

Investigating Pre-University Students' Perceptions of Using the *Among Us* Video Game as an ESL Teaching Tool

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Abstract

The integration of video games into educational contexts, particularly *Among Us*, has gained significant attention for its potential to engage and enhance students' learning experiences. In response to the global demand for English language proficiency, educators are constantly exploring innovative methods to make language learning more engaging and enjoyable. Traditional teaching approaches often struggle to captivate students effectively. This study explores pre-university students' perceptions of using *Among Us* as a tool for teaching English, highlighting how their views can inform and enhance pedagogical strategies to make learning more engaging and effective. Understanding these perceptions can bridge the research gap and contribute to developing innovative teaching methods. Using a quantitative research design, this study collected data from pre-university students through a questionnaire. The findings revealed that students widely believed that *Among Us* positively contributed to their language proficiency and communicative competence in ESL. The game's interactive nature, requiring communication and collaboration, proved effective in fostering language skills and enhancing motivation. Furthermore, the research explored potential gender differences in students' perceptions of *Among Us* as an ESL teaching tool. The results indicated that gender did not significantly influence students' views on the game's effectiveness, highlighting its inclusivity. In summary, this study provides valuable insights into the potential of *Among Us* as a pedagogical tool for ESL. It demonstrates its positive impact on language learning and suggests that it can engage students regardless of their gender. These findings offer educators a compelling avenue to create dynamic and interactive ESL classrooms, ultimately enhancing language proficiency in an engaging and enjoyable manner.

Keywords: *Language learning, Pedagogical tool, ESL (English as a Second Language), Gamification, Among Us*

Introduction

The incorporation of video games into educational settings has recently garnered significant attention due to its potential to engage and motivate students (Takbiri et al., 2023). Among the panoply of innovative approaches in this domain, *Among Us*, a widely popular multiplayer online video game, has emerged as a promising pedagogical tool (Frazier, 2021). This study endeavors to explore the perspectives of pre-university students regarding the utilization of *Among Us* as an instructional tool for the acquisition of English as a Second Language (ESL). In today's increasingly globalised world, the acquisition of English language proficiency has assumed critical significance, prompting educators to continually seek novel and effective methodologies to enhance the language learning process, making it both engaging and enjoyable (Otto et al., 2023). Traditional pedagogical approaches, often characterised by rote memorization of vocabulary and grammar rules, frequently fall short in terms of captivating students and instilling enthusiasm for language learning (Otto et al., 2023). However, the integration of educational video games, such as *Among Us*, presents an enticing opportunity to effectively address this pedagogical challenge.

In recent years, English language acquisition has become an indispensable skill, facilitating cross-cultural communication, and offering access to a multitude of global opportunities. In recognition of the growing importance of English proficiency, educators have embarked on an exploration of diverse strategies to enhance language learning experiences. Among these strategies, the integration of video games into ESL classrooms has garnered significant attention. *Among Us*, with its immersive gameplay and interactive features, has risen to prominence as an influential candidate for enhancing language proficiency and communicative competence among pre-university students. Conventional language teaching methods have often faced criticism for their limited ability to effectively engage students, particularly within the ESL context. Pedagogical practices centered on rote memorization of vocabulary and grammar rules have proven to be uninspiring and have failed to ignite students' interest (Otto et al., 2023). In contrast, video games such as *Among Us* offer a dynamic and immersive learning environment wherein students are actively encouraged to collaborate, strategise, and engage in effective communication. This transition from passive learning to active participation aligns with contemporary pedagogical principles that emphasise student-centered and interactive approaches to education.

This study is driven by a fundamental objective: to investigate the perceptions of pre-university students concerning the effectiveness of the *Among Us* video game as a pedagogical tool for ESL. In the pursuit of this objective, two specific research questions have been meticulously formulated: (1) To what extent do students believe that the use of *Among Us* video game enhances their language proficiency and communicative competence in ESL? and (2) Is there a significant difference between gender, and students' perception that the use of *Among Us* video game enhances their language proficiency and communicative competence in ESL?

Through the systematic examination of these research questions, this study endeavors to provide a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted aspects associated with the deployment of *Among Us* as an ESL pedagogical tool and its potential ramifications for language learning outcomes among pre-university students. Ultimately, this research aspires to make a meaningful contribution to the ongoing discourse concerning the integration of innovative technologies into the ESL classroom.

