

Interactive Learning for Young Minds: “What A Day!” Card Game as a Tool for English Language Acquisition in Secondary School Learners

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ABSTRACT

Game-based learning has emerged as a dynamic pedagogical approach to assist independence learning to foster active engagement and meaningful language use in educational contexts. This study evaluates the effectiveness of *What a Day!* an analogue educational tool, in enhancing English language acquisition among Malaysian secondary students through cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. A quasi-experimental one-group pre-test–post-test design was used, and significant improvements were observed across all domains. Cognitive gains, supported by Mayer’s multimedia learning theory, reflected enhanced understanding, recall, and application. Affective outcomes revealed increased motivation and positive attitudes, aligning with Self-Determination and control-value theories. Psychomotor improvements included higher attention, instruction following and independent learning, consistent with embodied learning and Total Physical Response principles. Correlational analyses confirmed strong intra-domain coherence. The findings validate the pedagogical value of integrating narrative, interactivity, and multimodal elements in game-based learning to promote holistic, learner-centred language development.

Keywords: Game-based Learning; Language Acquisition; Cognitive; Affective; Psychomotor

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the pedagogical shift toward student-centred and active learning methodologies has gained considerable momentum, particularly in English language education. As communication skills increasingly underpin global competencies, fostering proficiency in English speaking has become a central concern for educators worldwide. The increasing demand for communicative competence among English language learners has driven the development of various instructional tools designed to enhance language acquisition, including educational games that integrate cognitive, affective, and psychomotor elements. Among these, the speaking card game *What a Day!* has emerged as a novel instructional intervention aimed at improving students’ English communication skills through interactive and engaging gameplay.

This study explores the efficacy of *What a Day!* by evaluating its impact on learners across the three primary domains of learning: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. These domains, as outlined in Bloom’s Taxonomy [1], collectively represent the multifaceted nature of learning and are instrumental in assessing comprehensive educational outcomes. While prior studies have demonstrated the general effectiveness of educational games in enhancing language learning [2], [3], [4], [5], there remains a research gap concerning how analogue, narrative-based games specifically influence these domains in an integrated manner, especially within the context of second language acquisition.

Despite a growing body of literature emphasizing the benefits of gamification in education, much of the existing research has predominantly focused on digital platforms [6], [7], [8], [9], [10], [11]. Digital games have been credited with enhancing motivation, engagement, and knowledge retention; however, their efficacy

in promoting oral communication skills, particularly within the psychomotor domain, has yielded mixed findings [12], [13]. The overrepresentation of digital games in research has contributed to the relative neglect of low-tech and no-tech educational solutions. Many studies emphasise mobile apps and online platforms. However, many educational institutions, particularly public schools, face limited access to digital devices and reliable internet connectivity, making game-based learning less feasible. According to Capdarest-Arest et al. [14], gamification may provide interactive mobile games and virtual reality, but students may not have access to suitable devices capable of supporting high-tech games and this could pose accessibility and usability issues for some students. In addition, studies have indicated that teachers often resist or reject the integration of digital games in classroom instruction. Some instructors may not have adequate knowledge in coding the game [14], [13] and controlling the students is far more challenging as they are exposed to a wide range of entertainment content that can divert their attention from learning tasks [15].

Therefore, analogue educational tools, such as *What a Day!*, which are low-cost, accessible, and highly interactive, remain under explored in empirical studies. Substantial study is needed to determine how these games may influence learners' development in the cognitive, emotional, and psychomotor domains and their overall impact on holistic pedagogy. Moreover, the existing literature often isolates the analysis of these domains rather than adopting an integrative approach to understand how they collectively contribute to communicative competence. As communicative competence encompasses not only knowledge and emotion but also physical expression, an effective language intervention must be evaluated holistically. Hence, this study seeks to fill this gap by conducting a domain-based evaluation of *What a Day!* using inferential statistics and correlation analysis of pre and post-test data.

This study is guided by the following objectives:

1. To investigate the effectiveness of *What a Day!* in enhancing learners' cognitive understanding of English.
2. To assess the impact of *What a Day!* on learners' affective engagement with the English language.
3. To examine how *What a Day!* improves learners' psychomotor performance in spoken English.
4. To explore the correlations among cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains in pre- and post-intervention assessments.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Game-based Learning in English as a Second Language (ESL) Education

Game-Based Learning (GBL) has emerged as a compelling instructional strategy in English as a Second Language (ESL) education, offering an alternative to traditional methods that often prioritise grammatical accuracy and rote memorisation. Defined as the use of game elements and game design principles in educational contexts, GBL seeks to enhance student engagement, motivation, and learning outcomes through interactive, often collaborative, tasks [16]. In the context of ESL, where learners must build competence across listening, speaking, reading, and writing, games provide a dynamic platform for immersive and meaningful language practice.

The theoretical underpinnings of GBL in ESL instruction are rooted in constructivist and socio-cultural learning theories. Constructivism emphasises active learning, where students construct knowledge through hands-on experiences, while Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory highlights the role of social interaction in language development. Games naturally support these principles by placing learners in environments that require problem-solving, cooperation, and communication in English. Furthermore, Krashen's Input Hypothesis and Affective Filter Hypothesis [17] are also relevant to this concept as games can lower the affective filter by reducing anxiety and encouraging risk-taking in a non-threatening setting that is critical for learners in developing their communicative English skills.

Numerous studies have documented the positive impact of GBL on ESL learners, particularly in school settings. Digital games, mobile applications, and classroom-based board games have been shown to improve vocabulary acquisition, oral fluency, and motivation [18]. For instance, research by [19] demonstrated that Thai high school students using a multiplayer online role-playing game exhibited higher levels of English output and a greater willingness to communicate. Similarly, Wu et al. [20] found that ESL students who used mobile language games developed stronger vocabulary retention and contextual language use than those in non-game-based classrooms. These findings suggest that GBL not only enhances specific linguistic skills but also supports the broader goal of communicative competence.

