



Improving Libyan Student Skills in Learning English with Microlearning Through Games

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تحسين مهارات الطلاب الليبيين في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية من خلال التعلم المصغر باستخدام الألعاب

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Abstract:

In the increasingly globalized world we live in, it is essential to be able to communicate effectively in English, especially in countries like Libya. However, conventional teaching techniques frequently fall short of truly engrossing pupils and improving English. This study intends to investigate the potential of game-based microlearning in enhancing the English language proficiency of high school pupils in Alkhomes, Libya. The research was conducted with a purposive sample of 50 male students, aged 15 to 16 years, from Al-Refai High School in Alkhomes City. There are three cycles to the study, each of which includes planning, carrying it out, observing it, and reflecting on it. Using the relevant tools, the pupils' speaking abilities and learning motivation are evaluated. Cycle 2 is a result of Cycle 1's results showing a need for further development. In Cycle 2, the pupils' speaking abilities and motivation increase, although improvement is still needed. The investigation thus moves on to Cycle 3. The research's findings are consistent with earlier studies that have emphasized the advantages of microlearning and gamification. Knowledge retention and individualized learning experiences are made possible via microlearning. Gamification improves critical thinking, problem-solving, and engagement. Students are additionally encouraged to study and practice speaking English by playing language activities.

Keywords: English, Learning, Games, Microlearning, Libya.

المخلص

بالنظر إلى العالم المتزايد في العولمة الذي نعيش فيه، أصبح من الضروري القدرة على التواصل الفعال باللغة الإنجليزية، خاصة في بلدان مثل ليبيا. ومع ذلك، غالبًا ما تقصر أساليب التدريس التقليدية في جذب انتباه الطلاب فعليًا وتحسين مستواهم في اللغة الإنجليزية. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف إمكانيات التعلم المصغر القائم على الألعاب في تعزيز الكفاءة اللغوية الإنجليزية لدى طلاب المرحلة الثانوية في مدينة الخمس، ليبيا. أجريت الدراسة على عينة قصدية مكونة من 50 طالباً من الذكور، تتراوح أعمارهم بين 15 و16 عاماً، من مدرسة الرفاعي الثانوية في مدينة الخمس. تتكون الدراسة من ثلاث دورات، تشمل كل دورة مراحل التخطيط والتنفيذ والملاحظة والتأمل. تم تقييم مهارات التحدث لدى الطلاب ودوافعهم نحو التعلم باستخدام الأدوات المناسبة. جاءت الدورة الثانية استجابةً لنتائج الدورة الأولى التي أظهرت الحاجة إلى مزيد من التطوير. في الدورة الثانية، لوحظ تحسن في مهارات التحدث ودوافع الطلاب، رغم أن هناك حاجة لمزيد من التحسين. وبناءً عليه، انتقلت الدراسة إلى الدورة الثالثة. تتفق نتائج البحث مع دراسات سابقة أكدت فوائد التعلم المصغر والتعلم القائم على الألعاب. إذ يتيح التعلم المصغر تعزيز الاحتفاظ بالمعلومات ويوفر خبرات تعلم فردية. كما تسهم الألعاب التعليمية في تحسين مهارات التفكير النقدي وحل المشكلات وزيادة التفاعل. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تشجع الأنشطة اللغوية الطلاب على دراسة وممارسة التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: اللغة الإنجليزية، التعلم، الألعاب، التعلم المصغر، ليبيا.

Introduction

Today's worldwide world offers people chances for professional progression, further education, and personal improvement, making English language fluency crucial. The importance of being able to communicate successfully in English has increased both in Libya and many other nations. Traditional teaching strategies, on the other hand, frequently fall short of totally engrossing students and fostering a love of learning. English is the worldwide language that has been utilized as a medium for global communication in a number of nations throughout the world (Silalahi, M. (2019).

Microlearning has attracted attention as a successful strategy to improve learning outcomes because it focuses on delivering bite-sized learning information in brief spurts. Microlearning helps students to assimilate knowledge more effectively and retain it for longer periods of time by reducing complicated concepts down into smaller, more manageable parts. The use of game-based components in microlearning further boosts motivation and student engagement, improving both the fun and efficiency of the learning process (Fitria, T. N. (2022).

