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Candidates:

El-Rabie BAALI

Sami KHELLAF

Board of Examiners

Mrs. Karima LAAOUIDJI	University of M'sila	Chairperson
Dr. Imane CHERIET	University of M'sila	Supervisor
Dr. Chahra Zed HAMOUMA	University of M'sila	Examiner

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Dedication

*I dedicate this work to the precious “**people**” in my life*

To those who believed in me when I didn’t believe in myself my sweet and loving

*“**parents**” your unwavering support made this possible.*

*To my affectionate “**wife**” and devoted “**kids**” who have supported me throughout the*

process of this work,

*To my “**brothers**”, “**friends**”, and “**my family**”*

*To my “**mentors**” and “**teachers**”, thank you for your guidance, insight, and*

inspiration.

And to all those who pursue knowledge with integrity and perseverance, may this

contribute, however humbly, to that collective endeavour.

BAALI El-Rabie

Dedication

*I dedicate this work to my sweet and loving “**parents**” who have supported me*

throughout the process of this work,

***To** my beloved “**wife**”, who unwavering support and encouragement have been my*

foundation throughout this journey.

***To** all my loving “**family**”,*

*To all my “**friends**” who supported me and encouraged me to do my best,*

*To my “**teachers**” and “**class mates**”*

thank you for the effort you have made to draw the smile in our life.

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Abstract

Game-based learning is a teaching strategy that utilizes the power of games to define and reinforce learning objectives. The research aims to explore teachers' perceptions about game-based learning on teaching and learning as well as its practice and implementation in Maarif's Primary schools in Algeria. The present study has adopted a descriptive research approach. Researchers used questionnaire data collection tool. The sample was composed of six (6) primary school EFL teachers, the sample was conveniently selected. Therefore, the study revealed that teachers believe Game-Based Learning improves student engagement and motivation, making learning enjoyable and reducing anxiety. Teachers also presume that competitive games are effective for oral practice and vocabulary acquisition. Educators may encounter several challenges including lack of formal training, logistical difficulties, and inconsistent assessment practices.

Keywords: game-based learning; language teaching and learning; primary school pupils; games

List of abbreviations

CLT: Communicative Language Teaching

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESL: English as a Second Language

GBL: Game-Based Learning

GTM: Grammar-Translation Method

SLA: Second Language Acquisition

ZPD: Zone of Proximal Development

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General Introduction

1. Background

In light of the escalating demand for internationalization, English has emerged as a prevalent language and a crucial component of everyday life, owing to its status as a lingua franca. In recent decades, there has been a marked increase in global interest; this phenomenon can be ascribed to various factors, including the desire to augment English proficiency and bolster local competitiveness (Turhan & Kirkgöz, 2018).

Algeria has embarked on a new path in the academic year 2022/2023 by incorporating English as a foreign language (EFL herby) in the third year of primary school, rather than in the first year of middle school. The discussion surrounding the teaching of English in elementary schools has persisted for years, particularly regarding the transition of English instruction from middle school to elementary school in Algeria. This year, the ministry of education formally announced that children will start learning English in the third year of primary school, beginning in September 2022. (Imerzoukene, 2023)

As a matter of fact, primary school EFL instructors strive to create more interesting and effective learning settings. Educators pursue novel methods to engage students and improve language acquisition; game-based learning has surfaced as an effective instrument that integrates instructional material with interactive, enjoyable experiences. This method promotes active engagement and cooperation among learners while facilitating the development of essential language skills in a low-stress environment (Alotaibi, 2024). Integrating games into the EFL curriculum enables educators to build engaging classroom experiences that cater to various learning styles, so enhancing sustained interest and language proficiency (Munawarah, et al, 2024).

In fact, the integration of game-based learning in EFL primary cycle marks a significant interest between researchers. Purba & Katemba (2022) stated that Game-based learning

(GBL) is a tool used by teachers to teach English vocabulary, which is crucial for language learning and communication. While much attention has been given to Game-based learning, less focus has been placed on the integration of GBL in EFL primary cycle, which presents a considerable problem.

2. Statement of the Problem

In the field of English language education, teachers' perceptions and practices play an important role in shaping the learning experience of students. However, game-based learning is considered one of the teaching methods that fit the needs of children; it is also known to be highly beneficial for children's development. It helps them build social skills, such as communication, cooperation, and empathy, through interactions with peers during play activities (Alotaibi, 2024).

In Algeria, primary school education is traditionally more formal and structured, research suggest that game-based learning (GBL) is increasingly being integrated into primary education. However, there are still some challenges and limitations in its widespread adoption (Guan, et al, 2024).

This study seeks to explore the perceptions and practices of primary school teachers in M'sila, Algeria regarding game-based learning, and to assess its perceived effectiveness in this area. While existing literature provides insights into general trends and practices in language education, there remains a possibility that the experiences and perspectives of teachers in this particular context have not been widely explored. Investigating this gap is essential for informing educational policy and practice, enhancing educational strategies and promoting holistic development among young learners.

3. Research Questions

1. What are the primary school teachers' perceptions of game-based learning?
2. How do primary school teachers in M'sila implement game-based learning in their classrooms?
3. What challenges do teachers encounter when practicing game-based learning?

4. Objectives of the Study

The current study intends to

- 1- To investigate the primary school teachers' perceptions of game-based learning
- 2- To explore how to implement game-based learning in EFL primary classrooms.
- 3- To figure out the challenges that teachers encounter when practicing game-based learning.

5. Significance of the Study

The findings of the current study will redound to explore the perspectives of primary school EFL teachers on game-based learning (GBL) in English as a Foreign Language (EFL). It highlights the importance of understanding how teachers perceive and apply GBL in the classroom. The research provides empirical insights into the challenges and opportunities faced by educators in implementing GBL strategies in English as a Foreign Language. It also highlights the relationship between educational theory and classroom dynamics. The findings could help shape policies, curricula, and support structures for GBL implementation in early language education. The research aims to promote more engaging, learner-focused English as a Foreign Language instruction in primary education.

6. Research Methodology

In order to achieve the aim of the investigation, the present study adopts a descriptive research approach to examine teachers' views and perceptions regarding game-based language teaching in Algeria. Thus, the research was conducted in Maarif municipality during the 2024/2025 academic year, focusing on six (6) primary school EFL teachers. The sample was selected using convenience sampling due to its practicality. Additionally, the questionnaire was used to collect data from the teachers, who were non-native English speakers. The questionnaire was designed to collect teachers' perceptions about game-based learning of learning and teaching, as well as its practice and implementation.

The questionnaire was used for two purposes in this study: to explore teachers' practices of game-based learning and to investigate the perceptions of teachers about using game-based learning among EFL teachers of primary school. The descriptive research approach provides valuable insights into the characteristics of specific groups, the occurrence rates of certain events, and the relationships between different variables. The data, obtained through the tests, were analysed using the SPSS V20.

7. Literature review

Integrating games into the EFL (English as a Foreign Language) curriculum is a modern educational approach that offers numerous benefits for language learning. Games can make the learning process more enjoyable, reduce stress, and help students connect with each other and the language (Van Duc, et al, 2024). The following studies provide a robust foundation for understanding the integration of games into the EFL curriculum in primary education.

Additionally, Pinder (2021) in his study “Teacher Perceptions of Game Based Learning in Trinidad and Tobago's Primary Schools” explores the effectiveness of game-based learning in primary school instruction in Trinidad and Tobago, a region with limited research. Using a mixed-methods approach, it uses a quantitative questionnaire and interviews with teachers to gather their perspectives on the benefits and effects of game-based learning.

Besides, Tuba (2021) explores teachers' perceptions of play-based learning for early primary grade children in developing countries. It found that teachers are generally aware of play-based learning but prefer conventional methods. However, they believe it will be time-consuming and need more training. The study recommends reviewing existing curriculum and policies to incorporate play-based learning pedagogy and conducting larger-scale research for a nationwide perspective.

Also, Huizenga, et al (2017) investigate the perceptions of secondary education teachers who actively incorporate digital games into their teaching, contrasting with previous research that often involved teachers who do not regularly use such tools. Through semi-structured interviews with 43 teachers, the study reveals that those who utilize digital games perceive significant benefits in terms of student engagement and cognitive learning outcomes. However, fewer teachers acknowledged motivational effects associated with learning through digital games. The findings highlight the importance of understanding the perspectives of teachers who engage with digital games in their classrooms, suggesting implications for enhancing the integration of these tools in educational practices.

Furthermore, Hwang & Wu (2012) claimed that Educational computer games have been studied extensively for various courses, including mathematics, software engineering, civil engineering, business, computer science, geography, language, and decision science. Studies have shown that these games enhance students' learning interest and motivation, and

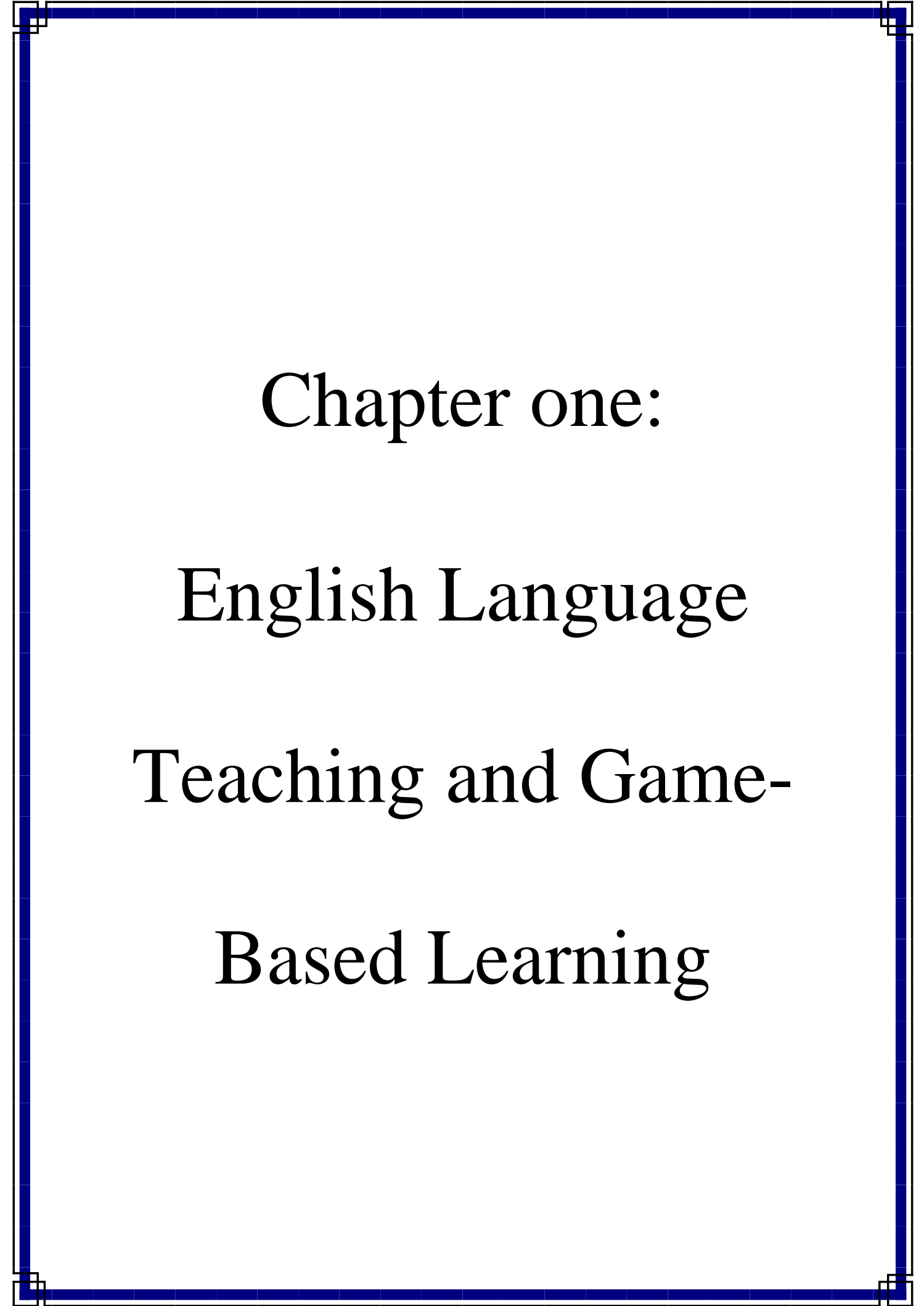
are crucial for the development of children's cognition and social processes. As technology advances, more technology-based learning is expected, and educational computer games could play a significant role in education. Analyzing emerging research trends can help choose appropriate topics and make critical decisions in the field.