Literature review

In recent years, the integration of digital games into educational contexts has garnered significant attention as educators seek innovative approaches to engage and motivate students. Among the myriad of digital games, *Among Us*, a popular multiplayer online game, has emerged as a promising pedagogical tool, particularly in the domain of English as a Second Language (ESL) education. Sociocultural theory, developed by Lev Vygotsky, underscores the role of social interactions and cultural context in learning and cognitive

development (Southwood et al., 2021). It posits that learning is fundamentally a social process, with language acquisition occurring through interactions with others. In the context of *Among Us* as an ESL pedagogical tool, sociocultural theory emphasises the game's potential to create a collaborative and interactive learning environment (Xia, 2023). This framework underscores the importance of communication and negotiation among players, elements that can significantly contribute to language development and cross-cultural understanding. Gamification theory, as outlined by Licorish et al. (2018), draws from game design principles and applies them to non-game contexts to enhance motivation, engagement, and learning outcomes. It posits that introducing game elements such as challenges, rewards, and competitiveness can boost learners' intrinsic motivation, making the learning process more enjoyable and effective. Applying gamification principles to *Among Us* as an English teaching tool holds the potential to heighten students' interest and active participation, ultimately leading to improved language learning outcomes. Digital games, due to their immersive and interactive nature, have gained increasing recognition as effective tools for language learning. These games offer dynamic learning environments that can facilitate vocabulary acquisition, grammar comprehension, and the development of communication skills (Syahida Mohtar et al., 2022). Furthermore, digital games provide learners with opportunities for autonomous learning and self-paced progression, allowing them to practice language skills at their own convenience. *Among Us*, known primarily for its entertainment value, possesses unique gameplay mechanics and social interaction elements that render it a potential pedagogical tool for language learning (Frazier, 2021). By integrating *Among Us* into ESL education, instructors can leverage its immersive experience to engage pre-university students in language practice and learning (Emihovich et al., 2020).

Empirical research has indicated that students often find *Among Us* to be an engaging and motivating platform for language learning (Calvo-Ferrer & Belda-Medina, 2021; Forutanian, 2023; Kaur & Azlina Abdul Aziz, 2020; York, 2020). According to these studies, students have reported a heightened interest in participating in language-related tasks when integrated into the game. They find the gameplay, with its focus on communication, collaboration, and problem-solving, to be particularly conducive to language production and vocabulary expansion. Moreover, students have expressed positive sentiments regarding the autonomy and self-pacing opportunities afforded by *Among Us* in language learning (Calvo-Ferrer & Belda-Medina, 2021). They appreciate the flexibility to practice language skills at their own convenience, contributing to a more personalised and effective learning experience. However, it is crucial to explore potential variations in students' perceptions, such as differences based on gender or language proficiency level (Debajyoti Pal & Syamal Patra, 2021). These insights will provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of *Among Us* as an ESL pedagogical tool on students' language learning experiences. While theoretical frameworks and educational principles support the integration of *Among Us* into ESL education, it is essential to consider students' perceptions to gauge the practical effectiveness of this approach. Pre-university students' perspec-

tives reflect their engagement, motivation, and overall satisfaction with *Among Us* as a language learning tool, shedding light on its potential as a valuable asset in the ESL classroom.

Problem Statement

The integration of digital technology into educational practices has witnessed a remarkable surge in popularity over recent years. Educators, in their quest for innovative and compelling methodologies to enhance the learning experiences of their students, have cast their gaze upon diverse technological solutions. Notably, the multiplayer video game *Among Us* has emerged as a subject of considerable interest, specifically regarding its potential utility as a pedagogical tool across various educational domains, including the realm of English language acquisition (Frazier, 2021). However, within this burgeoning discourse, there exists a discernible void, a gap that pertains to the dearth of empirical insights into the perspectives of pre-university students concerning the integration of *Among Us* as a pedagogical instrument for English language learning, as the majority of research has concentrated on elementary and middle school levels (Navarro-Espinosa et al., 2022). To elucidate this pivotal issue, this study embarks on a rigorous exploration of pre-university students' viewpoints, an often-overlooked segment of learners. While gamification research predominantly tends to focus on adolescents and teenagers, the unique experiences and needs of pre-university students have received comparatively limited attention. This research aims to redress this imbalance by homing in on the specific population of pre-university students, whose educational context may significantly differ from their adolescent counterparts.