In school environments, where ESL learners often face pressure to perform and may struggle with confidence, GBL offers a valuable shift toward student-centred learning. Vocabulary matching games, pronunciation applications, language-learning simulations, and collaborative storytelling activities are examples of games that frequently offer immediate feedback, a secure environment for making mistakes, and well-defined objectives, all of which support long-term engagement and increase learning motivation [21], [22], [23]. Moreover, games can be easily adapted to different proficiency levels, allowing for differentiated instruction that meets the diverse needs of ESL learners. These learning formats allow students to practice English in ways that are enjoyable and relevant to real-life contexts. However, while the literature is generally positive, some scholars argued on viewing GBL as a one-size-fits-all solution. Challenges in implementation include limited teacher training, lack of technological resources, and the need for alignment between game content and curricular goals. Huang [15] found that teachers showed a negative attitude in integrating games and they have limited ability to incorporate GBL in their lesson. In a systematic review conducted by Yaman et al. [24], they address challenges on the implementation of GBL - unwillingness of teachers to incorporate the game and to tailor it to the syllabus, lack of knowledge in creating a suitable game as well as technical skills. From the students' perspectives, they feel that the complexity of GBL, operational instability and competitiveness have caused them to resort to conventional learning.

Effectiveness of Game-based Learning on Learning Domains

The cognitive domain encompasses mental skills and the acquisition of knowledge. Numerous studies illustrate that card games can significantly support cognitive development, specifically in language learning. For instance, Armelia et al. [25] noted that *Master and Mastery* card games effectively promote vocabulary acquisition among students, suggesting that the interactive format of card games facilitates deeper cognitive engagement. Meanwhile, in the context of English language learning, Vega-Abarzua et al. [26] emphasised that card games can contextualise language use, which is pivotal for productive skill development. Such games enhance both vocabulary and grammatical competence through gameplay [26]. Furthermore, by integrating interactive models like card games in task-based approaches, participants exhibit a marked improvement in the students' speaking performance and interactions during the gameplay promote retrieval and application of language skills in a supportive environment [27]. This is further supported by Hii and Mahmud [26] that game-based learning (GBL) enhances learners' cognitive skills, promotes critical thinking and problem-solving, supports collaborative learning, and boosts their self-confidence. Hence, the findings clearly demonstrates that the cognitive benefits derived from card gameplay not only enhance retention but also enrich the language learning experience through active participation and peer interaction.

The affective domain focuses on learners' emotional states, attitudes, levels of motivation, and value orientations. A significant body of research demonstrates that the use of card games can positively influence students' attitudes towards language learning and improve their overall engagement. Card games enhance learners' willingness to communicate in English [29] as it fosters a positive emotional response from students [30]. This affective response is crucial in mitigating the anxiety in language acquisition [30]. Emotional engagement is essential for developing effective communication skills, as relaxed learners are more likely to practice speaking [31]. Moreover, [32] identified that card games create an enjoyable atmosphere that encourages both participation and collaboration among students. This clearly indicates that peer interaction not only enhances learning outcomes but also cultivates a positive learning environment that is conducive to emotional growth and language acquisition [32], [33].

The psychomotor domain involves physical skills and the development of coordination through practice. Engaging students in physically interactive games, such as *What a Day!*, not only facilitates cognitive and affective growth but also contributes to developing their speaking skills through practice and interaction. Research indicates that incorporating physical elements into language games leads to improved verbal communication skills [34]. Game mechanics that require players to physically engage with materials encourage repetition and practice, are vital for mastering pronunciation and speech patterns. Educational card games allow learners to actively engage in verbal interactions that simulate real-life conversations, providing the necessary practice for students to develop fluency and confidence in speaking English [35]. In addition, the physical act of playing card games such as placing cards and responding to other players reinforces language skills and aligns with findings from research on ESL classrooms, where incorporating movement within learning activities has been associated with improved speaking skills [36].

Taken together, the literature addresses, the usage of card game like *What a Day!* functions as a versatile tool that enhances students' confidence in speaking English by engaging the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. Evidence from various studies highlighted the effectiveness of card games in promoting cognitive engagement, fostering positive emotional responses, and facilitating practice through physical interaction.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study draws upon Bloom's Revised Taxonomy [1] as the foundational theoretical framework, which categorises educational objectives across the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. As shown in **Fig. 1**, the cognitive domain encompasses mental skills and knowledge acquisition; the affective domain relates to emotional attitudes and values; and the psychomotor domain involves the physical manipulation and articulation of language in speech. This taxonomy supports the holistic evaluation of learning outcomes, enabling a comprehensive understanding of how *What a Day!* supports language development. In addition, Self-Determination Theory [37] underpins the study's exploration of affective engagement, positing that learners' intrinsic motivation is enhanced when they experience autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The game's collaborative and interactive nature is theorised to fulfil these psychological needs, promoting sustained motivation and engagement. For the psychomotor domain, the study aligns with Asher's Total Physical Response theory [38], which emphasises the link between physical activity and language acquisition. The role-play and gestural elements of *What a Day!* are expected to reinforce language learning through embodied cognition.