Students in Al-Refai High School class at Al-khomes City in Libya, where the researcher lectured, similarly reported difficulties with learning English. The bulk of kids have been studying English since junior high school, yet many still struggle with speaking it. Most students find it difficult or embarrassing to converse in English. They will protest and withdraw if forced to use English. This is brought on by a number of things, such as the fact that students only study English in order to acquire excellent marks, their lack of enthusiasm or desire, and the unsuitable learning environments. The next step for researchers is to hunt for data on learning techniques (Souriyavongsa et al., 2013).

The speaking abilities and learning motivation of students may both be enhanced by a variety of effective tactics or techniques, according to research. Storytelling, role-playing, illustrated storytelling, and other tactics are some of them. The researcher wants to use some of these methods to help pupils at the Al-Refai High School in Libya at Alkhomes City class with their speaking and learning motivation. Speaking refers to the capacity to communicate thoughts, feelings, and views verbally. Speaking is using a particular language to communicate. As a result, speaking allows one individual to transmit ideas to another who is listening. A person frequently struggles when speaking a particular foreign language. One needs speaking abilities in order to communicate properly (Rao, 2019).

Speaking abilities include the capacity to modify intonation, facial expressions, gestures, tone of voice, and other aspects of speech in addition to linguistic abilities. Teachers might use interviews, plays, conversations, and games to assess their students' public speaking abilities. The researcher then selected games to test the pupils' proficiency in English. Being able to articulate thoughts, feelings, and opinions, as well as using appropriate language, sounding out sentences correctly, and grasping concepts completely, are all signs of speaking ability; able to employ effective sentence construction, be self-assured, and be able to express meaning clearly (Lamichhane, 2016).

Beyond enhancing language competence, microlearning through games has several advantages for language education. It encourages kids to think critically, solve problems, collaborate, and be creative. Additionally, individualized feedback and gamified microlearning may cater to individual learning preferences, letting students' study at their own rate and addressing their own requirements. The results of this study may help educational officials, curriculum designers, and English language instructors in Libya's Alkhomes City High School (Al-Refai) understand the advantages of incorporating microlearning through games into language instruction. This research can provide Libyan kids the tools they need to prosper in a world that is becoming more linked by improving their English language proficiency, which will advance educational and socioeconomic possibilities locally and internationally (Lin et al., 2023).

This study intends to examine if microlearning through games may help at Al-Refai High School in Libya's Alkhomes develop their English language proficiency. This research can give students an accessible and engaging learning environment by harnessing the vast availability of digital devices, such as smartphones and tablets, and gamified learning platforms. Students may participate in language learning activities that mimic real-life events by utilizing gamification, enabling them to practice and apply their language abilities in a lively and engaging setting.

Research problems

Even though Libyan schools have been teaching English for years, many high school students still have trouble becoming good speakers. Most students don't want to speak English because they don't feel confident, aren't motivated, or are afraid of making mistakes. Conventional pedagogical approaches, prioritizing rote memory and examination results, have proven ineffective in cultivating communicative competence. As result, students frequently perceive English as an academic discipline rather than a functional ability for everyday communication.

Another issue is how to get students to work hard. Students at Al-Refai High School in Alkhomes City say that English lessons are boring, focused on tests, and don't provide them chances to learn in interesting or interactive ways. The lack of fun ways to learn makes them less likely to want to take part in speaking activities.

Moreover, there is an absence of connaturalized methodologies that integrated creative education with the utilization of digital technology available to Libyan pupils. Even though microlearning and gamification have been explored a lot in other countries, the researcher doesn't know much about how to make them work in Libya, where technology, teacher training, and class room culture are all different.

Research questions

1. What methods may Libyan high school pupils at Al-Refai High School employ to enhance their speaking skills through microlearning via games?
2. To what extent does the incorporation of gamified microlearning into English classes at Al-Refai High School enhance students' engagement in the learning process?

Literature review

In recent years, English language education has experienced notable progress due to the implementation of novel teaching methodologies and initiatives. Many prior research has concentrated on assessing the efficacy of interactive methods, such microlearning and game-based learning, in improving students' linguistic abilities and motivation. These studies have examined the influence of such methodologies on enhancing students' academic performance and communicative skills, especially in environments where English is instructed as a foreign language. This literature review encapsulates significant findings from pertinent research, focusing specifically on the impact of microlearning and educational games in facilitating English language acquisition among high school students.