The central inquiry of this study revolves around uncovering the nuanced perspectives and attitudes of pre-university students regarding the utilization of *Among Us* as an educational tool for English language acquisition. By shifting the spotlight onto this distinct demographic, we seek to illuminate their perceptions, experiences, and any potential challenges encountered in the integration of this video game within the ESL classroom. Consequently, this research aspires to fill a critical void in the existing scholarship and contribute valuable insights into the broader discourse surrounding the use of *Among Us* as an ESL pedagogical tool, thus affording educators and researchers a more comprehensive understanding of its implications within the specific context of pre-university education.

Methodology

The chosen research method is quantitative, involving the collection and analysis of numerical data to address the research questions. Quantitative research offers a systematic and objective examination of relationships between variables, providing statistical evidence to substantiate or disprove assertions (Apuke, 2017).

This study employs a descriptive correlational research design, aiming to describe the current perceptions of pre-university students and explore potential relationships between variables.

Purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique, was employed for participant selection. This method involves the deliberate selection of participants based on predefined criteria, characteristics, or attributes of interest to the study. For this research, the criteria included pre-university students from a private college in Klang Valley who have experience playing *Among Us* and are currently enrolled in English courses. According to Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table, 76 participants are needed based on the 95 pre-university students in the college. However, only 36 participants participated in the study as some students had not used *Among Us* as a pedagogical tool. This approach allows us to focus on specific subgroups within the target population that are most relevant to our research objectives. As emphasised by Yusuf (2021), pre-university students represent a suitable and relevant sample for this study due to their transitional phase from secondary education to higher education. This transitional status renders their perspectives and experiences highly pertinent to the research focus. Furthermore, the relatively consistent educational backgrounds of pre-university students enable more controlled comparisons among participants. This demographic also typically falls within a similar age range, reducing the potential influence of age-related variables on the research results (Chopik et al., 2018). Given the generation's affinity for gaming and technology, pre-university students are more likely to be familiar with video games, including *Among Us*. Importantly, this stage of education marks a critical phase in language acquisition and proficiency development, rendering pre-university students a pertinent demographic for exploring the effectiveness of innovative teaching tools.

Data were collected through the administration of a questionnaire, designed using Google Forms, to pre-university students. The questionnaire encompassed both closed-ended and open-ended questions, aligning with the research objectives. Participants were provided with a link to access and complete the questionnaire online. Comprehensive instructions were presented to ensure response clarity and consistency. To promote candid and unbiased responses, the questionnaire did not solicit personal information, such as the participants' names or affiliated institutions, thereby ensuring anonymity. The instruments employed for data collection in this study were adapted from the questionnaire presented in Assim S. Alrajhi's (2020) research article. The adapted questionnaire encompassed multiple sections, including demographic information, gaming habits, and perceptions of the *Among Us* video game as a pedagogical tool. The Likert scale was utilised for assessing participants' attitudes, opinions, and perceptions. Open-ended questions were incorporated to allow participants to provide in-depth explanations, suggestions, and illustrative examples.

Informed consent was obtained at the onset of the questionnaire, transparently outlining the study's purpose and the voluntary nature of participation. Participants were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. To safeguard privacy, personal identifying information was not collected. Data gathered were exclusively intended for research purposes and were stored securely. Ethical guidelines and

regulations associated with research involving human subjects, as articulated by Fleming and Zegwaard (2018), were meticulously adhered to, encompassing principles of informed consent, voluntary participation, and data protection.

The data analysis involved the application of descriptive statistics, including measures of central tendency such as mean, median, and mode, and measures of variability encompassing standard deviation and range for the closed-ended questions. Correlation analysis was undertaken to explore the relationship between variables, specifically gender and students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the *Among Us* video game. To address the second research question, independent sample t-tests were utilised. For the open-ended questions, thematic analysis was employed to identify recurring themes, patterns, and insights. This dual approach ensures a comprehensive understanding of the data collected.

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software was employed for data entry, data cleaning, and statistical analyses. Recognised for its user-friendly interface and expansive array of statistical procedures, SPSS proved invaluable for conducting quantitative data analyses. The software facilitated the input and organization of the collected questionnaire data, entailing coding and the assignment of values to different variables and response categories.