Ultimately, A study by Burke (2024) intitled “*Teacher Perceptions of Play In Early Childhood Education*” revealed that Play is crucial for early childhood development, but its implementation is declining due to social and political factors like screen time and academic pressures. A study found that teachers understand the value of play but face challenges due to screen time and academic expectations. Assessments showed that teachers are not reaching the appropriate amount of play time, leading to increased challenging behaviors. There is a need for high-quality play experiences and support for teachers.

8. Dissertation Structure

The present study is composed of two chapters. In one hand, the first chapter, as a theoretical framework of the research, it provides a better understanding and a clear explanation to the variable of this study. It is dedicated to game-based learning, its principles, theories that support GBL, the types of games used in teaching pupils, and the integration of game-based learning in English language teaching in primary schools in Algeria,

The second chapter, on the other hand, is devoted to the methodological framework, it comprises of three sections; section one involves a full description of the research methodology and design where it provides the research methods, the research population, sample and sampling design, the tools used to collect data, and the pilot study. The second one is considered as the section of the data analysis and the results discussions. And general conclusion.



Chapter one:

English Language

Teaching and Game-

Based Learning

Introduction

Game-based learning has grown in popularity among English language learners owing to its capacity to provide a pleasant and engaging learning environment. It is especially helpful for young learners since games are inherently engaging to youngsters. GBL may aid with numerous elements of language learning, including vocabulary development, and can increase students' enthusiasm and interest in the topic (Adipat, et al, 2021). This Chapter is devoted for theoretical background of the Game-Based Learning, its Definitions, principles, types, an overview on theories that support GBL, and finally the integration of Game-Based Learning and English teaching.

1. Game-Based Learning in English Language Teaching

1.1. Definition and Background

According to Purba & Katemba (2022) Game-based learning (GBL) is an innovative educational approach that leverages games to enhance the learning process. It is a tool employed by teachers, particularly in teaching English vocabulary, and is deliberately designed for educational purposes to support learning media. GBL has gained prominence, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, as teachers use it as a method to reduce students' boredom while studying. This approach has shown potential in boosting motivation and incentive across various higher education activities. In the context of language learning, GBL is particularly effective as it can decrease students' anxiety, create a fun classroom atmosphere, and make the learning process more engaging and enjoyable (Adipat, et al, 2021). By incorporating games into the educational framework, GBL aims to create a more interactive, motivating, and effective learning environment for pupils.

Furthermore, Game based learning (GBL) is an educational approach that involves using games as part of the teaching and learning process. It consists of two main types: digital game based learning and non-digital game based learning (Naik, 2014). Game based learning incorporates three key elements: competition, engagement, and immediate rewards. GBL is considered to be linked to constructivist and cognitive educational theories. It is viewed as an effective way to improve content mastery, social skills, and higher-order thinking skills. The approach aims to make learning more engaging and transferable to real-world scenarios compared to traditional teaching methods. (Pinder, 2021).

In addition, Game-Based Learning (GBL) is an educational approach that utilizes games to enhance the learning experience. In the context of English as Second Language (ESL) classrooms, GBL is seen as a method that can improve students' engagement, motivation, and language skills. It creates a multi-dimensional learning environment that combines educational gains with enjoyment and increased confidence in language learning. GBL is considered an alternative to traditional teaching methods, as it provides opportunities for students to learn in an interactive and engaging manner. (Alhebshi & Halabi, 2020)

Huizenga, Ten Dam, Voogt, & Admiraal, (2017) in their study “Teacher perceptions of the value of game-based learning in secondary education” defined Game-based learning as the use of digital games in educational settings to support teaching and learning processes. It involves utilizing digital games as tools to engage students, enhance their motivation to learn, and achieve cognitive learning outcomes (Lin, et al. 2017).

Teachers who implement game-based learning in their classrooms perceive several benefits Huizenga, (Ten Dam, Voogt, & Admiraal, 2017):

- ✚ They observe increased student engagement, with students showing enthusiasm, perseverance, and willingness to invest time in playing or creating games.
- ✚ Games enhance motivation to learn by providing an authentic context that helps students connect theory to practice and understand the value of what they're learning.
- ✚ Teachers report improved cognitive learning outcomes, as games offer a safe environment for students to experiment, receive immediate feedback, engage in active learning, and visualize processes.
- ✚ Some teachers noted that game-based learning contributes to the development of general skills, particularly collaborative skills.

Overall, game-based learning is perceived as a valuable approach that can positively impact various aspects of the learning experience in secondary education.

1.2. Play-Based learning

McGinn (2017) demonstrated that Play-based learning is an educational approach that emphasizes the importance of play in a child's learning and development, particularly in early childhood education. This approach recognizes that through play, children explore their world, learn about various subjects, and develop crucial skills.

In play-based learning environments, according to Taylor & Boyer (2020) children are given ample opportunities for free play, which supports their social, emotional, and cognitive development. Play is seen as a vehicle for learning academic skills, such as literacy and language development.

Moreover, Loizou, et al (2019) stated that teachers play a crucial role in this approach by scaffolding children's learning through play, often by participating in or guiding play

activities. The classroom environment is typically set up to encourage various types of play, including sociodramatic play, which is particularly beneficial for developing social competence and language skills.

McGinn (2017) suggested that play-based learning is developmentally appropriate for young children and can lead to positive outcomes in both social and academic areas. This approach allows children to learn and practice important skills in a context that is engaging, meaningful, and natural to them.

Play-based learning, according to (Khalil, et al. 2022), is an educational approach that utilizes play as a fundamental element in the learning process, particularly in early childhood settings. It shifts the teaching process from teacher-centered education to student-centered education, allowing students to build constructive knowledge and skills.

Play-based learning can take various forms, ranging from free play to guided play and games. Guided play, where an adult arranges a context for learning but the child directs the play within that context, is particularly effective in maximizing learning (Aktaş, 2025).

Play-based learning is not only enjoyable but also serves as a stimulator and motivational agent for creative thinking and cultural engagement. It has been shown to enhance academic achievement, improve social and psychological behavior, and contribute to health improvement (Qayyum, et al. 2024).

Additionally, Play-based learning helps develop various skills in children, including cognitive abilities, language skills, self-reflection, socioemotional skills, empathy, problem-solving, and cooperation with peers (Khalil, et al. 2022).

1.3. Gamification and Game-Based Learning

Educators are progressively employing innovative strategies to enhance learning outcomes and engage students in the digital era. Two prominent approaches have emerged among these strategies: educational gamification and game-based learning (GBL). Although both employ interactive elements to improve education, they are inherently distinct in terms of their design, purpose, and implementation. It examines and contrasts these two educational approaches, examining their distinctive characteristics, advantages, and obstacles in academic environments. (Al-Azawi, Al-Faliti, & Al-Blushi, 2016)

The integration of game design components into non-game contexts, particularly educational environments, is known as educational gamification. Rather than employing actual games, this method integrates features such as avatars, leaderboards, badges, levels, and point systems into conventional learning frameworks. The primary objective of gamification is to enhance student engagement and motivation by incorporating elements of competition, achievement, and progression into the learning process. (Hamari, Koivisto, & Sarsa, 2014)

Gamification's adaptability is one of its most significant assets. It is a cost-effective and scalable solution for educators, as it can be seamlessly incorporated into existing curricula without the necessity of reworking the content. Furthermore, gamification offers learners immediate feedback, enabling them to monitor their progress and maintain motivation by means of visual and numerical indicators. This framework encourages consistent engagement and may induce behavioural modifications that facilitate long-term learning practices.

Game-based learning, in contrast to gamification, is characterised by the utilisation of genuine games that are specifically engineered to achieve educational objectives. Immersive

narratives, characters, and challenges that correspond with educational objectives are frequently implemented in these games. In contrast to gamification, which involves the addition of game elements to traditional instruction, game-based learning (GBL) incorporates the curriculum into the gameplay, thereby rendering the game both the medium and the message. (Lin, Ho, Lai, & Jong, 2014)

The benefits of game-based learning are substantial. According to research, GBL has the potential to improve cognitive abilities, including memory, problem-solving, strategic reasoning, and knowledge of computers. Experiential learning is also facilitated by the immersive nature of educational games, which encourage students to actively interact with the content rather than passively receiving information. This method is particularly effective for subjects that students may otherwise find uninteresting or challenging, as the engaging nature of games can convert learning into an enjoyable activity. (Squire, 2003)

Moreover, while educational gamification and game-based learning share the common goal of improving education by incorporating gaming principles, they differ in a number of significant ways (Qasim, et al. 2024):

- ✚ Gamification is comprehensive, incorporating game mechanics into the entire educational experience, whereas GBL is focused, employing specific games to instruct specific concepts.
- ✚ Gamification is generally more cost-effective and simpler to implement than new systems, as it frequently entails the modification of existing ones. In contrast, GBL typically necessitates the development or acquisition of specialised educational activities, which can be resource-intensive.
- ✚ The two differ in their approach to content integration. The curriculum is distinct from the game elements in gamification, which are designed to inspire and direct

students. The content is inextricably linked to the game in GBL; students acquire knowledge through the process of participating.

- ✚ The reward systems of these methodologies are distinct. Gamification primarily relies on extrinsic rewards, such as badges, points, and rankings, whereas GBL tends to promote intrinsic motivation through personal achievement, challenge, and narrative immersion.

In conclusion, educational gamification and game-based learning are both valuable resources for contemporary educators who are interested in improving student engagement and learning outcomes. Gamification is adaptable and effortless to implement across a variety of subjects, whereas GBL offers immersive, focused learning experiences that facilitate the development of skills and a profound comprehension. (Al-Azawi, et al. 2016)

According to Fonseca, et al (2023) the decision to implement gamification, game-based learning, or a combination of both should be based on the learners' requirements, the available resources, and the specific learning objectives. These methods are expected to become more significant in pedagogy as technology continues to evolve and transform educational environments. Educators can make more effective, motivating, and dynamic learning experiences for students by making informed decisions based on an understanding of their differences and applications.

1.4. Theories Supporting Game-Based Learning

1.4.1. Constructivist (Piaget) and social-constructivist (Vygotsky)

Wood & Bennett (1998) stated that the constructivist view, derived from Piaget, emphasizes child-initiated and self-directed activity, suggesting that learning depends on exploration, discovery, and first-hand experience. In contrast, the social-constructivist

perspective, based on Vygotsky's work, places greater emphasis on the social, cultural, and historical influences on children's learning and development. It suggests that play creates zones of proximal development where children can progress from their actual developmental level to a higher potential level. Also, Wood & Bennett (1998) revealed that teachers initially held predominantly constructivist views of play and learning, but through reflection and analysis of their practice, many shifted towards a more social-constructivist orientation. This shift led to changes in how they conceptualized and implemented game-based learning in their classrooms.

Additionally, a study by Puteh & Ali (2013) pointed that, in one hand, Vygotsky's theory emphasizes the social nature of language learning and the importance of play as a vehicle for social interactions. Play activities provide a context for learning with adult assistance, which he refers to as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Piaget's theory, on the other hand, focuses on cognitive development stages and the readiness of children to learn new concepts. Piaget recognized play as an essential tool for developing language, allowing children to combine existing knowledge and skills and apply them to new situations. Both theories support the idea that games are crucial for children's language and literacy development, providing a natural and engaging context for learning essential concepts and skills.

1.4.2. Second language acquisition theories (Krashen)

Game-based learning (GBL) has become a popular second language acquisition (SLA) pedagogical method in higher education. As worldwide demand for bilingualism and multilingualism develops, educators seek dynamic, student-centered ways to improve language acquisition. GBL excels in combining educational material with fun gameplay. A growing corpus of research shows that this strategy helps language learners improve

vocabulary and decrease anxiety. This article discusses game-based learning's benefits and implementation challenges for second language acquisition in higher education.

In SLA, game-based learning is often used for vocabulary development. GBL gives students a rich, contextualised environment to encounter and utilise new words, unlike standard memorisation. Learning new words and their right use is easier in narratives or games settings, which aids long-term memorisation. (Chen and Hsu, 2020)

Game-based learning improves fluency and vocabulary. Video games, particularly those that require real-time communication or narrative involvement, have been shown to enhance speaking speed and reduce unnecessary pauses. Many immersive and time-sensitive games enable learners to answer rapidly and confidently in the target language, which explains these increases. (Grimshaw and Cardoso (2018)

Learner motivation and engagement are another GBL benefit. When students struggle or lose interest, traditional classroom methods might lead to passive learning or decreased excitement. In contrast, interactive games foster active involvement and persistent interest. Games' challenge-reward structure, visual stimulation, and goal-oriented activities may drive learners to practise hard language skills, resulting in improved results. (Chen et al., 2019)

Yamazaki (2018) stated that GBL also reduces language learning anxiety. The casual and light-hearted atmosphere of video games helps lessen psychological obstacles to speaking or writing in a second language. Such settings encourage language learners to take chances, experiment with language usage, and make errors without judgement, which are essential to successful language acquisition.