Microlearning

An educational strategy called microlearning focuses on giving students brief, manageable learning units. It is distinguished by its succinctness, simplicity, and accessibility, making it an excellent way to provide information in a clear and understandable manner. Microlearning modules sometimes include quick movies, tests, interactive games, or infographics that may be finished in a short amount of time (Alqurashi, 2017).

The capacity of microlearning to accommodate the modern learner's penchant for brief informational bursts is one of its main benefits. It might be difficult to keep learners interested in lengthy learning activities in today's fast-paced environment since they frequently have limited time and attention spans. In order to help learners better absorb information, microlearning solves this problem by reducing complicated ideas down into smaller, more accessible portions (Ghafar et al., 2023).

Microlearning has been found to improve memory retention. Microlearning modules frequently use the spaced repetition approach, which includes reviewing and reinforcing previously acquired material at regular intervals. This method aids in boosting memory and encouraging long-term retention of the information. The repeating nature of microlearning exercises further solidifies understanding and memory retention by reinforcing learning via repeated exposures (Yuan, 2022).

Microlearning is also very adaptive to different learning preferences and styles. Students have the freedom to access microlearning courses whenever it is convenient for them using a variety of gadgets including cellphones, tablets, or PCs. Since the information is accessible, students may interact with it whenever and wherever they choose, encouraging self-paced learning and individualized learning experiences. Additionally, the gamification of microlearning has shown to be an effective method for raising student motivation and engagement. Microlearning may make learning more dynamic and pleasurable by introducing game-based components including challenges, prizes, and competition. Gamified microlearning engages students' intrinsic drive, promoting participation and topic progression (Javorcik et al., 2023).

Learning English

Students engage in learning in order to develop new habits. Interest, self-confidence, learning motivation, and other characteristics may all affect a person's performance in school. A person's willingness to engage in an activity might be viewed as their motivation (Purnama et al., 2019). The core of the learning process is motivation. Teachers must therefore be able to inspire students to learn. This study aims to increase students' desire for learning by using English games while simultaneously enhancing their speaking abilities. The use of games in language learning has several advantages (Filgona et al., 2020).

Students are encouraged through games to develop an interest in something. The use of games in language learning has six advantages, including inspiring, assisting students in their efforts to learn, offering a variety of speaking, writing, listening, and reading exercises, promoting student interaction and communication, and fostering language usage. Hence Mahmoud & Al-Tunh (2014), games can also help pupils feel less anxious. By including activities that also aid students' speaking abilities, researchers build a learning process that can drive

kids to study. Card games, riddles, and guessing games are all played. Practices in word pronunciation and discussions are used as learning exercises (Nurhayati, 2015).

The Various Games

Whisper Race

This game relies on memory, as the name would suggest. Then, split the class into two teams. A list of terms that one team member needs to memorize was provided. The members of the opposite team are then whispered the list of words. The last participant must list every word on the list. The team that eliminates one word from the list of words provided is deemed unsuccessful (Silalahi, 2019).

Hide and Seek

Prepositional use in English may be practiced with this game. This is how the game is played. Prior to the other participants being given the assignment of hiding objects, one individual was asked to leave the class. Then, individuals who had emerged were instructed to answer questions in order to locate objects that had been hidden (Silalahi, 2019).

What's Missing?

This puzzle-style game makes use of visual media. By providing the correct English grammar responses, each participant competes to be able to identify the missing elements of the image (Silalahi, 2019).

Action Games

Gestures are essential in this game. Pick one of the participants to read out a narrative, and thereafter, attempt to practice each part of the term that may be done so in the story. This kind of game might also help you expand your English vocabulary. Give some little discipline to those who practice incorrectly (Silalahi, 2019).

Game Market

This kind of game puts players to the test on their ability to construct effective sentences. Give the first phrase that, for instance, contains notions that encourage market purchasing. Be aware that each participant contributes a sentence, regardless of how well the grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation are constructed. We may all improve by correcting each other (Silalahi, 2019).