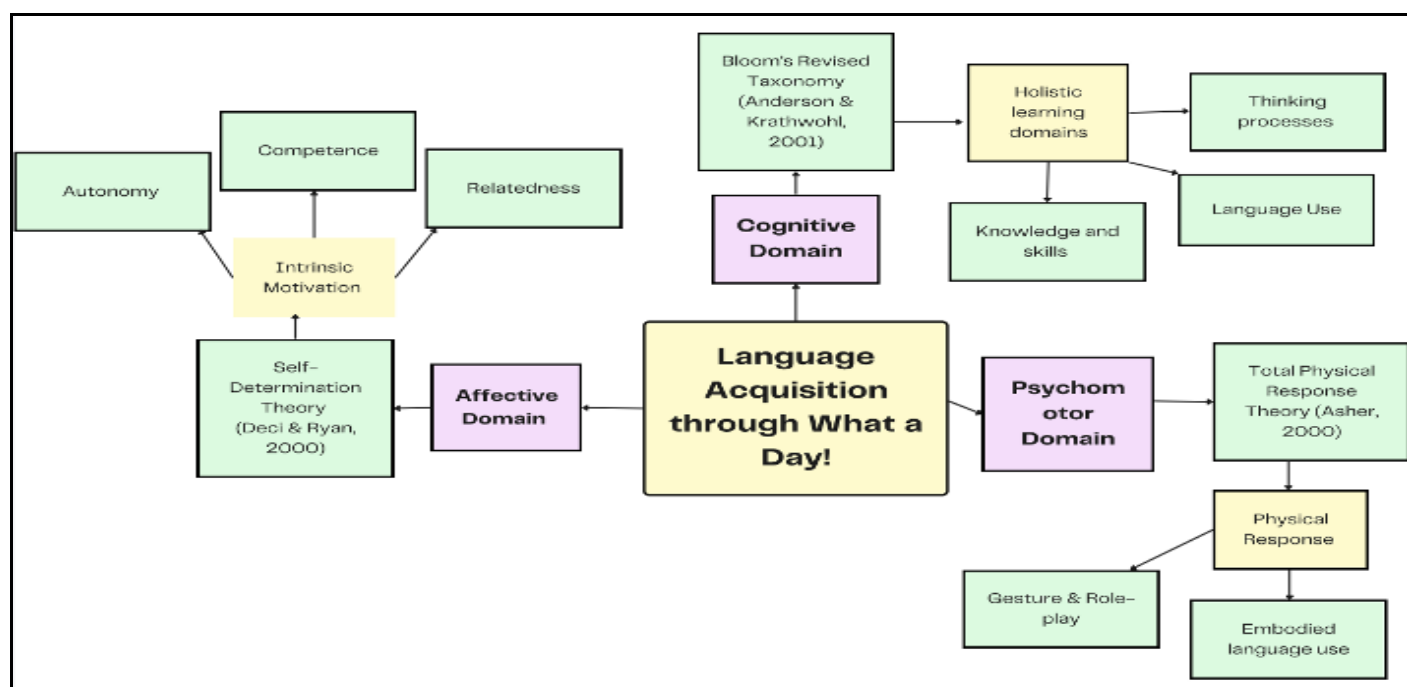


Fig. 1. Conceptual Framework of Language Acquisition through *What a Day!* and its effect towards learning domains

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative, quasi-experimental pre-test–post-test single-group design to examine the effectiveness of the digital educational product *What a Day!* on secondary school learners’ cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains in English language acquisition. This design enables the direct measurement of changes resulting from an intervention without the need for a control group, offering pragmatic advantages in authentic classroom settings [39]. The one-group pre-test–post-test model was selected due to its appropriateness for evaluating educational interventions where randomisation is impractical but internal validity is still prioritised.

The intervention consisted of the implementation of *What a Day!*, an analogue, story-driven English language learning product. The product incorporates storytelling based on the prompts (pictures and storylines). For the students to comprehend the storyline and arrange it into a coherent narrative sequence, the game allows for interactive tasks and contains bodily-kinesthetics elements to stimulate engagement across multiple learning modalities.

The study was conducted in three phases:

1. Pre-test Phase: All participants completed the cognitive, affective and psychomotor questionnaires.
2. Intervention Phase: Participants engaged with *What a Day!* in structured sessions under the facilitation of trained instructors.
3. Post-test Phase: Upon completion of the program, participants repeated the same questionnaires to allow for comparison.

A purposive sample of 100 participants responded to the survey. The instrument used is a 5 Likert-scale survey and is adapted from [33] to reveal the variables in Table 1 below. The distributed questionnaire has four sections. Section A has items on demographic profiles. All items in Section B until Section D are constructed on the effectiveness of *What a Day!* game, which Section B: Cognitive (6 items), Section C: Affective (7 items) and Section D: Psychomotor (4 items).

Table 1. Distribution of Items in the Survey

Section	Domains	No of Items	Cronbach Alpha	
			Pre-test	Post-test
B	COGNITIVE	6	0.826	0.846
C	AFFECTIVE	7	0.876	0.823
D	PSYCHOMOTOR	4	0.849	0.812
TOTAL		17	0.925	0.926

Table 1 shows the reliability of the survey. The analysis shows a Cronbach Alpha of pre-test and post-test. Pre-test recorded a reliability of .826, .876 and .849 respectively for Section B, C and D. Meanwhile, reliability for post-test items is .846, .823 and .812 respectively for Section B, C and D. Thus, this reveals a good reliability of the instrument chosen for pre-test (.925) and post-test (.926). Further analysis using SPSS is done to present findings to answer the research questions for this study.