According to Eun, & Lim (2009) Game-based learning matches contextual and situated learning theories. Games provide learners real-world circumstances to use the language

genuinely and deliberately. When traversing a virtual city, solving a challenge, or chatting with in-game characters, learners employ language in context to improve their practical language abilities.

Additionally, GBL may also improve communication skills, according to study. Gaming especially cooperation, bargaining, and role-playing teaches pupils communication skills that may be applied to real-life talks. Fluency and efficient communication need turn-taking, explanation, and context-sensitive language choices beyond grammar and vocabulary. (Yamazaki, 2018)

Franciosi (2017) demonstrates that, despite its potential advantages, game-based learning in SLA may not work. Its success relies on the games chosen, the learners' previous knowledge and gaming experience, and the instructor's guidance and scaffolding. Some games are more entertaining than instructional, thus GBL must be carefully included into the curriculum.

Ultimately, Chen et al. (2018) in their study said that game-based learning may improve higher education second language acquisition. GBL is a dynamic, learner-centred language teaching method that improves vocabulary, fluency, motivation, anxiety, contextual learning, and communicative competence. It involves careful organisation, game selection, and teacher participation to succeed. Game-based learning may become a cornerstone of current language teaching as technology changes schooling.

1.5. Principles of Game-based learning

Gee (2003) contends that excellent games include sound pedagogical ideas that may be successfully used in educational environments, such as schools. Gee (2003) posits that games provide information "on demand" and "just in time," enhancing the relevance and retention of

knowledge for learners. Moreover, well-crafted games confront players at the limits of their abilities, achieving a balance between challenge and ability that sustains interest without inducing irritation.

Cooper & Bucchiarone (2023) stated that games designate participants as creators rather than passive consumers, fostering active engagement and innovation. They cultivate a "cycle of expertise," whereby players progressively enhance their abilities and knowledge via repeated practice. Games are significantly motivating, a crucial element for effective and enduring learning. These concepts strongly coincide with the objectives of language education and indicate that the integration of game-based learning methodologies may enhance engagement and efficacy in language teaching.

Gee (2003) highlights several essential learning principles found in well-crafted games that can be successfully utilised in wider educational settings. An essential principle involves delivering information Just-in-Time and On-Demand, allowing learners to access information precisely when it is needed and within the relevant context, thereby improving comprehension and retention. Games provide a customisable challenge, tailoring difficulty to align with the player's skill level, which helps maintain engagement without causing overwhelm.

Another principle is the focus on Production, Not Just Consumption individuals are motivated to create and contribute, rather than simply absorb information. Furthermore, games introduce Well-Ordered Problems, where initial levels are designed to assist players in building foundational concepts that equip them for more intricate challenges in subsequent stages. This contributes to a continuous loop of skill mastery, where individuals consistently hone their abilities, face fresh challenges, and enhance their understanding through ongoing feedback and adjustment (Cooper & Bucchiarone, 2023).

Gee (2003) emphasises the importance of extended engagement, pointing out that games naturally motivate individuals and promote on-going interaction with educational content. An influential factor is identity investment: games enable players to embrace new roles and identities, enhancing both emotional and intellectual involvement. Finally, the concept of collective intelligence and collaboration illustrated in multiplayer games shows how learning can be improved through teamwork and shared knowledge. Gee (2003) posits that these principles, when applied with careful consideration, have the potential to revolutionise conventional learning settings like schools and workplaces, enhancing their engagement, personalisation, and overall effectiveness.

1.6. Types of Games

Plass, Homer, & Kinzer (2015) stated that educational games transcend beyond digital media, as the text describes a variety of game types utilised in game-based learning. Digital games are the most prevalent learning tool, yet they are only one. Simple, quick-play games like Angry Birds may teach problem-solving and physics. Physics-based games like Crayon Physics and Newton's Playground let kids explore in virtual surroundings using real-world physics.

Ultimately, Plass, Homer, & Kinzer (2015) list another games like Complex, player-driven MMOs like Eve Online and World of Warcraft are another genre. These games teach teamwork, strategy, and long-term goal-setting. Puzzle games like Noobs v. Leets use subject-specific content geometry in entertaining gameplay styles. AR games like Reliving the Revolution let users immerse themselves in historical or scientific topics. Finally, Citizen Science crowdsourcing games use player contributions to tackle real-world issues, combining entertainment with scientific inquiry. These games may include constructivism, experiential

learning, or situated cognition and support content reinforcement, skill development, and real-world application (Adipat, et al, 2021)

Accordingly, Purba & Katemba, (2022) mentioned a few types of games in different contexts. Particularly, they highlighted various types of games used to support language learning in the context of vocabulary acquisition and classroom engagement. Online games are identified as one of the most popular and entertaining methods for learning a foreign language, especially effective in teaching vocabulary through interactive and engaging platforms. Educational games, or those specifically designed for learning purposes, are central to the concept of game-based learning (GBL), where the primary goal is to achieve specific educational outcomes through structured gameplay (Dahalan, et al. (2024).

In addition, Akdogan (2017) pointed that vocabulary games are recognized as valuable strategies employed by teachers to enhance students' lexical knowledge in a fun and memorable way. The use of classroom games is also emphasized, as they offer an excellent technique to promote active learning, peer collaboration, and classroom participation. Furthermore, competitive games, though mentioned briefly, introduce an element of challenge and motivation, as students compete with one another, often increasing their focus and engagement (Hellín, et al. 2023)

1.7. Integration of Game-Based Learning and English Teaching

Ismaizam, & Al, (2022) stated game-based learning has shown significant promise in improving English language teaching, especially in ESL (English as a Second Language) settings. The incorporation of this approach into educational methods has demonstrated a notable enhancement in student engagement and motivation, resulting in a more dynamic and responsive learning environment that aligns with learners' interests. A prominent advantage is

its capacity to enhance vocabulary acquisition and retention, as engaging gameplay frequently reinforces word usage within meaningful contexts.

In addition to vocabulary, Lai & Pharanat (2024) stated that game-based learning plays a significant role in enhancing overall language skills, encompassing listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This approach emphasises a learner-centred pedagogy, transitioning the emphasis from teacher-led instruction to active engagement from students, allowing them to assume greater responsibility for their own progress (Frossard, Barajas, & Trifonova., 2012). Furthermore, numerous game-based learning environments promote collaborative learning, enhancing communication, teamwork, and peer interaction skills that are crucial for language development. (Ismaizam, & Al, 2022).

Brugliera (2024) said that these methodologies are effectively implemented in various educational environments, spanning from primary education to higher education institutions, frequently utilising digital platforms and technology to foster engaging and interactive experiences. Nonetheless, successful execution necessitates careful strategizing. Game-based learning must align with curricular objectives and be customised to achieve particular learning outcomes to prevent it from becoming a diversion (Brown, 2024). When aligned with clear educational objectives, game-based strategies have the potential to greatly enhance the ESL classroom and facilitate more effective language learning.

Likewise, Ningsih, (2023) pointed in his study that Game-Based Learning (GBL) has arisen as a significant and new method for instructing English to young learners in the 21st century, providing many educational advantages that correspond with contemporary pedagogical objectives. By incorporating games into the educational framework, Game-Based Learning (GBL) cultivates a more captivating and pleasurable experience for students,

converting English courses into joyful, interactive sessions that engage learners' attention and promote active involvement (Adipat, et al, 2021)..

Z'hor (2021) demonstrates that game-based learning (GBL) not only enriches the classroom environment but also improves educational results, notably in vocabulary acquisition, where students exhibit superior retention and comprehension. A notable characteristic of GBL is its capacity to enhance student motivation. The engaging and captivating qualities of games motivate learners to dedicate more time and effort to their studies, maintaining interest and enthusiasm throughout the educational experience(Adipat, et al, 2021).

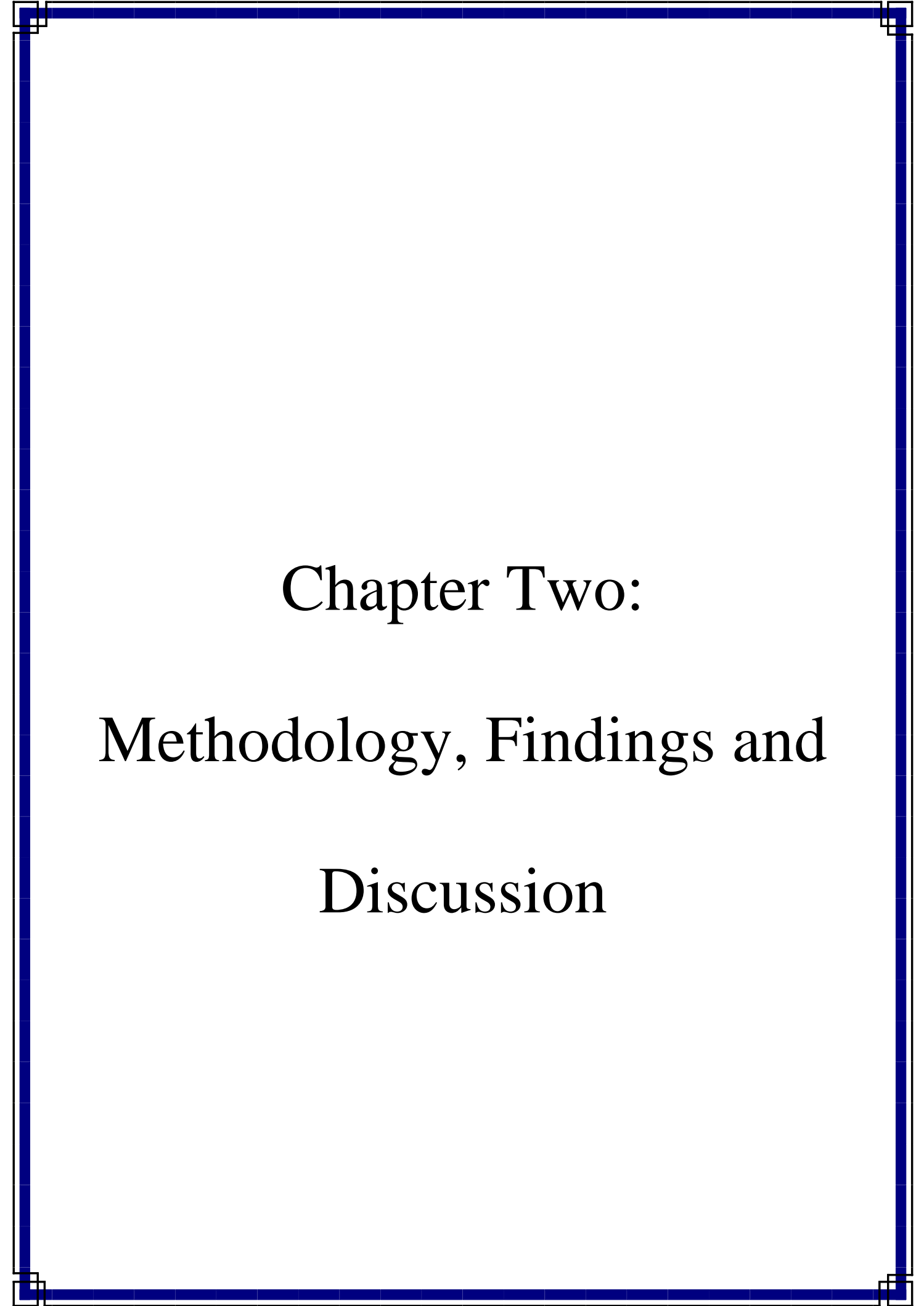
Furthermore, Mendoza Franco (2025) claimed that GBL fosters the acquisition of comprehensive abilities beyond linguistic proficiency, including creativity, critical thinking, and digital literacy each of which constitutes a vital competency in 21st-century education. Both educators and learners exhibit favorable views toward Game-Based Learning (GBL), hence fostering a more conducive and efficient educational atmosphere.

For GBL to be effectively implemented, educators must possess a strong proficiency in educational technology and be skilled in incorporating digital resources into their instruction (Falloon, 2020). This entails choosing suitable games and devising innovative, pedagogically effective activities that correspond with educational goals. When used judiciously, GBL may revolutionize English language training, creating a vibrant and significant experience for young learners (Ali, 2024).