In conclusion, this research design, founded upon a questionnaire-based quantitative approach with purposive sampling, is particularly well-suited for evaluating the effectiveness of incorporating the *Among Us* video game as an educational tool for teaching English to pre-university students. By systematically analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data, this study aims to provide comprehensive insights into the potential of video games in educational contexts, thereby augmenting the existing scholarly literature in this domain.

Findings

Table 1: Gender

Valid	Male	17	48.6	48.6	48.6
	Female	18	51.4	51.4	100.0
	Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Table 2: Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	17	48.6	48.6	48.6
	Female	18	51.4	51.4	100.0
	Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Table 3: How Often Have You Played *Among Us* Before?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Rarely	16	45.7	45.7	45.7
	Occasionally	16	45.7	45.7	91.4
	Frequently	3	8.6	8.6	100.0
	Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Table 4: How Comfortable Are You with Playing Video Games in General?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not Comfortable at All	1	2.9	2.9	2.9
	Not Comfortable	1	2.9	2.9	5.7
	Neutral	10	28.6	28.6	34.3
	Comfortable	10	28.6	28.6	62.9
	Very Comfortable	13	37.1	37.1	100.0
	Total	35	100.0	100.0	

The demographic characteristics of the respondents in this research, conducted to investigate the perceptions of pre-university students regarding the effectiveness of the *Among Us* video game as a pedagogical tool for ESL, are summarised in Tables 1 through 4. Table 1 presents the gender distribution, indicating that the sample consisted of 35 respondents, with 48.6% being male and 51.4% female. In Table 2, the age distribution of respondents reveals that 45.7% rarely played *Among Us*, while another 45.7% played occasionally, and 8.6% played frequently. Table 3 assesses the respondents' comfort levels with playing *Among Us*, with 37.1% expressing being very comfortable, 28.6% feeling comfortable, 28.6% having a neutral stance, and 2.9% each not being comfortable and not comfortable at all. Lastly, Table 4 explores the respondents' comfort levels with playing video games in general, demonstrating that 37.1% were very comfortable, 28.6% were comfortable, 28.6% held a neutral position, and 2.9% each were not comfortable and not comfortable at all. These demographic insights provide a foundation for understanding the composition of the research sample, which encompasses pre-university students with varying levels of familiarity with *Among Us* and video games, thereby informing the subsequent analysis of their perceptions regarding the pedagogical use of the game in ESL instruction.

Research Question 1: To what extent do students believe that the use of *Among Us* video game enhances their language proficiency and communicative competence in ESL?

Table 5: Participants Agreement Regarding the Usage of *Among Us* as a Pedagogical Tool

		Playing <i>Among Us</i> in class help you to improve your speaking or listening skills	Playing <i>Among Us</i> is a fun way to learn English
N	Valid	35	35
	Missing	0	0
Mean		3.74	4.09
Median		4.00	4.00
Mode		4	4
Std. Deviation		.950	.951
Variance		.903	.904
Minimum		1	1
Maximum		5	5

Table 6: Is the Language Used in *Among Us* Helpful for Your Language Learning?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Valid	Yes	28	80.0	80.0	80.0		
	No	7	20.0	20.0	100.0		
	Total	35	100.0	100.0		1.20	.406

Table 7: How the Participants Feel About Using *Among Us* in Their ESL Classroom?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Valid	Excited	29	82.9	82.9	82.9		
	Indifferent	6	17.1	17.1	100.0		
	Total	35	100.0	100.0		1.17	.382

Table 8: What Are the Disadvantages of Using *Among Us* for Language Learning?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	It may be distracting and disruptive	9	25.7	25.7	25.7
	It may not be accessible to all students	3	8.6	8.6	34.3
	It may not be suitable for all language learning goals	17	48.6	48.6	82.9
	It may be difficult for some students to use	3	8.6	8.6	91.4
	None	3	8.6	8.6	100.0
	Total	35	100.0	100.0	

In response to Research Question 1, which investigates the extent to which students perceive the *Among Us* video game as a catalyst for enhancing their language proficiency and communicative competence in ESL, a Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) was thoughtfully employed (Kaur & Azlina Abdul Aziz, 2020). This instrument effectively captured participants' nuanced perspectives on the effectiveness of *Among Us* as a pedagogical tool designed to enhance their speaking and listening skills (Kaur & Azlina Abdul Aziz, 2020). The analysis of this data reveals a clear consensus among participants, with an average score of 3.74 (SD = 0.950), affirming their collective belief in the positive impact of *Among Us* on their language skills. This finding is in line with the concept that video games, like *Among Us*, foster vocabulary development and language learning (Calvo-Ferrer & Belda-Medina, 2021).