FINDINGS

Findings for Demographic Profile

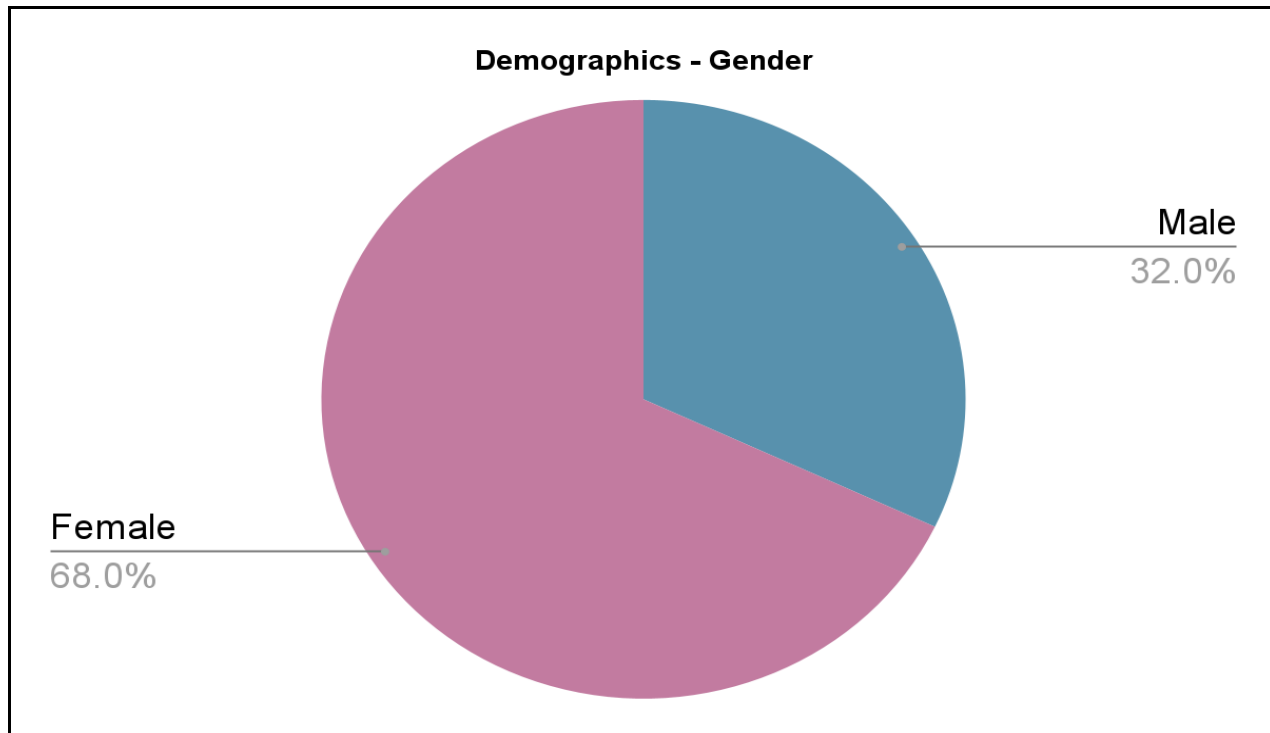


Fig. 2 Demographics Profile for the Participants

Fig. 2 shows the gender distribution of the study's participants. Females comprised 68% of the participants, while males represented the minority (32%).

Findings for Pre-survey and post-survey

Table 2. Mean and Standard Deviation for Cognitive Domain based on Pre-survey

ITEMS	RESULT	
	Mean	Std. Deviation
I can give my opinion in English	3.99	.859
I can ask questions in English	4.09	.922
I can comment on my friends' ideas/ responses in English	3.94	.827
I can criticise my friends' responses in English	3.85	.957
I can use the WH questions effectively in English	3.91	.996
I speak effectively in English in group work rather than individually	3.66	.997

The data in **Table 2** indicates that students generally feel confident in their English-speaking abilities, with the highest mean for *asking questions* ($M = 4.09$; $SD = .922$) and *giving opinions* ($M = 3.99$, $SD = .859$). Skills like *commenting on peers' ideas* and *using WH-questions* also scored well. The lowest mean was for *speaking effectively in group work* ($M = 3.66$), which also showed the highest variability ($SD = 0.997$), suggesting mixed confidence in group communication. Overall, while students show strength in basic speaking tasks, it shows a positive indication to strengthen students' abilities in more complex and interactive speaking skills.

Table 3. Mean and Standard Deviation for Cognitive Domain based on Post-survey

ITEMS	RESULT	
	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION
What a Day! Improves my ability to give opinions in English	4.28	.712
What a Day! Improves my ability to ask questions in English	4.12	.832
What a Day! Improves my ability to comment on my friends' ideas/responses in English	4.21	.832
What a Day! Improves my ability to criticise my friends' responses in English	3.98	.864
What a Day! Improves my ability to use the WH questions in English effectively when discussing the stories provided in the game	4.17	.817
What a Day! Improves my ability to speak effectively in English in group work rather than individually	4.14	.888

Table 3 reflects positive student perceptions regarding the effectiveness of *What a Day!* in enhancing their English-speaking skills. The highest mean score was reported for *giving opinions in English* ($M = 4.28$, $SD = 0.712$), indicating strong agreement that the game supports self-expression. This is followed by *commenting on friends' ideas* ($M = 4.21$, $SD = .832$) and *using WH-questions effectively* ($M = 4.17$, $SD = .817$), suggesting that the game facilitates both interactive and functional communication. Although the ability to *criticise peers' responses* received the lowest mean ($M = 3.98$, $SD = 0.864$), it still reflects a generally favourable view. The relatively low standard deviations across all items indicate consistency in students' responses. Overall, these findings suggest that *What a Day!* contributes meaningfully to the development of learners' speaking competencies, particularly in communicative and collaborative contexts.