Conclusion

The role of game-based learning is as much essential as the other elements of the teaching-learning process. Henceforth, the greater the level of care they exhibited, the more

advantageous their impact would be. Furthermore, it is pivotal for teachers to carefully consider the classroom environment and the positive elements that contribute to effective EFL classes. They must take into account the design and selection of course materials, as well as the needs of the participants. Indeed, this is primarily the responsibility of those involved in designing materials and course books.



Chapter Two:

Methodology, Findings and
Discussion

Introduction

Emphasizing the real-world implementation of game-based learning (GBL) in the framework of English language education in primary schools in M'sila, Algeria, this chapter offers the practical side of the study.

Beginning with an overview of the study environment and participant demographics, this chapter then presents and analyses the data gathered by means of teacher questionnaire. The results are then examined in perspective of the theoretical framework and past research, therefore providing a whole picture of how game-based learning is seen and used in the area. By means of this analysis, the chapter seeks to close the distance between theory and classroom reality, therefore offering important consequences for policy and practice in early English language instruction.

1. Research Methodology and Design

1.1 Descriptive Research Approach

This study has adopted a descriptive research approach, which, as noted by Marczyk, DeMatteo, and Festinger (2005), is particularly valuable for providing significant insights into the average member of a group. This indicates that the descriptive method is appropriate for educational studies as it enables the examination of the characteristics of a specific phenomenon. For example, one can characterize the average member or the average performance of an individual within a studied group by gathering data from sufficiently large groups of people (p.16). Descriptive research serves as a valuable method as it enables the investigator to gain insights into the characteristics of specific groups, the occurrence rates of certain events, and the relationships between different variables.

This study employs the descriptive method as it offers a clear account of teachers' views and perceptions regarding game-based language teaching.

1.2 The Setting and Population

The current study was conducted in Maarif municipality during the 2024/2025 academic year. The current study primarily focuses on a specific demographic of six primary school EFL teachers as targeted population.

1.3 Research Sample and Sampling Design

This study focuses on primary school EFL teachers within the Maarif municipality. The selection of this specific population is based on the convenience sampling technique due to its practicality. The sample for the questionnaire consists of six (06) teachers, comprising 03 males and 03 females, all of whom are non-native English speakers.

1.4 Research Tools

To carry out this study focused on examining primary school teachers' perceptions and practices regarding game-based language teaching in Algeria, a single research tool was employed: a questionnaire.

1.4.1. The teachers' Questionnaire

A questionnaire is commonly employed to collect information from individuals. It is noteworthy that a questionnaire stands out as one of the most widely utilized methodological tools for gathering valid and reliable data. This tool is purported to provide a rapid and straightforward method for gathering extensive data. This perspective is reinforced by Zoltán (2007), who asserts that “The popularity of questionnaires is due to the fact that they are relatively easy to construct, extremely versatile, and uniquely capable of gathering a large amount of information quickly in a form that is readily processible” (p.101). Questionnaires serve as effective instruments for exploring various research topics. Therefore, it is essential to meticulously plan the approach, considering the timing, sequence, and target sample for their administration.

The aim behind designing the questionnaire in this study is to collect teachers' perceptions about the game-based learning on learning and teaching as well as its practice and implementation.

It is noteworthy that this questionnaire was used for two different purposes within this study. First, it was used at the beginning as strategy to explore teachers' practices of game-based learning as well as to investigate the perceptions of the teachers about using game-based learning among EFL teachers of primary school.

1.4.1.1. Structure of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire is divided into several sections that address different aspects of game-based language teaching:

- ✚ **Demographic Information :** questions 1–3 collect basic information, such : gender, years of EFL teaching experience, and whether the teacher has received any formal training in game-based instruction
- ✚ **Training and Resources:** questions 4–5 explore the types of training received and the resources teachers use to find or create games.
- ✚ **Frequency and Types of Games Used:** questions 6–7 ask: teachers' frequency of using games in their lessons and what types of games they use.
- ✚ **Purpose and Timing of Game Use:** questions 8–10 investigate: time of when games are used in a lesson, in what teaching contexts games are applied, and situations in which games help increase student engagement, such as when students are bored or unmotivated
- **Perceptions of Effectiveness:** questions 11–16 ask for opinions on: whether games can replace traditional methods (like speaking drills), if games are appropriate for teaching specific skills (e.g., writing, vocabulary), the importance of aligning games with cultural context, and when and how games should replace traditional instruction.

- ✚ **Assessment and Challenges:** questions 17–20 examine: assessing the impact of games (e.g., observations, tests, and feedback) and what hinder, and support using games.
- **Beliefs and Attitudes – Likert Scale:** Question 21 presents **22 statements** where teachers rate their agreement using a Likert scale (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree). These statements cover beliefs about: the benefits of games, their alignment with curriculum goals, whether games help develop writing, grammar, or communication skills, and concerns like time consumption, difficulty, or competition stress.

2. Data Analysis and Findings Discussion

In order to attain the necessary data to solve the questions of the current study, all collected data were processed by the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 20 for Microsoft. The analysis of the test was conducted by means of mean, standard deviation.

2.2. Teachers' Questionnaire Analysis

The questionnaire was administered to 06 teachers. It comprises of 21 questions ranging from open-ended to close- ended. This questionnaire aims to explore teachers' perceptions and practices of game-based language teaching. The following table shows the background information of the questionnaire's sample.

Table 01: Background Information of questionnaire's sample

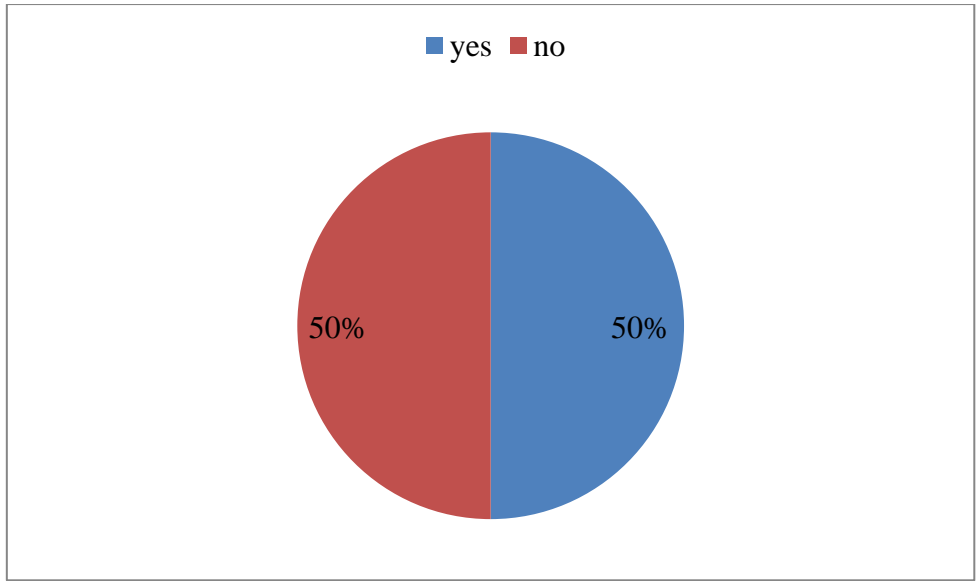
Gender	Males	Frequency	3
		Percentage	50 %
	Females	Frequency	3
		Percentage	50 %
Years of teaching English	1 year	Frequency	1
		Percentage	16.7 %
	2-3 years	Frequency	2
		Percentage	33.3 %
	3> years	Frequency	3
		Percentage	50 %

The table (01) shows that (50 %) of teachers are females, whereas male teachers are (50 %). Furthermore, only one teacher who has one (01) year as experience of teaching English as a foreign language is (16.7 %). Additionally, (33.3 %) of the teachers said that their experience of teaching English is between (02) and (03). And also, three teachers choose the third choice more than three years with (50 %).

The following table and graph represent if participants have *formal training in game-based teaching*:

Table 02: Formal training in game-based teaching

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	3	50 %
No	3	50 %



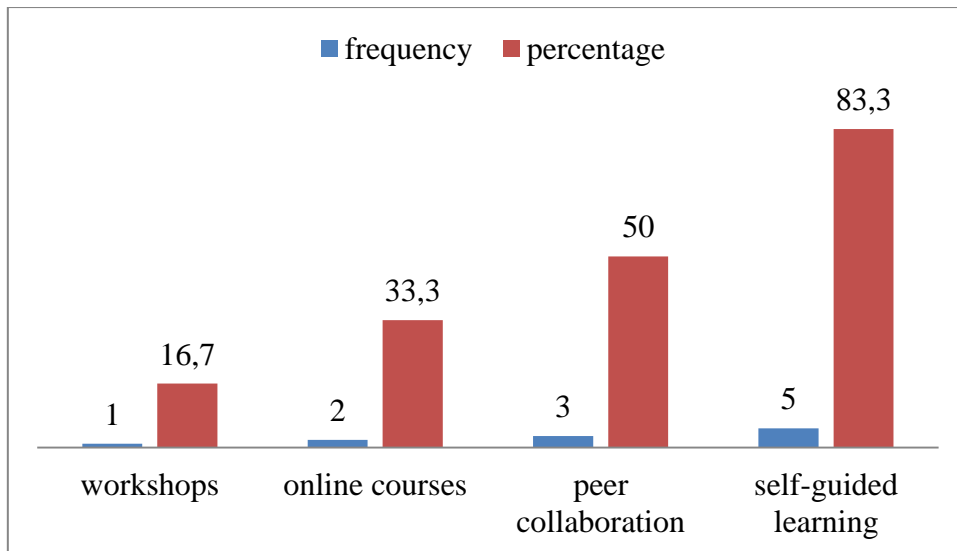
Graph 01: *Formal training in game-based teaching*

Table (02) indicates that 3 teachers (representing **50 %** of the responses) have received formal training on game-based teaching. However, the other 3 teachers (representing **50%** of the responses) said that they have not received any formal training on game-based teaching. All in all, it can be said that the slow implementation of English at the level of primary schools and recruiting small numbers of teachers every year lead to the lack of formal training.

The following table and graph demonstrate of different types of formal training in game-based teaching received

Table 03: *Types of formal training in game-based teaching received*

	Frequency	Percentage
Workshops	1	16,7 %
Online Courses	2	33,3%
Peer Collaboration	3	50%
Self-Guided Learning	5	83,3



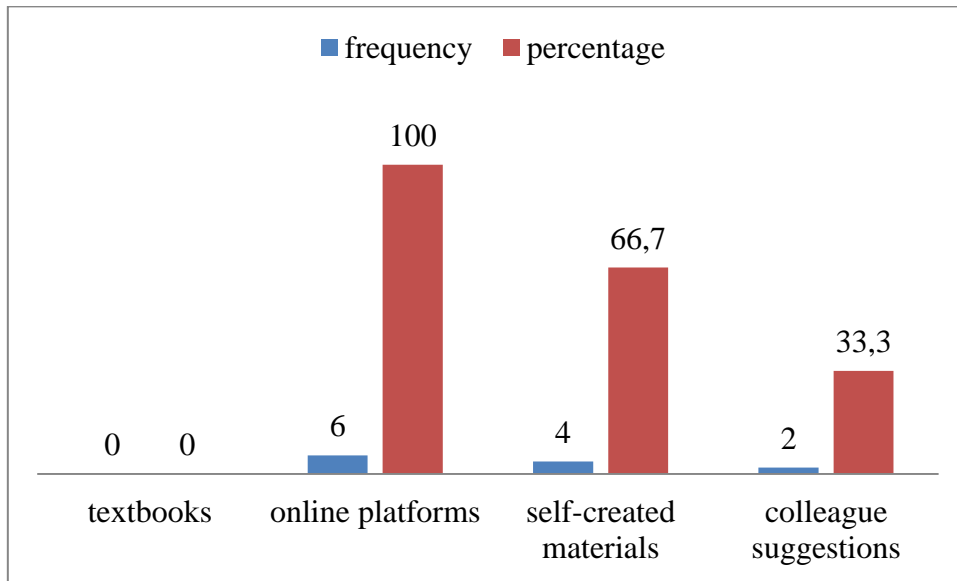
Graph 02: *Types of formal training in game-based teaching received*

Table (03) shows that one teacher (16.7 %) stated that he has received a formal training on game-based learning through workshops. While 33.3 % of teachers said that they have received online courses on game-based learning. Additionally, three participants (50 %) reported that they got assisted by other teachers (peer collaboration). 83.3 % the overwhelming majority of respondents said that they have self-guided learning. Hence, it is observed that most of teachers are significant initiative to the topic of game-based this is due to the lack of formal training.

