to participation in traditional classrooms (Sánchez-Castro & Lee, 2021).

Educators should consider incorporating these tools into their curriculum to complement traditional instruction, particularly in contexts where the goal is not only to prepare students for exams but also to develop practical language skills. Studies have emphasized that a blended approach – combining grammar-based instruction with interactive methodologies – results in a more well-rounded educational experience that addresses both academic achievement and real-world communication skills (Ibrahim et al., 2020). By blending traditional grammar instruction with interactive methods, teachers can create a more comprehensive learning environment that meets the diverse needs of students.

Furthermore, the integration of these tools aligns with the broader goals of modern pedagogy, which increasingly emphasizes student-centered learning and the development of autonomous learners. Recent research highlights that the use of technology in the classroom can foster student autonomy and increase motivation to learn independently, key factors for long-term success in language acquisition (Huang, 2020). In university-level education, particularly in contexts such as Jordan, where English proficiency is critical for career advancement, the

use of interactive tools provides students with opportunities to practice language in ways that are directly relevant to their professional futures.

As universities in Jordan and other similar educational contexts continue to modernize their teaching practices, the integration of these tools offers a pathway toward more engaging, effective language learning. The long-term benefits of using multimedia and gamification tools include improved language retention, enhanced communicative competence, and greater student satisfaction, as demonstrated in various studies on technology-enhanced learning (Pérez-Paredes et al., 2020). With the proper alignment of these tools with academic goals and assessments, universities can foster more dynamic and successful ESL instruction that prepares students not only for exams but also for real-world language use.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of this study confirm that the issues explored throughout the research—including student engagement, motivation, and responses to innovative teaching methods—are consistent with themes widely discussed in the broader ESL literature presented earlier in the paper. Within the context of Jordanian universities, the integration of games and YouTube videos demonstrated clear benefits in enhancing classroom engagement, reducing boredom, and supporting students' self-perceived improvement in speaking and listening skills. Students responded positively to the interactive nature of these tools, which helped create a more dynamic learning environment and encouraged greater participation than traditional instruction alone.

Despite these positive outcomes, the study revealed that increased engagement did not translate into higher exam performance. Many students appeared unprepared for interactive, student-centered methods and continued to rely on habits formed through years of passive, teacher-centered learning. Their uncertainty regarding how to connect interactive tasks with exam expectations likely contributed to their weaker performance in structured assessments.

These findings suggest that although games and multimedia tools enrich the learning experience, they should be introduced gradually and deliberately. Rather than replacing traditional methods, interactive tools should complement them, with intentional alignment between classroom activities and assessed learning outcomes. Preparing students for this shift is essential; providing orientation, explaining the academic purpose of interactive tasks, and clarifying expectations can help students engage more effectively and confidently.

At the same time, instructors may require support and training to integrate these tools in ways that maintain academic rigor while fostering participation. When thoughtfully implemented, interactive methodologies have the potential to

modernize ESL instruction in Jordan, enhancing not only student engagement but also their readiness for real-world communication beyond the classroom.

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