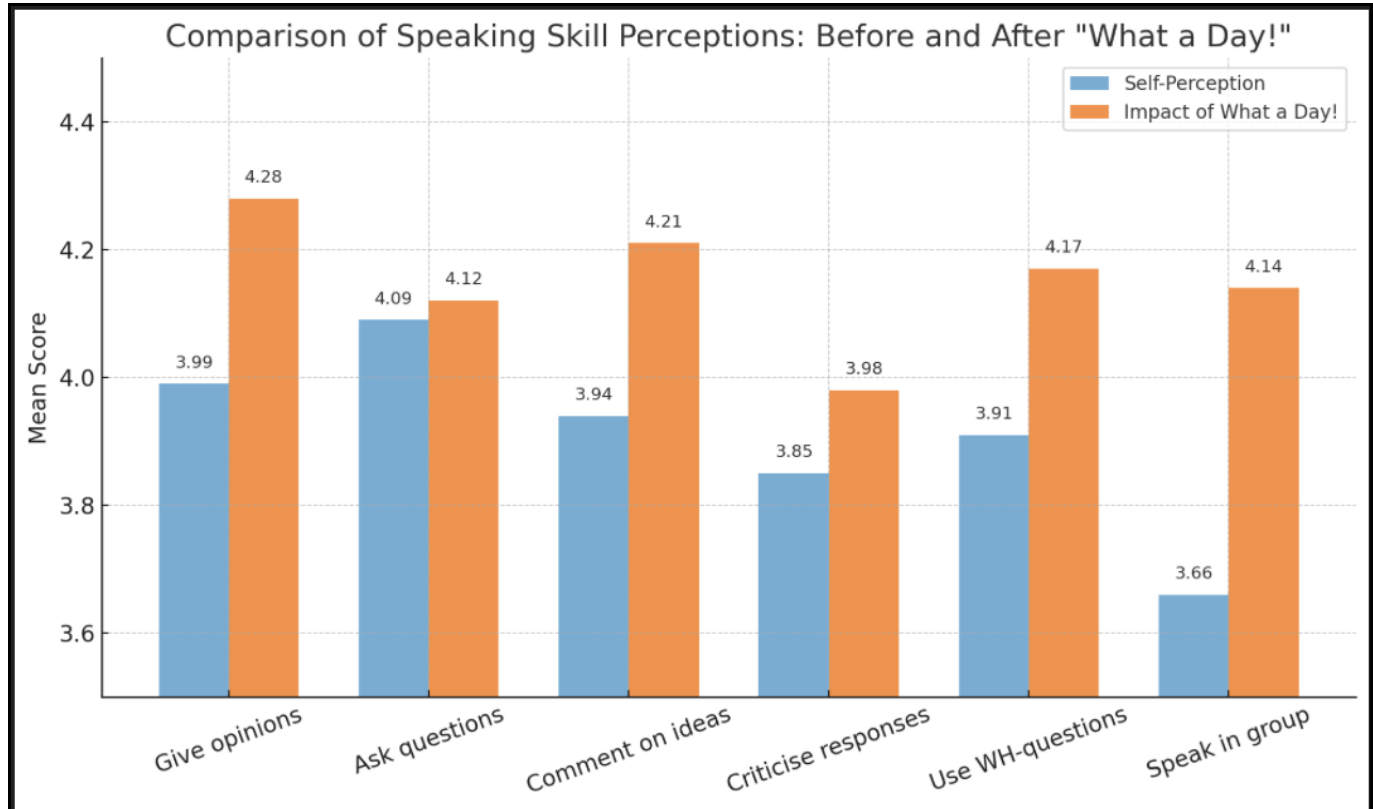


Fig. 2 Comparison of speaking skill perceptions: Pre-survey and Post-survey (Cognitive Domain)

Fig. 2 shows comparisons of all mean scores for pre and post surveys. It highlights that all skills show an increase in mean scores after using *What a Day!* game. The most notable improvement is in *group speaking*, rising from 3.66 to 4.14. The highest post-intervention mean is for *giving opinions* (4.28). There is a slight

difference in means for *asking questions*, only from 4.09 to 4.12, however for items *using WH-questions*, it shows a vast difference (from 3.19 to 4.17). This indicates with a proper stimulation of materials and prompts, the learners are able to know exactly how and what to ask, resulting in better communication. Overall, this comparison of pre and post surveys highlights the consistent improvement across all areas, suggesting the game had a broad positive impact in their cognitive domain.

Table 4. Mean and Standard Deviation for Affective Domain based on Pre-survey

ITEMS	RESULT	
	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION
Speaking in English makes me more enthusiastic	3.99	.948
Speaking in English reduces my anxiety	3.54	.999
I am not afraid to make mistakes when speaking in English	3.54	1.058
I feel more supportive of my friends when I speak in English	3.69	.992
I can communicate in English with my friends without stress	3.92	.961
I feel motivated to speak in English with my friends	3.89	.942
I am confident speaking using the English language	3.94	1.071

Table 4 illustrates pre-survey results for the affective domain show that students generally had positive attitudes toward speaking in English. The highest mean was for *feeling enthusiastic when speaking English* ($M = 3.99$), followed closely by *confidence in using the language* ($M = 3.94$) and the ability to *communicate without stress* ($M = 3.92$). However, lower means were recorded for *anxiety reduction* and *fear of making mistakes* (both $M = 3.54$), suggesting these areas may require additional emotional support. Overall, the findings indicate a moderately strong affective readiness among students, with some variability in confidence and emotional comfort.

Table 5. Mean and Standard Deviation for Affective Domain based on post-survey

ITEMS	RESULT	
	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION
Speaking through What a Day! makes me more enthusiastic to speak in English.	4.19	.662
Speaking through What a Day! reduces my anxiety to speak in English.	3.95	.914
I am not afraid to make mistakes when speaking in English through What a Day! game.	3.85	.925
I feel more supportive of my friends when learning English through What a Day! game.	4.13	.825
I prefer to practice speaking skills through What a Day! Game to the conventional learning method.	4.06	.874
I can improve my motivation to communicate with my friends without feeling any stress when I play What a Day! game.	4.10	.916
I feel more confident speaking in English after playing What a Day! game.	4.12	.856

The post-survey data in **Table 5** show improved affective engagement following the use of *What a Day!* The highest mean was for *increased enthusiasm to speak English* ($M = 4.19$), followed closely by *feelings of confidence* ($M = 4.12$) and *supportive peer interactions* ($M = 4.13$). Students also reported *reduced anxiety* ($M = 3.95$) and greater willingness to take risks, such as *making mistakes* ($M = 3.85$). These findings suggest that the game positively influenced learners' emotional readiness and motivation to communicate in English.