The following table and graph display the various *Resources used to find learning games*

Table 04: *Resources used to find learning games*

	Frequency	Percentage
Textbooks	0	0%
Online Platforms	6	100%
Self-Created Materials	4	66,7%
Colleague Suggestions	2	33,3



Graph 03: *Resources used to find learning games*

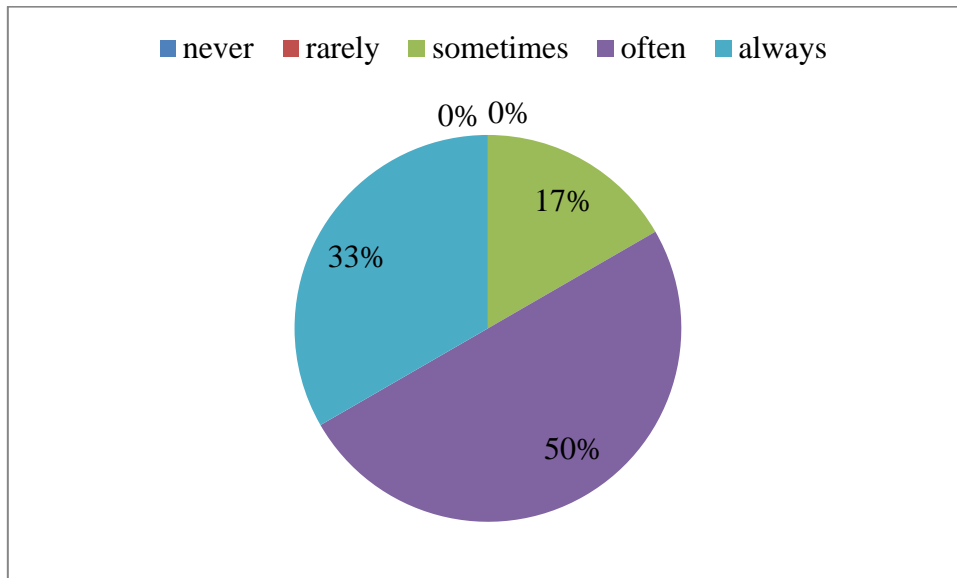
The results, in this item, show that, all teachers said that they don't rely on textbooks as a source of learning games. However, all of them agreed on online platforms as a source of learning games. But, 66.70 % of teachers said that they create their own materials. While, 33,3 % said that they rely on games suggested from colleagues. Therefore, it is seen that online platforms are the primary resource for educators to find learning games. This could reflect teachers' positive accessibility to internet and digital resources.

The following table and graph show the participants' *frequency of game usefulness*

Table 05: *Frequency of game usage*

	Frequency	Percentage
Never	0	0%
Rarely	0	0%
Sometimes	1	17%

Often	3	50%
Always	2	33%



Graph 04: *Frequency of game usage*

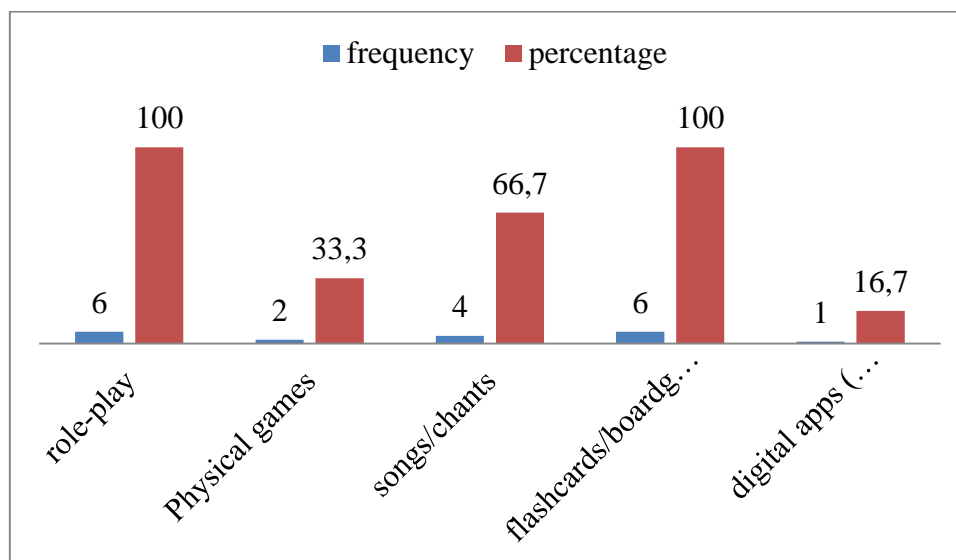
The results obtained show that 17 % of the participants stated that they sometimes use games in the process of teaching. However, 50 % of the teachers said that they often use games. Moreover, 33 % of them said that they always use games when they teach. As result, it can be said that games are a significant part of the pedagogical practices but perhaps not constant in the process of teaching.

The following table and graph represent what games used during the process of teaching

Table 06: *Types of the used games in teaching*

	Frequency	Percentage
Role-Play	6	100%
Physical Games	2	33,3%

Songs/Chants	4	66,7%
Flashcards/Boardgames	6	100%
Digital Apps (Kahoot, Quizlot)	1	16,7%



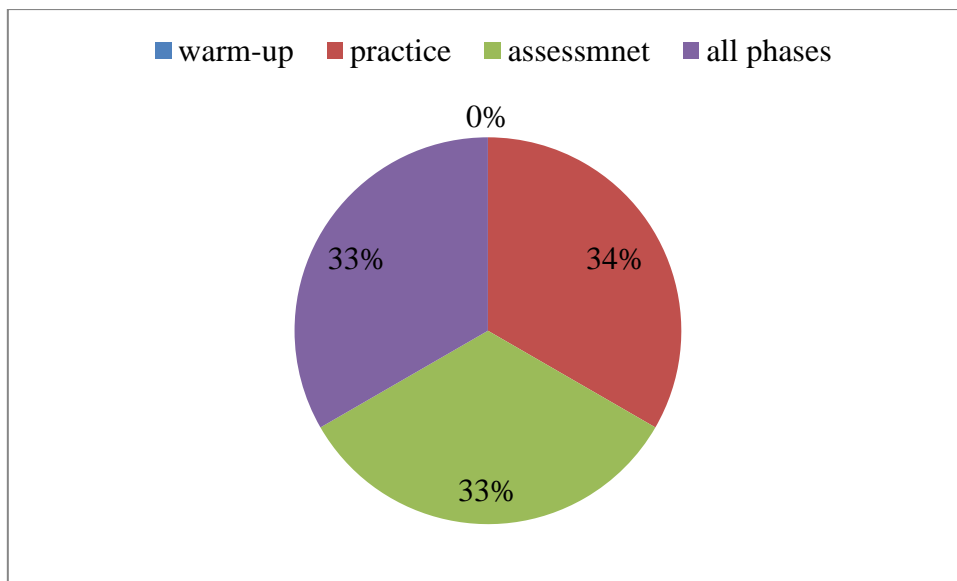
Graph 05: *Types of the used games in teaching*

The displayed data show that all teachers reported using both role-play and flashcards/board games as a type of game in their teaching with 100 %. Moreover, 66.7 % of the respondents incorporate songs and chants as games. However, two respondents with 33.3 % use physical games. Only one respondent reported using digital apps like Kahoot or Quizlet as learning games with 16.7 % which is the least frequently used type among the options. Thus, all the teachers agreed that role-play, flashcards, and board games are the most significant types used by them which show the preference for active learning strategies and traditional game formats.

The following table and graph show teachers' timing of integrating games in the classroom

Table 07: *Timing of game integration during sessions*

	Frequency	Percentage
Warm-Up	0	0%
Practice	2	33,3%
Assessmnet	2	33,3%
All Phases	2	33,3%



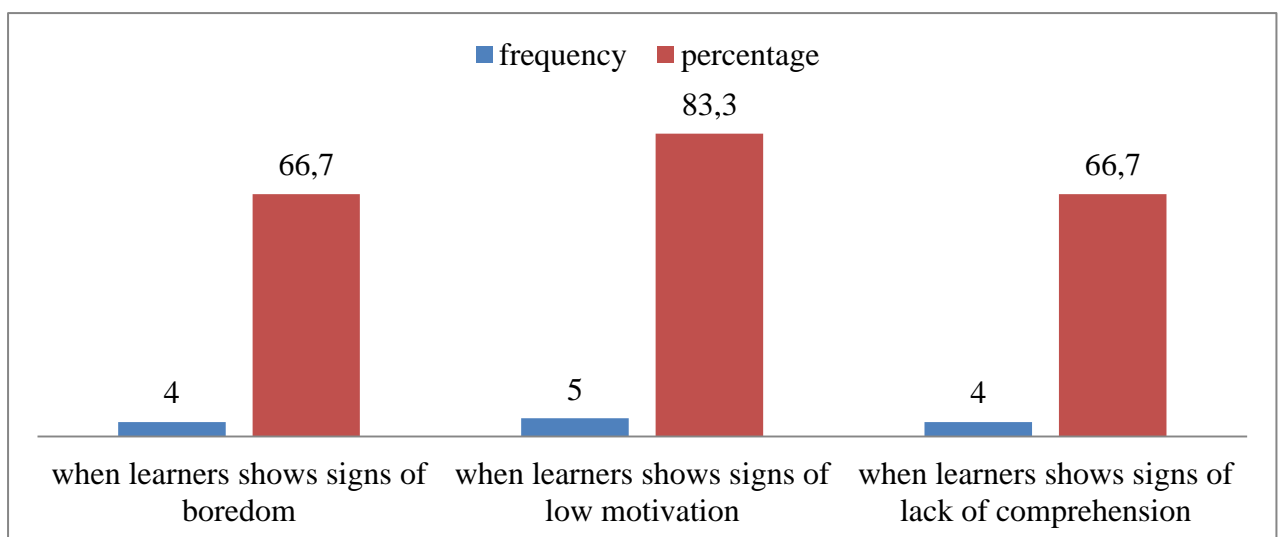
Graph 06: *Timing of game integration during sessions*

The data show that all the respondents reported that they don't use games specifically during the warm-up phase. Whereas, two teachers (33.3%) stated that they integrate games during the practice phase. While 33.3% of them said that they use games as part of their assessment strategies. The remaining of the teachers reported that they integrate games across all phases of their sessions. Therefore, it is observed that teachers integrate games during the practice and assessment phases this indicates that teachers may consider games as tools to reinforce learning and evaluate understanding.

The following table and graph represent the different circumstances in which games enhance pupils' engagement

Table 08: *Circumstances in which games enhance pupils' engagement*

	Frequency	Percentage
When learners shows signs of boredom	4	66,7%
When learners shows signs of low motivation	5	83,3%
When learners shows signs of lack of comprehension	4	66,7%



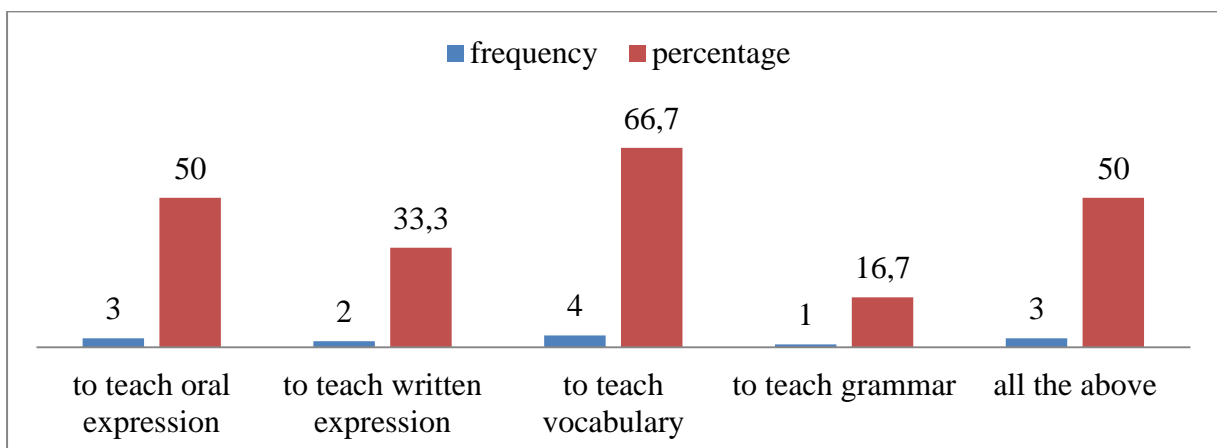
Graph 07: *Circumstances in which games enhance pupils' engagement*

The results obtained show that 66.7% of the participants stated that games enhance engagement when learners are showing signs of boredom. Furthermore, 83.3% of the participants said that games enhance engagement when learners are showing signs of low motivation. This is the most frequently selected circumstance. And, 66.7% of the participants reported that games enhance engagement when learners are showing signs of a lack of comprehension. As result, it can be said that games are highly effective to enhance and raise engagement when learners feel demotivated, bored or struggling with comprehension