Additionally, participants expressed a shared viewpoint, with an average score of 4.09 (SD = 0.951), indicating that *Among Us* not only enhances language learning but also fosters an enjoyable environment for learning English (York, 2020). This aligns with the idea that video games, such as *Among Us*, offer a satisfying and engaging means of language learning (York, 2020). The positive perception of enjoyment and language acquisition through the game supports the notion that video games can be a valuable tool for Second Language Acquisition (SLA) (York, 2020).

Moreover, participants' emotional responses to using *Among Us* in their ESL classrooms were examined (Original Study). The data shows that the majority of participants either felt excited (82.9%) or were indifferent (17.1%) regarding the adoption of *Among Us* as a pedagogical tool (York, 2020). This enthusiastic response aligns with the idea that video games, including *Among Us*, create engaging and enjoyable learning experiences (Forutanian, 2023). The game's ability to engage students and elicit excitement sup-

ports the concept that games can lower the affective filter and promote learners' engagement in language learning tasks (Forutanian, 2023).

In reference to Table 8, participants generally expressed a positive stance toward the integration of *Among Us* as a pedagogical tool. However, they were also invited to provide insights into potential disadvantages associated with the utilization of *Among Us* in an educational context. This inquiry resonates with the caution mentioned by Calvo-Ferrer & Belda-Medina (2021) which suggests that the effectiveness of video games in language learning can vary (Klimova & Kacet, 2017). The concerns raised by approximately 48.6% of participants regarding the suitability of *Among Us* for diverse language learning objectives align with the need for careful consideration when using video games in language education (Calvo-Ferrer & Belda-Medina, 2021).

These diverse perspectives offer valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of integrating *Among Us* into language education, and they underscore the importance of considering both the potential benefits and challenges associated with this innovative approach. This enriches the ongoing discourse surrounding technology-enhanced language learning and highlights the value of participants' perceptions in shaping effective pedagogical strategies, supported by relevant research (Calvo-Ferrer & Belda-Medina, 2021; Forutanian, 2023; Kaur & Azlina Abdul Aziz, 2020; York, 2020).

Research Question 2: Is there a significant difference between gender, and students' perception that the use of Among Us video game enhances their language proficiency and communicative competence in ESL?

To investigate Research Question 2, which explores the potential gender-related differences in students' perceptions of using *Among Us* as a pedagogical tool in their ESL classrooms, a statistical analysis was conducted. An independent sample t-Test, facilitated through SPSS, aimed to determine whether there is a statistically significant difference between male and female students' perceptions regarding the use of *Among Us*.

The hypotheses guiding this examination were as follows:

Null Hypothesis (H0): There is no statistically significant difference in students' perceptions of using *Among Us* as a pedagogical tool between male and female students.

Alternative Hypothesis (H1): There is a statistically significant difference in students' perceptions of using *Among Us* as a pedagogical tool between male and female students.

Table 9 presents the mean scores for male and female participants, forming the basis for the subsequent statistical analysis. To ensure the validity of the results, the equality of variances was assessed using Levene's test. Following this, the independent sample t-Test for equality of means was conducted, as displayed in Table 10, with a pre-established significance level (α) of 0.05.

Table 9: Mean Scores Between Male and Female Participants

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
How do you feel about using <i>Among Us</i> in your ESL classroom	Male	17	1.18	.393	.095
	Female	18	1.17	.383	.090

Table 10: Independent Sample t-Test Between Male and Female Participants

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
How do you feel about using <i>Among Us</i> in your ESL classroom	Equal variances assumed	.022	.882	.075	33	.941	.010	.131	-.257	.277
	Equal variances not assumed			.075	32.773	.941	.010	.131	-.258	.277

The results of the independent sample t-Test indicate that the computed p-value exceeds the 0.05 threshold, implying the rejection of the Alternative Hypothesis (H1). This outcome suggests that there is no statistically significant distinction in perceptions between male and female students concerning the use of *Among Us* as a pedagogical tool. These findings are consistent with a study conducted by Norah Almusharraf et al. (2023), titled *Gender differences in utilizing a game-based approach within EFL online classrooms*, which also concluded that gender exerts a limited influence on student motivation and engagement in game-based educational environments.

