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**FACULTY OF LETTERS AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

# **MASTER THESIS**

Letters and Foreign Languages

English Language

Language Sciences

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**The Effect of Using Educational Games to Improve Learners' Vocabulary:**

**Case of Second Year pupils at Chikh Saleh Massaoudi Middle School, Biskra.**

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**A dissertation submitted to the department of foreign languages in partial Fulfillment  
for the requirement of master degree in science of language**

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**Academic year: 2020/2021**

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# *Dedication*

*I dedicate this work to:*

*My source of happiness and inspiration, my parents, for their understanding,*

*unconditional love, and support,*

*My brothers and sisters for their encouragement and help from the very first*

*beginning of this journey,*

*My precious angel, K.T, who has always been by my side and who has*

*always shown me love and support; who believed in me when no one else did,*

*My cousin, Dounia, for all the support and her kind words,*

*My nephews, Yasser and Ahmed, who have brought us endless joy and*

*happiness.*

## Acknowledgement

All great abundant thanks to the Glorious Almighty Allah, who guided me and granted me the strength and patience to finish this work.

All the sincere gratitude and appreciation to my supervisor **Dr. TRIKI Manel** for her help, precious bits of advice, patience, encouragement, and kindness.

I would like to thank the members of the board of examiners **Dr. TURQUI Barket** and **Miss GHANAI Mariem** for devoting the time to read and evaluate this work.

I deeply thank **Mr. BOUSSELAOUI Hani** for his valuable pieces of advice and help. Thank you so much for everything you have done for me.

I truly thank my friends, **Rania, Nour, Yasmine, Saida** for their endless support and encouragement.

I frankly thank all the teachers and learners who participated in completing their roles and for the help to get this work done.

Thank you to everyone who contributed in the achievement of this research work.

### **Abstract**

The majority of English learners face some challenges learning vocabulary, as it is considered ambiguous and difficult for them. Hence, the present study aims at investigating the effectiveness of educational games on improving and enhancing learners' vocabulary, boost foreign language learners' awareness towards the significance of vocabulary learning, and highlights the importance of using educational games as a beneficial technique in learning vocabulary. To confirm the two research hypotheses, which claimed that pupils' vocabulary will be enhanced if educational games are continually used and that the pupils will acquire and memorize vocabulary easily if entertaining games are used; a descriptive study was conducted using three data collection tools, a questionnaire for two (02) teachers who voluntary contributed, a classroom observation to study the pupils' attitude and investigate the time management, in addition to an interview for the learners (20) who were randomly selected. Moreover, the obtained findings revealed that educational games are a beneficial technique to enhance learners' vocabulary as it helps to facilitate the learning and memorization; hence, the hypotheses were confirmed.

**Key Words:** Educational games – vocabulary – foreign language learners – English learners – vocabulary teaching and learning – memorization.



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### **List of Abbreviation**

**ACCESS:** Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**ELL:** English Language Learners

**ESOL:** English to Speakers of Other Languages

**Etc:** Et Cetera

**P:** Productive knowledge

**R:** Receptive knowledge

**RH:** Research Hypothesis

**RQ:** Research Question

## **General Introduction**

Vocabulary is an essential part in learning English language. However, it can be a very hard task for some learners. Learners face difficulties trying to memorize new words and the blame refers to the methods used; most of the techniques teachers use in schools are the same, tedious, and not helpful for all the learners; for example, giving pupils a long list of words to memorize by heart, relying on dictionaries, or using long explanation which most of the learners are not interested in, etc. For this reason, teachers have to vary techniques to use when introducing new terms to the pupils in order to facilitate and motivate them in learning vocabulary.

Different studies show that games can be helpful for vocabulary learning because they encourage learners to interact more, enhance their motivation which leads them to memorize unconsciously.

Shabaneh and Farrah (2019) examined the effect of games on vocabulary retention. The study aim is to figure out the efficiency of using games inside the classrooms. They randomly chose twenty pupils to participate in the study, ten males and ten females, from the third and fourth grades of Dar-Assalam school in Palestine. To conduct the study they used the pretest and posttest for each grade. The study took place every Saturday for two months during the first semester. By the observation of the researchers and the analysis of the pretest and posttest, they found that learners liked activities that include physical movements. Games motivate learners to learn and participate; they also enhance team spirit so they help to develop their communicative skills too.

Moreover, Benoit (2017) conducted a quasi-experimental study that focused on the effect of games-based learning on vocabulary acquisition for middle school English language learners. The participants were 60 bilingual ELL learners enrolled in grade six

through eight from a population of learners located in a suburban district in Northwest Georgia from middle school ESOL. the study started during the second semester of 2015-2016 where three teachers taught two classes with control variable with traditional learning material and the other three taught the treatment variable with game-based activities and it lasted for six weeks. By using the ACCESS and the Measurement of Academic Vocabulary, the results showed that there was no statistically significant difference between game-based learning and traditional learning methods of academic vocabulary. Also, there was no statistically significant difference in scores based on gender.