The following table and graph demonstrate the purpose of using games during teaching

Table 09: *Timing and purpose of game use*

	Frequency	Percentage
To teach oral expression	3	50%
To teach written expression	2	33,3%
To teach vocabulary	4	83,3%
To teach grammar	1	16,7%
All the above	3	50%



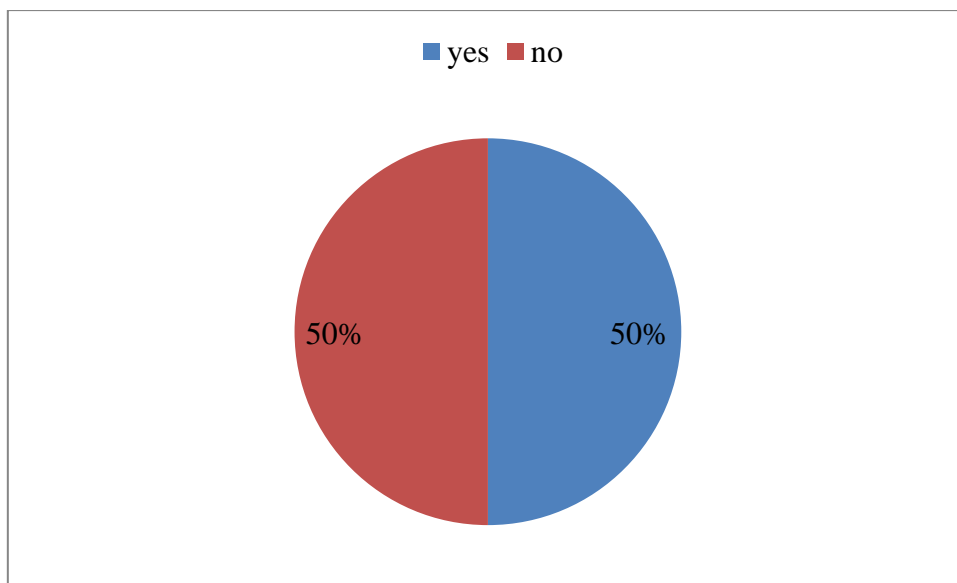
Graph 08: *Timing and purpose of game use*

The results obtained show that three out of the six respondents with 50% said that they use games to teach oral expression. While, 33.3 % of the respondents said that they use games to teach written expression. Moreover, 83.3% of the teachers agreed on using games to teach vocabulary. 50 % of the respondents stated that they teach oral expression, written expression, vocabulary, and grammar through using games. And, only one respondent with 16.7% uses games to teach grammar. All in all, it is observed that most of teachers agree that using games is the best way to teach both vocabulary and oral expression.

The following table and graph a comparison between the effectiveness of games and traditional speaking exercises

Table 10: *Effectiveness of games compared to traditional speaking exercises*

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	3	50%
No	3	50%



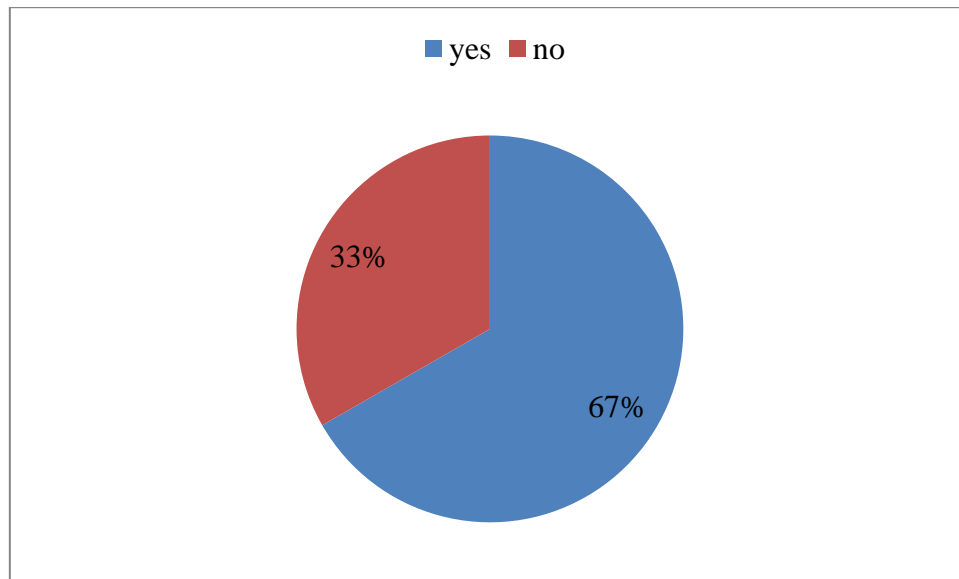
Graph 09: *Effectiveness of games compared to traditional speaking exercises*

In this item, the participants were asked if games replace traditional speaking drills in teaching oral expression. 3 teachers (representing **50%** of the responses) said yes; whereas the rest of them **50%** said no. Consequently, teachers consider games and traditional speaking drills as ways to teach oral expression.

The following table and graph show *Suitability of competitive games for oral practice*

Table 11: Suitability of competitive games for oral practice

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	4	66,7%
No	2	33,3%



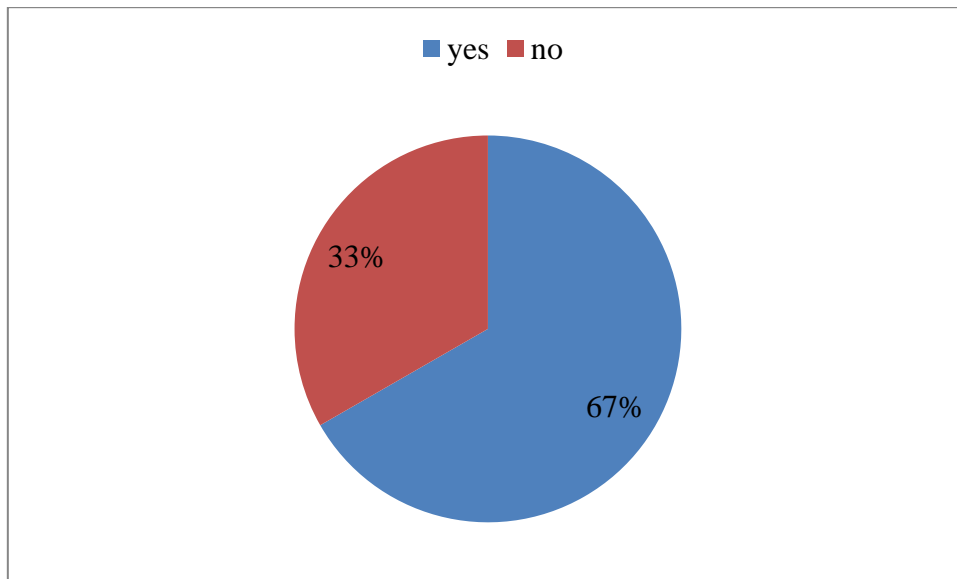
Graph 10: Suitability of competitive games for oral practice

In this item, the participants were asked if they think that competitive games appropriate for oral practice. The majority of the participants with 67 % said yes; while the remaining of them 33 % said no. Overall, it is quite clear that competitive games are appropriate for oral practice because competitive games encourage and motivate learners to speak more.

The following table and graph show the effectiveness of game-based learning on pupils' writing style improvement

Table 12: *Impact of game-based learning on pupils' writing style improvement*

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	04	66,7%
No	02	33,3%



Graph 11: *Impact of game-based learning on pupils' writing style improvement*

In this item, the participants were asked if they games scaffold learners to enhance their writing style. The majority of the participants with 67 % said yes; while the remaining of them 33 % said no. All in all, it is noticeable that most of the respondents agree that games have a crucial role in scaffolding learners to improve their writing style

Q14/ The effectiveness of games on vocabulary memorization

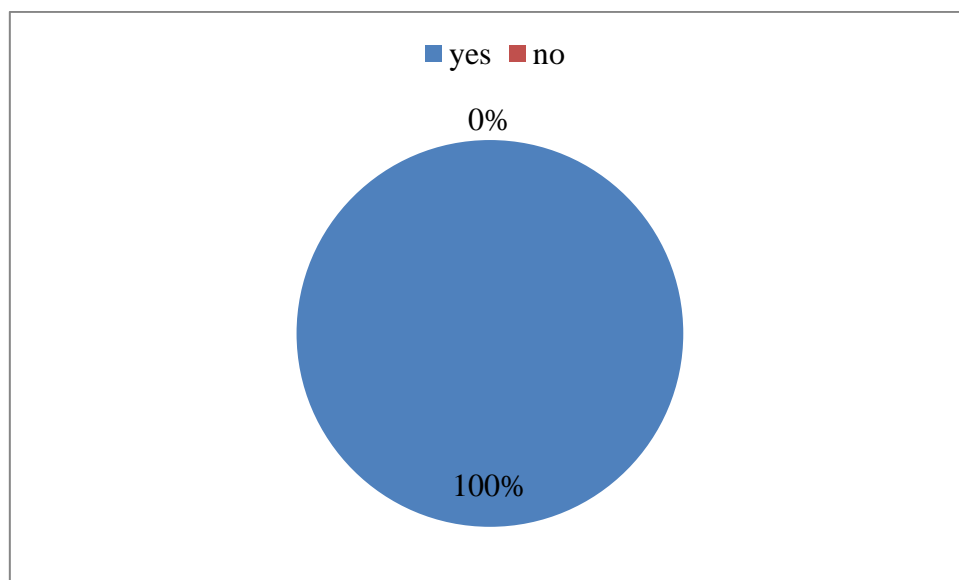
All teachers stated that games have a great extent in the contribution in memorizing vocabulary “To a great extent, highly effective, a lot”. One teacher said choosing the best game can contribute to good comprehension of the topic “Teachers should select the appropriate games for the session will ultimately lead to a better understanding of the topic”.

Furthermore, educators believe that games seek to foster the establishment of a strong linguistic foundation and contribute to vocabulary memorization because they make learning enjoyable, raise motivation, and provide meaningful repetition. While another teacher seem to believe that games may not replace traditional methods entirely, they may enhance engagement and improve long-term retention, especially for pupils.

The following table and graph show the necessity of relationship between games and cultural context

Table 13: *The Importance of relevance between games and cultural context*

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	6	100%
No	00	0%



Graph 12: *The Importance of relevance between games and cultural context*

Table 13 shows that all teachers with 100% said ‘Yes’. Overall, it is noticeable that all teachers have high familiarity and significant awareness of the necessity of cultural relevance to education.

Q16/ Situations where games can replace traditional instruction

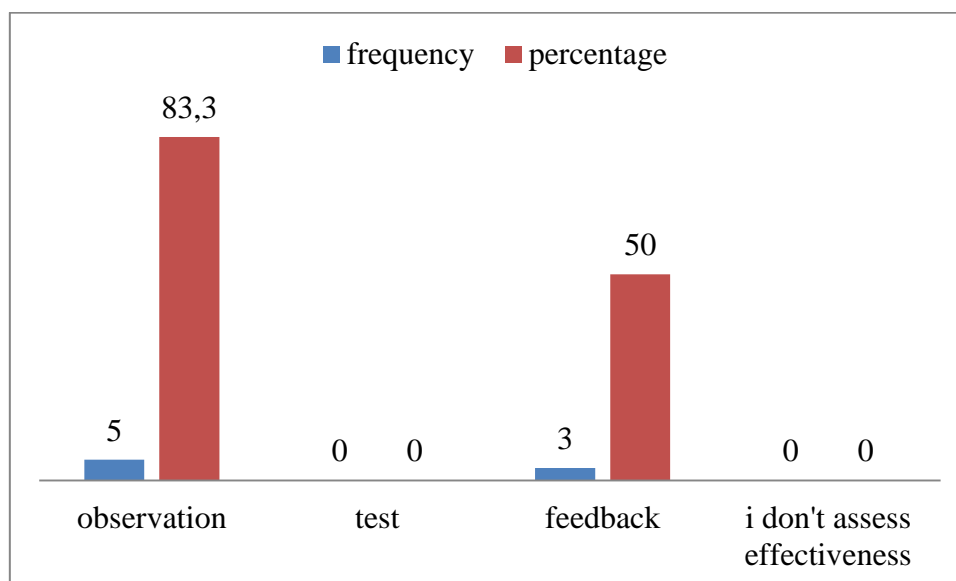
Teachers were highly engaged to this question. Two teachers pointed that games should not completely replace traditional instruction but can be used effectively to support it. Additionally, one teacher stated that games can replace depending on learners’ styles “I think that it can replace it when we find that the majority of the learners are engaged, with their styles and strategies”. And also, two teachers agreed that games should replace traditional instruction when learners lose their attention “when the teacher feels that his students are less interested in the lesson, the usage of games could be a very successful solution to regain his learners’ attention”, motivation, and or when the instruction is hard to comprehend “when teaching a complex topic, when motivation is absent, when practical exercise is absent....etc”. Ultimately, the last teacher stated that “Modern era requires modern tools like games”, this is may be due its significant use for reinforcing learning, increasing motivation, engaging young learners, and promoting participation “used strategically, games make lessons more interactive and memorable.