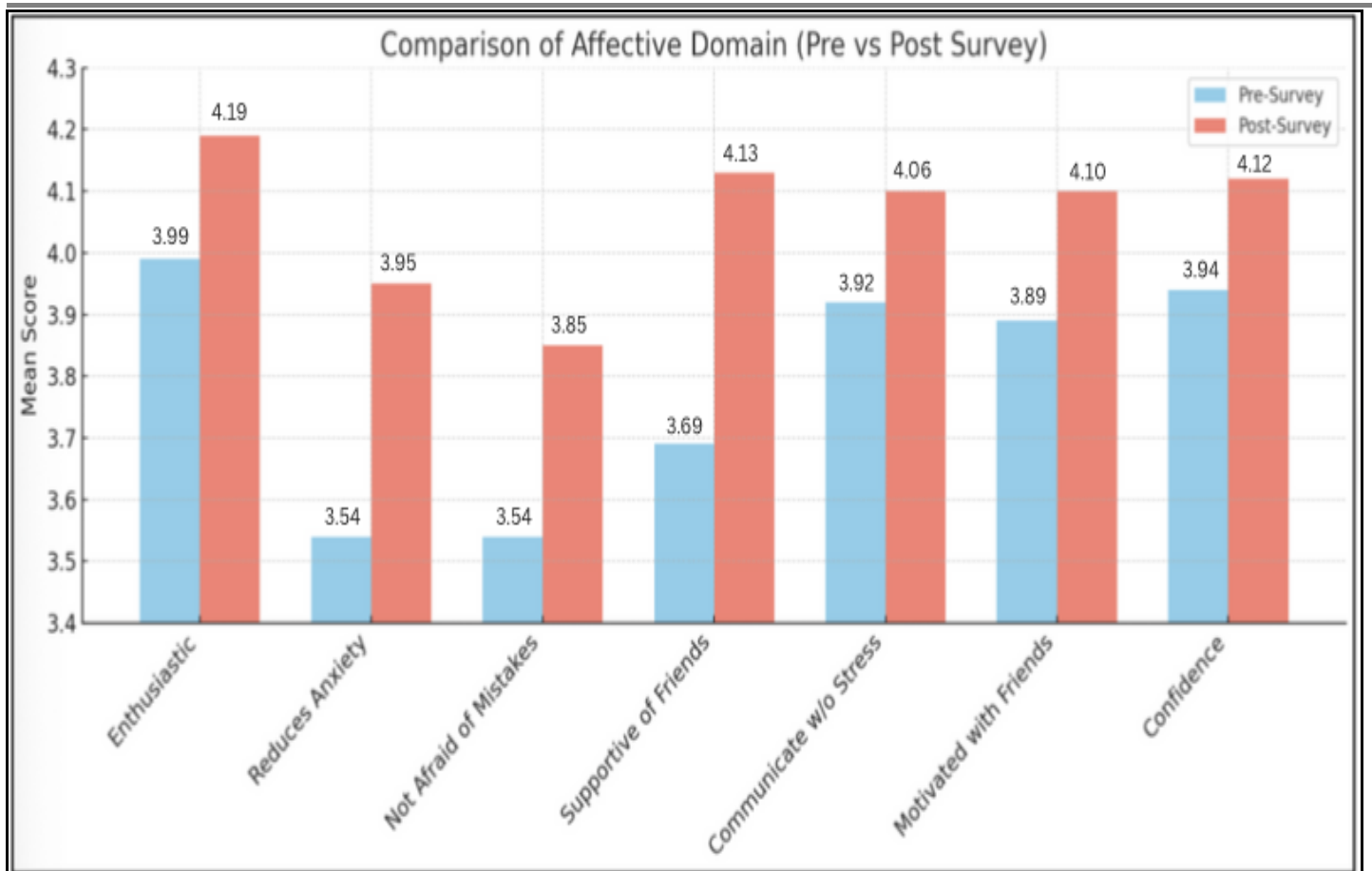


Fig. 3 Comparison of speaking skill perceptions: Pre-survey and Post-survey (Affective Domain)

Fig. 3 illustrates a comparison between mean scores of the affective domain from a pre-survey (Table 3) and post-survey (Table 4). There are positive improvements in all domains especially in enthusiasm in speaking English (from 3.99 to 4.19). The most significant difference is seen in *feeling supportive of friends*, which rose from 3.69 to 4.13, indicating a social-emotional engagement. Besides, another noticeable improvement can be seen in the *reduced anxiety* domain which shows an increase from 3.54 to 3.95. This shows *What a Day!* game positively helped the learners to feel less anxious in using English to communicate with their friends. Overall, the post-survey results suggest that the intervention of *What a Day!* game positively influenced students' affective attitudes toward English speaking activities.

Table 6. Mean and Standard Deviation for Psychomotor Domain based on Pre-survey

ITEMS	RESULTS	
	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION
I pay better attention when learning through conventional English lessons	3.75	1.038
I can learn independently when learning through conventional English lessons	3.81	.873
I follow instructions better when learning through conventional English lessons	3.82	.892
I do tasks/ homework more seriously when learning through conventional English lessons	3.83	.965

Table 6 shows pre survey means and standard deviation for psychomotor domain. Among the four items, the highest mean ($M = 3.83$, $SD = .965$) was recorded for the statement, "I do tasks/ homework more seriously when learning through conventional English lessons". Subsequently, learners also reported *improved ability to follow instructions* ($M = 3.82$, $SD = .892$) and *enhanced independent learning capabilities* ($M = 3.81$, $SD =$

.873) in conventional settings. The lowest mean ($M = 3.75$, $SD = 1.038$) was noted for the item, "I pay better attention when learning through conventional English lessons," although the score remains within the moderately high range. The higher standard deviation here indicates greater variability in student responses, highlighting that attention span may differ significantly among individuals under conventional instructional methods. Overall, these findings imply that the structure of conventional instruction is perceived well and supportive by the learners' learning skills.