Material and methods

Research Design

The study used a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart, which focuses on implementing a process of acting, observing, and reflecting. The action research design was used due to its appropriateness for implementation and addressing local issues that require immediate solution and action. These local issues would include low language skills among students when learning English. Action research provides the researcher an opportunity to do something and act through teaching the students. After acting, the researcher observes and reflects. This study employed three cycles of the model, with all stages in every cycle comprising planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. Observations from each cycle provided data necessary for planning in the next cycles.

Participants

Participants of this research work included 50 male Libyan high school students aged 15 to 16 years. These students belonged to Al-Refai High School City. These students were chosen through purposive sampling as they were easily accessible to the researcher. A total of 50 students is also appropriate for conducting action research in the classroom. This helps in increasing the internal reliability of the research results. The research adhered to ethical considerations. The subjects of the study gave their mandatory consent before being subjected to research. The subjects remained anonymous, and their data was kept private. The research was conducted in accordance within ethical frameworks.

Instruments and Data Collection

Two principal instruments were used in gathering data for this study. The first instrument used was the speaking assessment rubric. This rubric was designed to help in the assessment of student speaking capability. There were five indicators in this rubric. They include utterance, Fluency, grammatical structure, vocabulary, and comprehension. Every indicator is scored using a scale of four, and level four is the highest achievement. The second instrument was an observation list designed to measure the students' learning motivation in the

implementation of microlearning through games. The observation was carried out on four indicators: participation (work), interest, curiosity, and competition. The maximum score for each indicator was four.

These activities were conducted in nine sessions spread over three cycles. These initial observation results showed that students' speaking ability and learning motivation of students are low. The initial results indicated that speaking ability scores of 1.4 on utterance, 1.3 on fluency, 1.3 on structure, and 1.3 on comprehension were very low. The results of initial observations of students' learning motivation showed that the level of students' participation in learning was low with a score of 2.2 on participation, 2.2 on competition, 2.1 on curiosity, and 2.1 on mood. On the basis of these results, micro-learning activities incorporating game-based approaches were implemented and improved throughout cycles to enhance speaking skills and motivation levels within the students.

Data analysis

The class average is calculated by summing the student results, which are then divided by the total number of pupils in the class.

$$\bar{X} = \Sigma X / \Sigma N \quad (1)$$

Observation:

X = Mean score

X = Overall Score

N = Stands for all pupils.

To determine student skills, there are two categories: individually and classically. According to the guidelines for carrying out the curriculum's teaching and learning, a student is regarded "competent" if they have a score of 65 or above, and a class is considered "competent" if 85% of the students receive scores that are higher than or equal to 65%.

Results and discussion

For the assessment of speaking proficiency, assessment was done at two different levels: individual and classical. For speaking assessment, the assessment scale comprises four points, with 4 being the highest score. Following the curriculum guidelines, the standard for efficiency was fixed at 65%, which translates to an average score of 2.6 on the four-point scale. A candidate is said to be competent if they score 2.6 or higher, and the whole class is said to be classically competent if at least 85% of the students attain the minimum score of 2.6.

Cycle 1

An action plan is then created in accordance with the findings of the observations. The first cycle was completed in six meetings. Five different types of English games are used by the teacher when putting the action into practice. The following table illustrates how students speaking abilities changed throughout the course of the six meetings.

Table 1. Speaking Skills of Students in Cycle 1

Meetings	Average Score Indicator				
	Utterance	Fluency	Structure	Vocabularies	understanding
1	1,3	1,2	1,2	1,3	1,2
2	1,4	1,2	1,3	1,4	1,2
3	1,7	1,8	1,9	2	2,1
4	1,8	1,7	2	2	2,2
5	2,4	2,6	2,7	2,7	2,8
6	2,5	2,6	2,7	2,7	2,8

As it can be seen from Table 1, students' speaking skills gradually improved during Cycle 1, though most of the indicators stayed below the competence threshold of 2.6, especially during the early meetings. Only during the final meetings did some indicators, such as fluency, structure, vocabulary, and understanding, start to reach or even go slightly above the minimum level of competence. The observations of students' learning motivation resulted in average points of 2.6 for working, competition, curiosity, and mood. Although these points increased, the speaking ability was still considered insufficient, because most of the students were still hesitant, passive, and lacking in confidence. Thus, Cycle 1 did not meet the criteria of competence, so Cycle 2 was conducted.