Darfilal (2015) conducted a study on the effectiveness of using language games in teaching vocabulary. The participants of her study were thirty-two learners in the third year of middle school in Tlemcen, who were chosen randomly. Made a questionnaire for the teachers (3) and an interview for only nine of the participant pupils. She allocated three sessions in the same week for the experiment. In the first session, they had reading comprehension, the learners were asked to read a text about road accident. Then in the next session, they divided the pupils into groups and asked the teacher to give those roles and each group has to come up with a word that is relevant to his job/role, and whoever writes it correctly or with fewer mistakes is the winner. In the third session the learners were asked to write an article about road accident, which is the same topic they read about in the first session, and then participate all together to write one on the board. From the observation and results of the data collected, she noticed that the motivation and interest of the learners have risen and the mistakes decreased starting from session two. The experiment was successful and confirmed that language games can help pupils to acquire vocabulary easily and motivate them to learn the language.

Similarly, Dolati and Mikaili (2011) investigated the effects of instructional games on facilitating learners' vocabulary learning. The participants of the study were seventy (70)

female learners between the ages of 12-13 years old from two classes of Noor primary school in Iran. They used a pre-test and post-test in this study to collect data. They used two types of games; the find me game and the charade game before giving them the post-test. And the results confirmed that games can be helpful for vocabulary teaching and the language learning as it is also helpful to motivate the learners and engage all the learners in the learning process.

### **1. Statement of the Problem:**

English as foreign language (EFL) learners, especially middle school learners, face numerous challenges learning a foreign language in Algeria. Lack of vocabulary is one of them. Lack of vocabulary knowledge is the poor knowledge of words as well as the meaning, one word can have multiple meanings depending on its context and many words can be used in the same context. Many learners neglect it because they find it difficult to memorize new words using traditional techniques such as dictionaries, notebooks, and word list, etc. Especially when English class is the only place they have to learn and practice the language. Therefore, they stay content with the basic vocabulary they have.

To overcome this difficulty the use of educational games could be appropriate. The teacher could devote the last 5-10 minutes of the lecture for vocabulary learning; where s/he gives the learners a small activity related to the vocabulary they dealt with in that lesson which will be introduced in a form of a game (orally or written). Introducing vocabulary in a more enjoyable way than the usual may give the pupils the chance to learn and practice the language easily.

### **2. Aims of the Study:** This study aims to:

- Investigate the effectiveness of educational games in learning vocabulary.
- Boost foreign language learners' awareness of the significance of vocabulary learning

- Highlight the importance of using educational games as a beneficial technique in learning vocabulary.

### **3. Research Questions:**

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

**RQ1.** Does the continual use of educational games help to enhance pupils' vocabulary?

**RQ2.** Does the use of entertaining games help the pupils memorize easily?

**RQ3.** What is the pupils' reaction to the educational games performed?

### **4. Research Hypotheses:**

The present research is based on two hypotheses that shall be tested and verified.

**RH1.** It is hypothesized that pupils' vocabulary will be enhanced if educational games are continually used.

**RH2.** It is hypothesized that the pupils will acquire and memorize vocabulary easily if entertaining games are used.

### **5. Research Methodology:**

In this study, the researcher intends to use a descriptive method to acquire and gather data using a questionnaire for the teacher to obtain their opinions on the problem and what strategy they think is useful for the beginners, etc. An interview for the learners to ensure if they genuinely benefit from educational games and memorize the vocabulary learnt. In addition to classroom observation which is used to observe their reaction toward educational games. The results of the questionnaires and the classroom observation will be included in the dissertation.



## **6. Data Collection Tools:**

The main research tools are itemized below:

- Questionnaire for the teacher.
- An interview for the learners.
- Classroom observation.

## **7. Population and Sample:**

The target population of this study is second year middle school pupils who are enrolled in the academic year 2020/2021. The total number of the population is about 230.

This population has been chosen for the following reasons:

- They are beginners
- They are motivated and have the ability to learn new terms.
- Games are appropriate for them to improve their vocabulary.

The representative sample is about twenty (20) learners in addition to two (02) teachers.

## **8. The Research Structure:**

This research study is divided into three main chapters. The first two chapters deal with the theoretical background of the study however, the third chapter deals with the fieldwork.

The first chapter is about vocabulary teaching and learning: definitions, its different types, foreign language teaching strategies, vocabulary teaching and learning strategies, and the selection of vocabulary.

The second chapter is concerned with educational games: definitions, their types, the teacher's roles, and selection of educational games.

The last chapter contains the practical work. It focuses on the data collected and analyzed and the study results.