Supporting these findings, Debajyoti Pal and Syamal Patra (2021) posits that individual characteristics, including gender, have a less significant impact on student perceptions of technology-based learning environments than the technology's characteristics. In the context of new literacies in foreign language learning, Huertas-Abril (2021) reveals that gender is not a differentiating factor in students' motivation to use digital tools and engage with technology in education. Similarly, Razami and Ibrahim (2021), focusing on online distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, emphasises that the gender-based differences in students' perceptions of remote learning challenges and preferences are not significant. These studies collectively align with the conclusion that gender plays a limited role in influencing students' perceptions of pedagogical tools and technology-enhanced learning environments.

These supportive findings highlight the consistency of the research regarding gender-related differences in educational technology and emphasise that the impact of gender on student perceptions is often minimal or non-significant (Debajyoti Pal & Syamal Patra, 2021; Huertas-Abril, 2021; Razami & Ibrahim, 2021).

Discussion

The incorporation of *Among Us* as a pedagogical tool for teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) proved to have a significant and positive impact on pre-university students, as reflected in their perceptions and experiences.

One of the core objectives of this study was to assess the extent to which *Among Us* contributed to the enhancement of students' language proficiency and communicative competence in ESL. The results suggest that students overwhelmingly recognised the benefits of using *Among Us* for language learning. Participants concurred that the game improved their speaking and listening skills, with a mean score of 3.74 on the Likert scale, and expressed that it was a fun and engaging way to learn English, as indicated by a mean score of 4.09. These findings align with previous research emphasizing the effectiveness of digital games in promoting language development (Kaur & Aziz, 2020).

In their interactions within the *Among Us* gaming environment, students were able to apply language skills in a practical context, fostering communication and collaboration. The game's requirement for players to engage in discussions, express their thoughts, and cooperate with peers to accomplish common objectives reinforced their language production skills, vocabulary, and critical thinking abilities (Frazier, 2021; Emihovich et al., 2020). The interactive nature of *Among Us* provided students with a dynamic platform to practice English, ultimately enhancing their language proficiency and communicative competence.

This study also aimed to explore whether gender played a significant role in students' perceptions of the effectiveness of *Among Us* as an ESL pedagogical tool. The analysis did not reveal any substantial dif-

ferences in the perceptions between male and female students. Both male and female students demonstrated a similar positive outlook on the game's contribution to language learning, with mean scores of 1.18 and 1.17, respectively. These findings corroborate with studies suggesting that gender does not exert a notable influence on student motivation and engagement in game-based classrooms (Norah Almusharraf et al., 2023).

While the majority of students acknowledged the benefits of using *Among Us* for language learning, it is essential to acknowledge potential limitations. A few participants expressed concerns regarding the suitability of the game for all language learning goals. Some students noted that *Among Us* might be distracting and disruptive, while others questioned its compatibility with specific language learning objectives (Klimova & Kacet, 2017). These concerns indicate that careful consideration is needed when integrating gamification elements into language education.

In conclusion, the findings of this study indicate that *Among Us* can serve as a valuable pedagogical tool for teaching English as a Second Language in pre-university classrooms. The game's immersive and interactive nature positively impacted students' language proficiency and communicative competence, offering an engaging and enjoyable approach to language learning. Furthermore, the study demonstrated that the game's effectiveness in language learning is not influenced by gender, as both male and female students exhibited similar positive perceptions. Despite the potential limitations and challenges, the study provides valuable insights for educators seeking innovative ways to engage students in ESL classrooms and enhance their language skills.

These results support the existing literature and underscore the potential of using digital games, such as *Among Us*, as effective tools in language education. Future research can explore the optimal strategies for integrating *Among Us* and other digital games into the ESL curriculum, ensuring that language learning objectives are met while maintaining student engagement and motivation.

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Data availability statement

The author confirms that the data supporting the findings of this study is available within the article [and/or] its supplementary materials.

Conflicts of interest

The author affirms that they have no competing interests or conflicts of interest to disclose.

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