Cycle 2

The researcher and observer then arranged cycle 2, which was likewise held in six meetings, using the data collected from cycle 1. There are five scheduled games for cycle 2. The following graph displays how students speaking abilities changed during cycle 2.

Table 2. Speaking Skills of Students in Cycle 2

Meetings	Average Score Indicator				
	Utterance	Fluency	Structure	Vocabularies	understanding
1	2,2	2,2	2	2	2
2	2	2	1,9	2,4	2,2
3	2,6	2,7	2,6	2,6	2,6
4	2,6	2,6	2,4	2,7	2,7
5	2,6	2,7	2,6	2,6	2,6
6	2,2	2,2	2	2	2

Some speaking indicators reached the minimum competence level of 2.6, especially during middle meetings in Cycle 1. Moreover, learning motivation has grown, such as in working with average scores of 3.2, competition at 3.2, curiosity at 3.1, and mood at 3.2, showing greater intensity of engagement and enthusiasm. However, students' performance was not consistent yet, and some indicators dropped below the threshold of competence in the late meetings. Therefore, classical competence had not completely occurred, and Cycle 3 was done accordingly.

Cycle 3

As can be seen from Table 3, all the speaking indicators constantly went above the threshold of competence, or 2.6, meaning most of the students were already at the competent level. Likewise, students' motivational increase was very significant: the average scores equaled 3.4 for work, 3.5 for curiosity, 3.4 for mood, and 3.6 for competition. These findings indicate that the sustainable implementation of game-based microlearning activities has positively influenced both students' speaking ability and learning motivation. By the end of Cycle 3, the class achieved individual and classical competence, confirming the effectiveness of the instructional intervention.

Table 3. Speaking Skills of Students in Cycle 3

Meetings	Average Score Indicator				
	Utterance	Fluency	Structure	Vocabularies	understanding
1	2,8	2,9	2,7	2,9	2,8
2	3,0	3,0	2,9	3,1	3,0
3	3,1	3,2	3,0	3,3	3,1
4	3,2	3,2	3,1	3,3	3,2
5	3,3	3,4	3,2	3,4	3,3
6	3,4	3,5	3,3	3,5	3,4

Discussion

In contrast to a mobile application that only permitted static learning, students' usage habits on a mobile microlearning application that allowed for interrupted learning (e.g., the option to stop and start the session at any moment) were examined. They discovered that interrupted learning application users exhibited higher levels of engagement with the course materials (Ohkawa et al., 2019). Students who used course materials that were given in a microlearning style finished tasks more quickly and went through more iterations than those in the non-microlearning group (Correa et al., 2018). According to another research, students who used a microlearning method to learn performed tasks more quickly and accurately than other students (Gao, 2018). Interestingly, the best time for engagement with learning materials in a micro learning environment may depend on the type of

learning assignments and platform of delivery. The term wait-learning refers to the use of a user's downtime while interacting with other services to deliver brief learning tasks. Tasks that were delivered right away after the user finished an interaction were more responsive than tasks delivered after a longer delay (Huang et al., 2019).

Language games are one of several tactics or ways that maybe used to help students enhanced their speaking abilities. Games are a lot of fun, they make the classroom more enjoyable, and they help students become better writers and speakers. The usage of this game helps boost students' desire to utilize English in class. The ability of high school students in Al-Refai High School at Al-khoms to learn English might be considerably improved by the use of microlearning through games. This strategy delivers a dynamic and interesting learning experience that improves motivation, retention, and language competency by utilizing the advantages of microlearning and gamification. First if all, microlearning divides complicated linguistics concepts into smaller, easier to comprehend parts. Students may target particular language skills, including vocabulary, grammar, listening, or speaking, with the help of this bite-sized format. Microlearning helps students learn more efficiently by offering condensed, readily consumable knowledge that reinforces what they have learned through repetition and spaced repetition approaches (Voice & Stirton, 2020).