The following table and graph show how to assess the impact of using games

Table 14: *Methods for assessing the effectiveness of using games*

	Frequency	Percentage
Observation	5	83,3%
Test	0	0%
Feedback	3	50%

I don't assess effectiveness	0	0%
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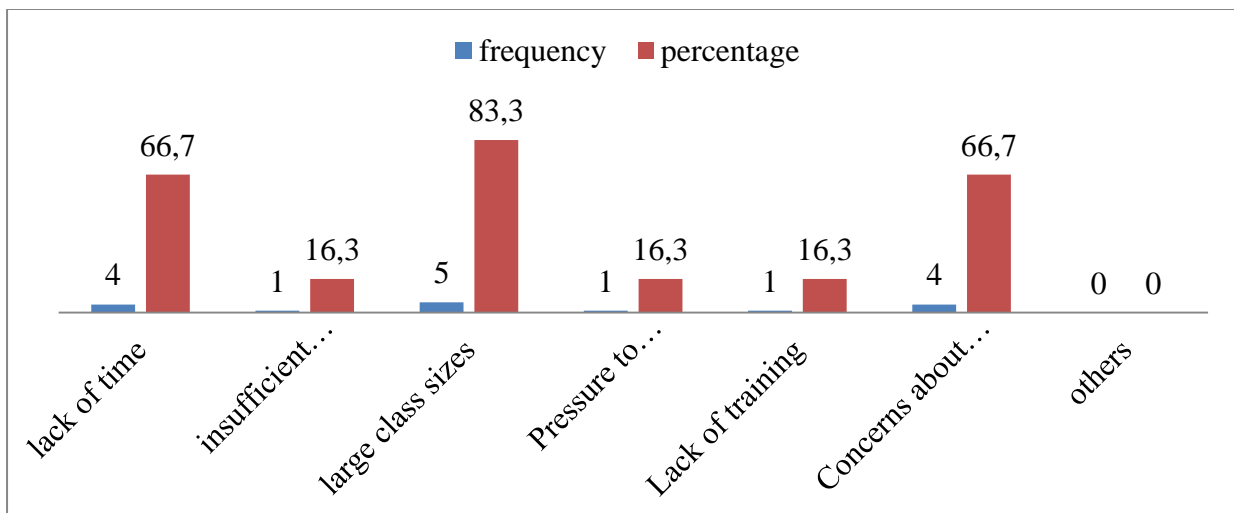
Graph 13: *Methods for assessing the effectiveness of using games*

The results obtained show that all teachers assess the effectiveness of using games whether through observation (83.3% the vast majority of respondents) or through feedback (50 % of respondents). Results also show that none of teacher assesses the effectiveness of using games through tests. Consequently, it is observed that the overwhelming of teachers rely on observation as tool of assessing the effectiveness of games this may indicate that they observing pupils' engagement during the lesson.

The following table and graph represent the factors that hinder the use of games in the classroom

Table 15: Factors limiting game use

	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of time	4	66,7%
Insufficient resources	1	16,3%
Large class sizes	5	83,3%
Pressure to follow a rigid curriculum	1	16,3%
Lack of training	1	16,3%
Concerns about noise/disruption	4	66,7%
Others	0	0%



Graph 14: Factors limiting game use

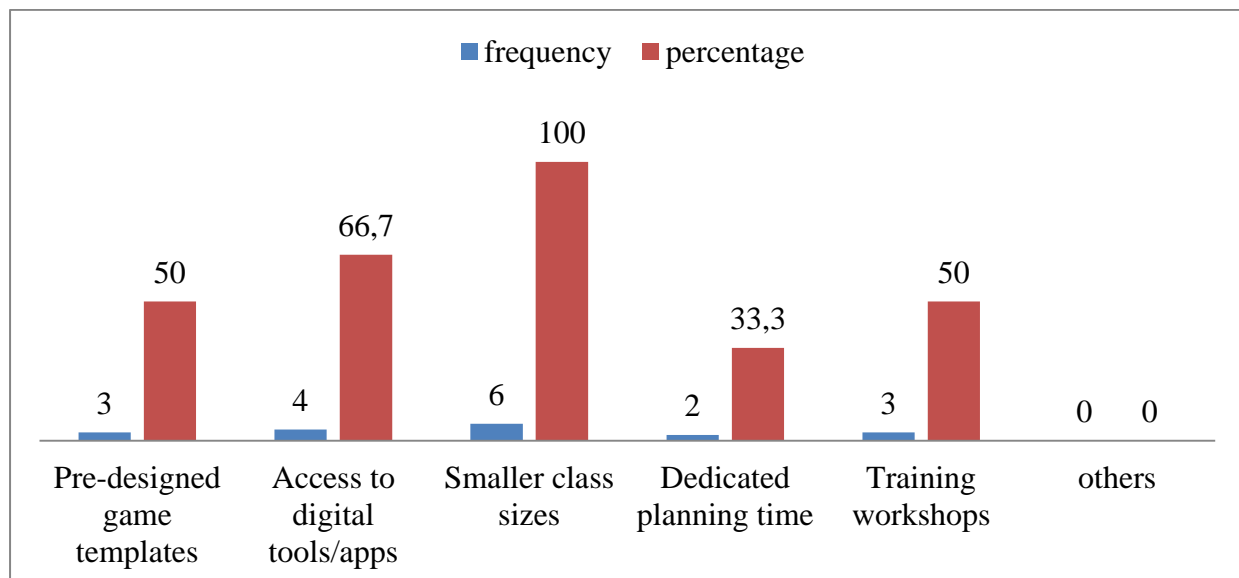
The results obtained show that four teachers reported that both lack of time and concerns about noise/disruption are limiting factors for the game use with 66.7% for each. Whereas, 83.3% the overwhelming majority of respondents (five out of six) indicated that large class sizes limit their game use. Additionally, one respondent cited insufficient resources as a limitation, one respondent felt limited by the pressure to adhere to a rigid curriculum, and one out of the six respondents identified a lack of training as a limiting factor

(with 16,7 % for each). Overall, it can said be that the vast majority of teachers consider large class sizes as the primary obstacle and the most significant limiting factor.

The following table and graph show the factors that encourage the use of games in the classroom

Table 16: Factors supporting game use

	Frequency	Percentage
Pre-designed game templates	3	66,7%
Access to digital tools/apps	4	16,3%
Smaller class sizes	6	83,3%
Dedicated planning time	2	16,3%
Training workshops	3	16,3%
Others	0	0%



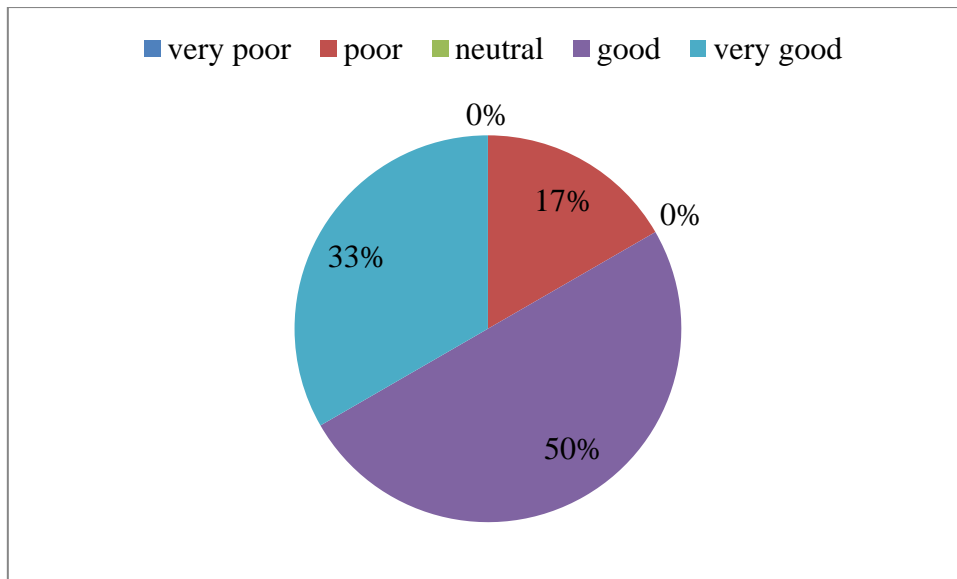
Graph 15: Factors supporting game use

The results obtained show that 66.7% of teachers indicated that pre-designed game templates would help them use games more for each. Whereas, 83.3% the majority of respondents (five out of six) believe that smaller class sizes would enable them to use games more. In addition, (33.3%) Two out of the six respondents would be helped by having dedicated planning time for game-based learning. Also, one respondent mentioned that access to digital tools would be helpful and another respondents indicated that training workshops would support increased game use (with 16,7 % for each). Overall, it can be said that the overwhelming majority of teachers identify smaller class sizes as the most significant factor that would help educators to use games more.

The following table and graph display the accessibility to game materials for learning

Table 17: *Availability of game materials for learning*

	Frequency	Percentage
Very poor	0	0%
Poor	1	16,7%
Neutral	0	0%
Good	3	50%
Very good	2	33,3%



Graph 16: *Availability of game materials for learning*

The obtained results show that only one respondent rated their access to game materials as poor with 16.7%. Furthermore, the half of teachers with 50 % rated their access to game materials as good. While the rest of them (two teachers) rated their access to game materials as very good with 33.3 %. Thus, it can be said that most of teachers have a positive access to game materials.

The following table demonstrates descriptive statistics for teachers' perceptions on game-based. This question is composed of 22 items. Positive items rated (from Strongly Agree= 5 to Strongly Disagree= 1) while negative items rated (from Strongly Agree= 1 to Strongly Disagree= 5).

Table 18: *Teachers' perceptions on game-based*

Items	Mean	Std.D
01 I believe GBL can be highly effective in simplifying concepts for primary school pupils	4,6667	,51640
02 I believe games are more effective for younger learners.	4,6667	,51640

03	I believe games make language learning more enjoyable for pupils.	4,6667	,51640
04	I believe games reduce anxiety in shy pupils	4,6667	,51640
05	I believe games minimize boredom	4,8333	,40825
06	I believe games maximize motivation.	4,6667	,51640
07	I feel competition might intimidate beginners or cause frustration.	2,8333	,98319
08	I think developing games in instruction is difficult	3,6667	,51640
09	I think GBL is not effective in primary instruction	1,3333	,51640
10	I think games are time consuming to implement in primary instruction	1,5000	,54772
11	I think I can use GBL in any phase of the instructional process	3,5000	1,0488
12	I fee GBL is an effective strategy for assessing primary pupils skills	2,8333	2,0412
13	I feel GBL is an encourages self-feedback	3,6667	1,0328
14	I think games enhance primary school pupils' engagement.	4,5000	,54772
15	I think games align well with curriculum goals.	3,8333	,75277
16	I believe games simplify complex grammar rules	3,5000	1,3784
17	I think games are very helpful for kinaesthetic pupils	4,5000	,54772
18	I believe games help pupils to memorize new words	4,6667	,51640
19	I believe games encourages collaborative writing	3,8333	1,1690
20	I feel adequately trained to use games in EFL instruction.	4,1667	,75277
21	Games help pupils develop communication skills	4,6667	,51640
22	I think games simulate real-world scenarios	4,5000	,54772

The data presents a comprehensive view of teachers' perceptions on game-based learning (GBL) in primary education, with mean scores and standard deviations providing valuable insights. Overall, teachers demonstrate a highly positive attitude towards GBL, as evidenced by the numerous items with mean scores of 4.5 and above on what appear to be a 5-point scale. Teachers strongly believe that games minimize boredom (highest mean of 4.8333), make learning enjoyable, are effective for younger learners, simplify concepts, reduce anxiety, maximize motivation, aid in memorization, and develop communication skills. They also perceive games as effective in enhancing engagement and simulating real-world scenarios. The relatively low standard deviations (mostly around 0.5) for these high-scoring items suggest a strong consensus among teachers on these positive aspects of GBL.