Table 7. Mean and Standard Deviation for Psychomotor Domain based on Post-survey

ITEMS	RESULTS	
	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION
I pay better attention when learning through What a Day! game.	4.32	.750
I can learn independently when learning through What a Day! game.	4.10	.785
I follow instructions better when learning through What a Day! game.	4.12	.782
I do tasks/ homework more seriously when learning through What a Day! game.	4.00	.829

Based on **Table 7**, students reported higher levels of psychomotor engagement when learning through *What a Day!* game. The highest mean was for *paying better attention* ($M = 4.32$) followed by *following instructions* ($M = 4.12$) and learning independently (4.10). Although item "I do tasks/ homework more seriously when learning through *What a Day!* game" has the lowest mean ($M = 4.00$) but it reflects a positive response. Generally, these findings suggest that game-based learning effectively enhances student focus, responsibility, and active participation in English lessons.

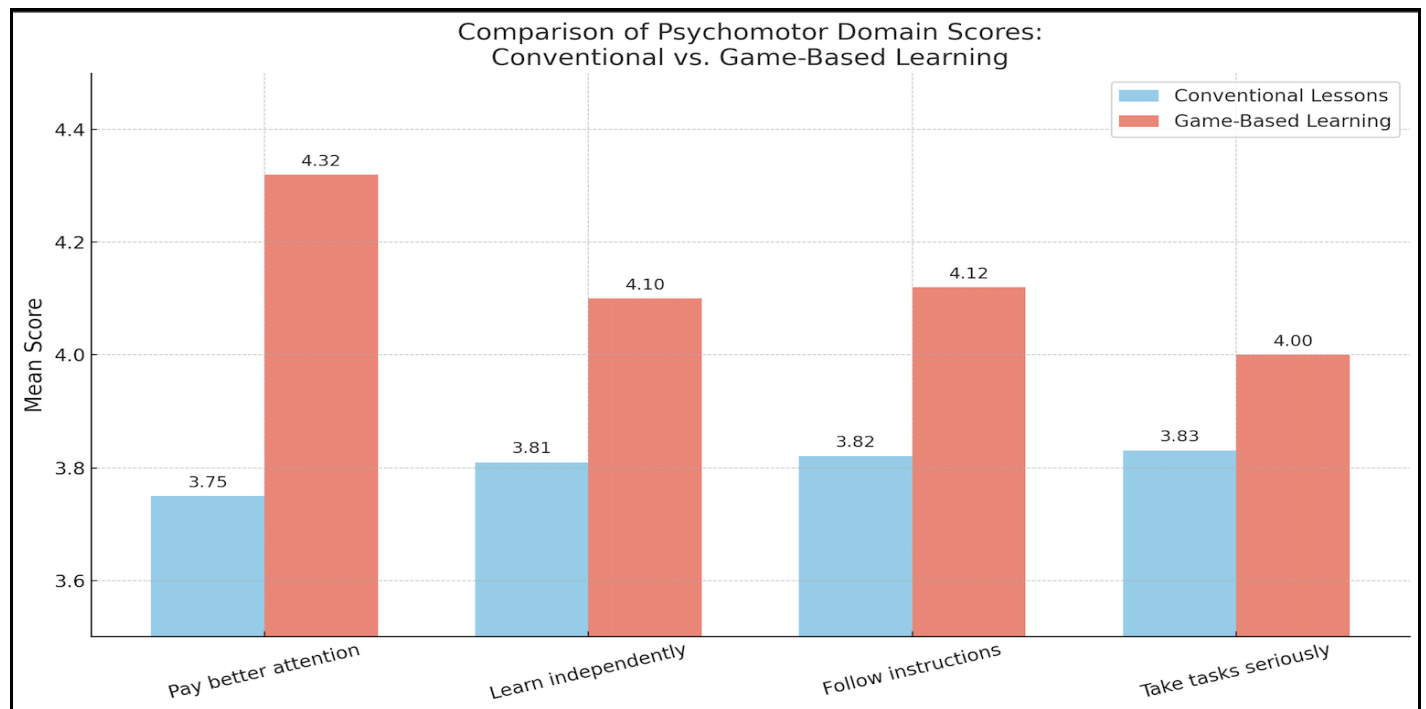


Fig. 4 Comparison of speaking skill perceptions: Pre-survey and Post-survey (Cognitive Domain)

Fig. 4 demonstrates a comparison between pre and post results for psychomotor domain. As shown in the graph, it was recorded that there are positive improvements in all items indicating a significant engagement in the psychomotor domain. High *attention level* has the most notable mean difference from 3.75 to 4.32. This shows that after game-based learning, the students showed improvement in their mental activity particularly in *high attention levels*, *consistent improvements in following instruction* and *independent learning*. Overall, students reported a higher engagement with game-based approach as compared to conventional learning methods.