The learning process is improved even further by the use of gamification components. By fostering a feeling of challenge, competitiveness, and reward, games engage pupils more deeply and tap into their innate desire. Activities for learning a language can be created as interesting and engaging games, quizzes, or simulations where students can practice their English. Students may use their language skill in real-world circumstances by simulating discussions, role-play, and problem-solving situations in these games. Additionally, the results are consistent with previous studies Mert & Samur (2018); Reinders (2017) that highlighted how microlearning enhances retention and engagement by presenting information in brief, digestible segments, this study found that combining microlearning with gamification not only helped students remember what they learned, but it also made them less hesitant to take part in spoken English exercises. Traditional teaching approaches typically don't motivate Libyan pupils (Baah et al., 2024). In contrast, games made the classroom a safe, low-stress place where students were encouraged to try out new words and correct each other's mistakes. This corroborates Muhazir & Retnawati (2020) assertion that language games diminish learner fear and promote collaborative communication.

Conclusion

This study's findings provide strong evidence that the purposeful incorporation of microlearning via gamified methods markedly improves the speaking skills and motivation of Al-Refai high school pupils in Al-Khoms, Libya. This thorough inquiry encompassed three separate research cycles, during which significant enhancements were noted in several essential facets of speaking proficiency, particularly in utterance, fluency, structure, vocabulary, and overall comprehension. The consistent rise in average scores indicative of speaking proficiency and learner motivation with each iteration clearly demonstrates that ongoing engagement with game-based microlearning activities fosters significant, enduring enhancements in these domains. Moreover, the research highlights numerous practical advantages linked to this innovative educational model: students exhibited enhanced engagement and diminished anxiety concerning potential mistakes, while also demonstrating a greater willingness to participate in English-speaking activities. The gamified methodology promotes an engaged and supportive classroom environment, distinguishing itself from conventional rote memorization and passive learning methods. The use of digital microlearning tools enabled students to access essential educational resources at their convenience, fostering a more personalized and self-directed learning experience. It is essential to recognize the persistent issues related to the incorporation of novel teaching approaches into current curricula, guaranteeing equal access to technical resources, and offering sufficient professional development for educators. Confronting these difficulties necessitates a unified endeavor among educational stakeholders, encompassing investment in essential infrastructure, promoting collaboration, and guaranteeing ongoing training and support for educators. This comprehensive approach is essential for surmounting obstacles and optimizing the advantages of gamified microlearning methodologies, hence resulting in a more successful and enriching educational experience for students. By prioritizing these approaches, schools can refine their curricula to more effectively address the requirements of contemporary education while markedly enhancing student outcomes in language acquisition and motivation.

However, there are several important limitations of this study that must be acknowledged. First, the sample consists of 50 male students only, and thus generalization of findings to female students, other age groups, or learners from other schools and regions is limited. Consequently, outcomes must be interpreted cautiously and considered context-specific rather than universally applicable. Second, since this study involved a CAR design, its primary focus was on local classroom improvement, not on establishing causal effects or statistical significance. No inferential statistical tests, such as a t-test, were undertaken, and there was no control group for comparison. Hence, any "notable improvements" reported in this paper should be taken to refer to increases in local efficiency and competence levels based on school-established criteria (65% or a score of 2.6 on a four-point scale), rather than statistically significant effects in the conventionally understood quantitative sense. Despite this fact, this study gives a precious insight into practical ideas of how gamified microlearning could be successfully

applied to overcome real classroom problems. The various efforts to integrate new methodologies through existing curricula, including equity in technological access and adequate professional training of teachers, are essential to maximize benefits from such innovative approaches. Overcoming these challenges calls for prudent cooperation among educators, school administration leaders, and policymakers.

Suggestions:

Based on the findings and the limitations of this study, some recommendations are put forward. First, microlearning integrated with gamified activities should be systematically incorporated into the English language curriculum to improve students' communication skills and raise their level of engagement. Second, educational institutions and policymakers must work together to increase access to digital devices and reliable internet connectivity for all students. Third, professional development programs should be provided to support teachers with the necessary skills to design and then effectively introduce microlearning and gamification strategies into their classrooms. Finally, continuous evaluation and reflective practice should be maintained to monitor the effectiveness of these instructional approaches and make necessary adjustments. By offering such recommendations, Libyan educational institutions will raise the level of practical English language skills for the students, which indeed will improve their performance, and not only their academic performance, in the future, with professional perspectives opening in an interdependent world.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

The author(s) declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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