Moderate mean scores (3.5 to 4.4) are observed for items related to teachers' preparedness, alignment with curriculum goals, and encouraging collaborative writing. Interestingly, while teachers feel adequately trained to use games in EFL instruction (mean 4.1667), they also find developing games somewhat difficult (mean 3.6667). Lower mean scores (below 3.5) are seen for items about using GBL in any phase of instruction and simplifying complex grammar rules, indicating areas where teachers are less certain about GBL's effectiveness.

Notably, teachers strongly disagree with negative statements about GBL, such as it being ineffective or time-consuming in primary instruction, as evidenced by the lowest mean scores of 1.3333 and 1.5000 respectively. However, there is more variation in opinions regarding GBL's effectiveness for assessment and its potential to intimidate beginners through competition, as indicated by lower means and higher standard deviations for these items. The particularly high standard deviation (2.0412) for the assessment-related item suggests a significant divide in teachers' views on this aspect of

GBL. This analysis reveals that while teachers generally view GBL very positively for engagement and learning, there are still some areas of uncertainty, particularly regarding assessment and universal application across all instructional phases.

3. Discussions of the Findings

The integration of game-based learning (GBL) in primary education, particularly for teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL), has garnered significant attention due to its potential to enhance engagement, motivation, and retention. The presented study explores teachers' perceptions of GBL, revealing both its benefits and challenges. It discusses these findings in the context of previous research, highlighting how GBL aligns with modern pedagogical strategies while addressing implementation barriers.

Furthermore, one of the most consistent findings in the study is that teachers perceive games as highly effective in minimizing boredom and increasing student engagement. The highest mean score (4.8333 on a 5-point scale) indicates strong agreement that games make learning enjoyable and reduce anxiety. Similarly, Plass et al. (2015), who argued that well-designed educational games stimulate intrinsic motivation by combining challenge, curiosity, and reward that, enhance attention and retention. Teachers in the research overwhelmingly reported that GBL significantly improves student engagement, with competitive games being particularly effective (mean score: 4.83/5). Also this aligns with Hamari et al. (2016), whose meta-analysis of 39 studies found that game-based approaches increase motivation and engagement by 12% compared to traditional methods.

Additionally, the study highlights that competitive games are particularly effective for oral practice, as they encourage participation and reduce fear of mistakes. Previous studies, such as DeHaan's (2011) research on language acquisition, found that competition in games fosters active communication, supporting the present findings.

Despite the positive reception of GBL, the study identifies a critical issue: the lack of formal teacher training. Many educators rely on online platforms and self-initiated learning, rather than structured professional development. This finding echoes Hussain et al. (2020), who noted that insufficient training leads to inconsistent implementation of GBL strategies.

Moreover, while teachers report feeling confident in using games, they find game development challenging (mean score: 3.6667). This suggests a need for workshops or curriculum-integrated training programs, as recommended by Whitton (2012). Without proper support, teachers may struggle to design pedagogically effective games, limiting GBL's full potential.

The study reveals that teachers favor traditional game formats such as role-play, flashcards, and board games. These methods align with active learning principles, reinforcing vocabulary and oral skills through repetition and interaction. Prensky (2021) argued that traditional games remain popular due to their simplicity and proven effectiveness, which supports the current findings. All participating teachers agreed that GBL contributes "to a great extent" in vocabulary memorization through meaningful repetition. And also, this corroborates Psothka's (2013) research on vocabulary learning, which found that spaced repetition through games leads to better long-term retention than rote memorization. Additionally, Hwang et al. (2012) showed that game-enhanced vocabulary learning resulted in 23% better test scores than conventional methods.

However, while games are frequently used in practice and assessment phases, they are not consistently applied across all lessons. This suggests that teachers view games as supplementary tools rather than core instructional methods a perspective that aligns with Egenfeldt-Nielsen's (2007) caution against over-reliance on GBL at the expense of foundational teaching.

A significant obstacle identified in the study is large class sizes, which hinder effective GBL implementation. Teachers emphasized that smaller groups would facilitate better engagement a finding supported by Butler et al. (2014), who noted that overcrowded classrooms reduce interactivity and individualized learning. Moreover, Teachers identified large class sizes and lack of training as primary barriers to GBL implementation. These challenges mirror those identified by Boyle et al. (2016), whose systematic review found that 68% of teachers faced difficulties adapting games to large classrooms. Similarly, Whitton's (2018) work highlighted the training gap, showing that only 31% of teachers received formal GBL instruction.

Another challenge is assessment. Most teachers rely on observation to gauge game effectiveness, which lacks objectivity. Shute & Ke (2012) proposed embedded assessments (e.g., in-game analytics) as a more systematic approach. Without formal evaluation tools, assessing long-term learning gains remains difficult.

Ultimately, the study confirms that GBL is a valuable pedagogical tool, enhancing motivation, engagement, and retention in EFL classrooms. However, challenges such as insufficient teacher training, large class sizes, and assessment limitations must be addressed for broader adoption. While games cannot replace traditional instruction entirely, their strategic use can transform language learning into a more dynamic and enjoyable experience.

Conclusion

In sum, the idea of integrating game-based learning EFL classrooms is considered new in the field of EFL/ ESL. For this reason, the researcher chooses to undertake the descriptive research. The descriptive research is used to explore and define the phenomenon and to undertake a better understanding on the integration of game based learning in EFL classrooms. Data has been gathered, analyzed, described, compared and finally summarized to draw out teachers' perceptions concerning the integration of game based learning in EFL classrooms

General Conclusion

Game-based learning is a valuable tool for children's growth, as it allows for initiative, engagement, creativity, and sociability. It aids in the development of social skills, increases motivation to study, and enhances language and numeracy abilities. Playing helps children with problem-solving skills, emotion regulation, creativity, decision-making, and teamwork, resilience, sharing, and socializing in small and large groups. Early primary grades, defined as children aged 6 to 8, can be transformed by game-based learning techniques, improving learning motivation and outcomes. Teachers' attitudes towards game-based approaches are shaped by their knowledge, comprehension, and interpretation of how game-based approaches help children's learning. Teachers play a critical role in children's lives, serving as protectors, caregivers, and companions from kindergarten. Their attitude and conduct significantly impact a child's lifelong learning. Primary education is the breeding ground for future leaders, intellectuals, and inventors, and children begin their academic careers with both anxiety and joy.

In order to achieve the purpose of the research, the present study adopts a descriptive research approach using a questionnaire to investigate teachers' views and perceptions regarding game-based language. The study results claim that teachers believe that GBL positively impacts student engagement and motivation, making learning more enjoyable and reducing anxiety. Competitive games are particularly effective in promoting oral practice and vocabulary acquisition. However, challenges such as lack of formal training, demanding game development, logistical difficulties, and a lack of objectivity and consistency in assessing game effectiveness hinder its widespread adoption. Traditional activities like role-play, flashcards, and board games are preferred, but are not routinely integrated into lessons. To overcome these challenges, targeted training, institutional support, and improved assessment practices are needed. Despite these challenges, GBL remains a valuable pedagogical approach in EFL classrooms.

Limitations:

Despite the value of the findings, this study is subject to several limitations that must be acknowledged:

The study involved only six EFL teachers from primary school in the Maarif municipality. Although rich insights were obtained, the small sample restricts the generalizability of the findings to broader contexts across Algeria.

Recommendations:

A number of recommendations proposed on the basis of the findings of the present study:

- Teachers' training on game –based learning for early primary grade children is required, continuous training supervised by inspectors in the form of seminars and workshops in which game-based instruction is emphasized.
- Existing curriculum needs to be reviewed to incorporate game –based learning (curriculum updates).
- Policies need to be reviewed to ensure implementation of inclusion of game –based learning.
- Further research needs to be carried out on a larger scale to see a nationwide perspective (especially longitudinal ones on how such methods affect teacher and learner growth over time.)

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Appendices

Appendix 01: Teachers' Questionnaire

EFL Teachers' Perceptions and Practices of Game-Based Language Teaching

You are kindly invited to answer the following questionnaire that is a part of Master dissertation research. The questionnaire aims at investigating EFL Teachers' Perceptions and Practices of Game-Based Language Teaching. Would you please fill the attached questionnaire carefully? Your responses are very important for the success of this study. Your responses will be kept confidential. Thank you in advance.

1- Gender*

Male

Female

2- Years of EFL Teaching Experience*

1 year

1-2 years

3=> years

3- Have you received formal training on game-based teaching?*

Yes

No

4- If yes, what type? (You can select more than one)*

- Workshops
- Online courses
- Peer collaboration
- Self-guided learning

5- What resources do you use to find the learning games? (You can select more than one) *

- Textbooks
- Online platforms
- Self-created materials
- Colleague suggestions

6- How often do you use games?*

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

7- Types used (You can select more than one): *

- Role-play
- Physical games

Songs/Chants

Flashcards/Board games

Digital apps (e.g., Kahoot, Quizlet)

8- When do you Integrate games in your session?*

Warm-up

Practice

Assessment

All phases

9- Under what circumstances do games enhance engagement?(You can select more than one)*

When learners show signs of boredom

When learners show signs of low motivation.

When learners show signs of lack of comprehension

10- When do you use games(You can select more than one)?*

To teach oral expression

To teach written expression

To teach vocabulary

To teach grammar

All the above

11- Do games replace traditional speaking drills in teaching oral expression?*

Yes

No

12- Do you think that competitive games appropriate for oral practice?*

Yes

No

13- Do games scaffold learners to enhance their writing style?*

Yes

No

14- To what extent games contribute in memorizing more vocabulary? *

.....
.....

15- Do you games should align with the cultural context?*

Yes

No

16- When should games replace traditional instruction*

.....
.....

17- How do you assess effectiveness of using games?*

Observations

Tests

Feedback

I do not assess effectiveness

Other:.....

18- Factors Limiting Game Use (You can select more than one): *

Lack of time

Insufficient resources

Large class sizes

Pressure to follow a rigid curriculum

Lack of training

Concerns about noise/disruption

Other:.....

19- What support would help you use games more? (You can select more than one): *

Pre-designed game templates

Access to digital tools/apps

Smaller class sizes

Dedicated planning time

Training workshops

Other:.....

20- How would you rate your access to game materials? *

Very poor

Poor

Neutral

Good

Very good

21- Rate your agreement (S.D = Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, N=Neutral, A= Agree, S.A = Strongly Agree)

Phrases		S.D	D	N	A	S.A
01	I believe GBL can be highly effective in simplifying concepts for primary school pupils					
02	I believe games are more effective for younger learners.					
03	I believe games make language learning more enjoyable for pupils.					
04	I believe games reduce anxiety in shy pupils					
05	I believe games minimize boredom					
06	I believe games maximize motivation.					
07	I feel competition might intimidate beginners or cause frustration.					
08	I think developing games in instruction is difficult					
09	I think GBL is not effective in primary instruction					

10	I think games are time consuming to implement in primary instruction					
11	I think I can use GBL in any phase of the instructional process					
12	I fee GBL is an effective strategy for assessing primary pupils skills					
13	I fee GBL is an encourages self-feedback					
14	I think games enhance primary school pupils' engagement.					
15	I think games align well with curriculum goals.					
16	I believe games simplify complex grammar rules					
17	I think games are very helpful for kinaesthetic pupils					
18	I believe games help pupils to memorize new words					
19	I believe games encourages collaborative writing					
20	I feel adequately trained to use games in EFL instruction.					
21	Games help pupils develop communication skills					
22	I think games simulate real-world scenarios					

الملخص:

يُعد التعلم القائم على الألعاب استراتيجية تعليمية تستغل قوة الألعاب الكامنة لتحديد الأهداف التعليمية وتعزيزها. تهدف الدراسة إلى استكشاف تصورات المعلمين حول التعلم القائم على الألعاب في مجال التعلم والتعليم، بالإضافة إلى ممارسته وتطبيقه في المدارس الابتدائية ببلدية المعاريف بالجزائر. وقد اعتمدت الدراسة الحالية منهجًا بحثيًا وصفيًا، واستخدمت استنباطًا لجمع البيانات. تكونت عينة الدراسة من ستة أساتذة لتعليم لغة الإنجليزية. وكشفت النتائج أن المعلمين يعتقدون أن التعلم القائم على الألعاب يحسن مشاركة الطلاب ودوافعهم، مما يجعل التعلم ممتعًا ويقلل من القلق. كما يفترض المعلمون أن الألعاب التنافسية فعالة بشكل خاص للممارسة الشفهية واكتساب المفردات. ومع ذلك، قد يواجه المعلمون العديد من التحديات، بما في ذلك نقص التدريب الرسمي، والصعوبات اللوجستية، وعدم اتساق ممارسات التقييم.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التعلم القائم على الألعاب، تعليم وتعلم اللغات، التلاميذ الطور الابتدائي، الألعاب.