Table 8. Paired sample t-test for Pre-test and Post-test

	Cognitive Pre	Cognitive Post	Affective Pre	Affective Post	Psychomotor Pre	Psychomotor Post
Cognitive Pre	1.000	0.031	0.633	-0.033	0.586	-0.069
Cognitive Post	0.031	1.000	-0.033	0.725	0.014	0.749
Affective Pre	0.633	-0.033	1.000	0.018	0.741	-0.055
Affective Post	-0.033	0.725	0.018	1.000	0.024	0.781
Psychomotor Pre	0.586	0.014	0.741	0.024	1.000	0.019
Psychomotor Post	-0.069	0.749	-0.055	0.781	0.019	1.000

Based on **Table 8**, paired samples t-tests revealed statistically significant improvements ($p < .001$) in all measured indicators, suggesting that the intervention had a meaningful impact on learners' knowledge acquisition, emotional engagement, and skill development. In the cognitive domain, learners demonstrated enhanced understanding and higher-order thinking, likely facilitated by the interactive and contextualized nature of the program. Affective outcomes indicated increased motivation, reduced anxiety, and more positive learner attitudes, highlighting the emotional resonance and learner-centred design of the intervention. Psychomotor outcomes also showed significant improvement, reflecting better coordination and engagement in skill-based tasks. Furthermore, Pearson correlation analysis among psychomotor items revealed moderate to strong positive relationships ($r = .555$ to $.673$, $p < .05$), suggesting internal consistency and interconnected growth within this domain. Collectively, these findings support the effectiveness of *What a Day!* in fostering holistic language learning through an engaging, multimodal instructional approach.

CONCLUSION

Summary of Findings and Discussions

The present study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of the *What a Day!* educational card game in enhancing English language learning among secondary school learners, specifically through cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. The findings offer robust support for the integration of analogue game-based learning tools within English language classrooms, aligning closely with the theoretical perspectives and empirical literature reviewed.

The significant improvement observed in learners' cognitive outcomes after the intervention strongly reflects the pedagogical value of *What a Day!* in fostering language acquisition. The pre- and post-test comparison demonstrates clear gains in learners' ability to express opinions, ask questions, and apply language structures in communicative contexts. These outcomes resonate with previous literature asserting the efficacy of game-based learning (GBL) in enhancing cognitive engagement and linguistic competence [25], [27]. The incorporation of storylines and visual prompts in the game appears to facilitate deeper understanding and retention, as supported by Mayer's [40] multimedia learning theory. Furthermore, the active learning environment created by the game is consistent with Bloom's Revised Taxonomy [1], in which students shift from recalling facts to engaging in application and analytical thinking. The findings also support the notion that analogue games may provide equal or even greater cognitive engagement than digital alternatives particularly in limited resources environment.

The affective outcomes further substantiate the emotional and motivational impact of *What a Day!* on learners. Post-intervention improvements in enthusiasm, reduced anxiety, and increased confidence are significant, particularly because affective factors often mediate learners' willingness to communicate in second language acquisition [17]. The game's interactive design likely contributed to a more relaxed and socially supportive learning atmosphere, enabling students to take risks and participate more actively. These findings are in line with Self-Determination Theory [37], implying that the game met fundamental psychological needs i.e. autonomy, competence, and relatedness and these contribute in promoting intrinsic motivation. The literature

review had similarly identified the potential of GBL to foster positive attitudes and engagement [29], [30] and this study empirically validates those claims in a secondary ESL classroom using an analogue medium.

The development of psychomotor skills through the *What a Day!* game is particularly noteworthy and addresses a gap in existing GBL literature, which often underrepresents this domain, especially in analogue contexts. Post-test improvements in attention, task completion, and instruction-following demonstrate that the game's physical and interactive features foster embodied learning which is a key principle in Total Physical Response theory [38]. The game's structure allowed learners to engage physically with content, which likely reinforced memory and language production through kinesthetics involvement. This is corroborated by findings from [34] and [35], who reported that physical interaction in learning activities promotes verbal fluency and engagement. Moreover, the strong inter-item correlations within the psychomotor domain imply that these skills are mutually reinforcing and should not be overlooked in the design of communicative language tasks. This reflects the finding in [34] that an integration of physical movements in the lesson can help the students to better grasp the information delivered by the teacher and enhance their skills in ESL.

Taken together, the findings affirm that *What a Day!* is a highly effective instructional tool capable of supporting language learning holistically. Unlike many digital GBL studies that isolate skill domains, this research demonstrates the integrated development of learners' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. Empirical evidence suggests that analogue, low-cost interventions can be as impactful as technologically advanced ones, especially in contexts with limited digital infrastructure. The alignment between the study's findings and the reviewed literature enhances the credibility of its claims and suggests that similar analogue games can be successfully adopted in other ESL learning environments. Future research may explore longitudinal impacts, scalability, and cross-cultural adaptability to further substantiate and extend these findings.

Pedagogical Implications and Suggestions for Future Research

Game-based learning holds significant potential for enhancing ESL education, particularly in the development of speaking, listening, and vocabulary skills. By offering interactive and emotionally supportive learning experiences, games can bridge the gap between passive learning and active language use. This study contributes to the broader discourse on innovative instructional strategies for English language learning. It offers empirical evidence regarding the pedagogical potential of analogue games in fostering communicative competencies, a topic often overshadowed by research on digital learning tools. By focusing on *What a Day!*, this study provides insights into a practical, scalable solution that may be especially beneficial in low-resource educational contexts. Moreover, its analysis encompassing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains reflects an inclusive approach to evaluating language proficiency, in line with contemporary pedagogical frameworks [41].

Additionally, the findings from this study have implications for curriculum designers, language educators, and policymakers who are seeking to enhance the communicative competence of learners through non-traditional methods. The integration of theory and practice in this investigation will contribute to the formulation of evidence-based strategies in English language teaching. However, to maximize impact, educators must consider pedagogical fit, learner needs, and contextual constraints. Continued research is necessary to explore long-term outcomes, teacher preparedness, and how GBL can be scaled effectively within formal ESL programs in schools. Additionally, exploring qualitative feedback from students may provide deeper insights into how and why *What a Day!* was effective, particularly in the affective and psychomotor domains where experiential and emotional aspects are paramount.

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