# **Chapter One**

## Vocabulary Teaching and Learning

## **Introduction**

Vocabulary plays an important role in mastering a language (first or second) from its both forms, oral and written. However, many learners or even teachers give more importance to grammar rules than vocabulary. Even though it is clear that vocabulary is essential in learning a language and as Wilkins (1972, p. 111) declares “Without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary that nothing can be conveyed”.

The present chapter provides the definition of vocabulary and its types. Then, it sheds light on some strategies used for vocabulary learning as well as teaching in addition to vocabulary selection. Overall this chapter gives an overview of vocabulary.

### **1. Definitions of Vocabulary:**

Vocabulary is an essential part in learning a foreign language; it is the core of the language. According to the online Etymology dictionary (2001-2021), the origin of the word vocabulary can be traced back to the 1530s. It comes from the Medieval Latin word “**vocabularium**” which means a list of words with explanations. In addition to its Latin roots, “**vocabulum**” meaning words, noun, and name; together with “**vocare**” which means to name.

Oxford advanced learner’s dictionary (2010, p. 1722) defines vocabulary as “all the words that a person knows or uses”. Similarly, Cambridge dictionaries online (2021) defines vocabulary as “all the words used by a particular person, or all the words that exist in a particular language or subject”.

“Vocabulary is the words that people understand both their meaning and usage” (Hernawati, 2015). Moreover, Takaç (2008) states that vocabulary can be referred to as a dictionary or a set of terms. On the other hand, Nushi and Jenabzadeh (2016) argue that vocabulary contains multiword expressions, idioms, and even sentences and not only single

words. According to McCarthy (1990, p. 3) “when we speak of the vocabulary of a language we are speaking primarily, but not exclusively, of the words of that language”.

From all the different definitions mentioned previously, it is clear that vocabulary commonly refers to word meaning.

As it is important to also define the term “**word**”, based on Oxford advanced learner’s dictionary (2010, p. 1775) it is “a single unit of language which means something and can be spoken or written”. In addition, Carter (1992) indicates that a word can be defined from two aspects; first, as stated in the orthographic definition it is defined as “... any sequence of letters (and a limited number of other characteristics such as hyphen and apostrophe) bounded on either side by a space or a punctuation mark”. Second, according to semantics, it can be defined as “the smallest meaningful unit of language” (as cited in Takaç, 2008, p.4-5).

## **2. Types of Vocabulary:**

According to many scholars, vocabulary can be categorized into two types, receptive and productive which are also known as active and passive.

As believed by Gains and Rendom (1986), receptive vocabulary is the language elements that can be acknowledged and identified through listening and reading; and productive vocabulary is the language elements that the learner can remember and use correctly in any kind of speech or writing (as cited in Hernawati, 2015).

Similar to Schmitt (2000), who indicates that receptive vocabulary is the ability to understand a term, and it is usually associated with reading and listening. However, it is considered productive vocabulary when the learner is capable of producing a term on his own when writing or speaking.

Furthermore, Recognizing the structure of a term when reading or hearing and recalling its meaning is an example of the use of receptive vocabulary, whereas attempting to convey a meaning by speaking or writing and recovering and producing the proper spoken or written form is an example of productive vocabulary (Nation, 2000).

Additionally, Pursuant to Harmer (1991), there are two types of vocabulary, passive vocabulary which are words that can be recognized when found but cannot be produced; and active vocabulary which refers to the words that are learnt and expected to utilize (as cited in Hernawati, 2015).

According to Laufer et al. (2004), receptive knowledge is viewed as retrieving the word structure, and productive knowledge as retrieving the meaning of the word.

As a result, the following table summarizes the types of vocabulary:

	Oral vocabulary	Writing vocabulary
Productive / active	Speaking	Writing
Receptive / passive	Listening	Reading

**Table 1: Types of vocabulary**

## **1.1. Receptive Vocabulary:**

### **1.1.1. Listening Vocabulary:**

Kitao and Kitao (1999) define listening vocabulary as the words that the hearer receives yet is not expected to produce when speaking. In other words, listening vocabulary is words recognized and understood by someone while listening to other individuals speaking (speech, communication...).

### **1.1.2. Reading Vocabulary:**

It refers to the words that are recognized when reading any form of text. It is the terms that the reader understands, however, would not be able to produce (Kitao and Kitao, 1999). The learner is exposed more to written form than others.

## **1.2. Productive Vocabulary:**

### **1.2.1. Speaking Vocabulary:**

Refers to the words used or included when speaking. Kitao and Kitao (1999) declare that speaking vocabulary is the term that the speaker can use when talking.

### **1.2.2. Writing Vocabulary:**

Refers to the words used when writing a text or any other form of writing. Kitao and Kitao (1999) state that writing vocabulary is the words that the author can use when writing.

## **2. Word knowledge:**

As it is important to memorize as many words as possible in a certain language, it is not enough to say that you know a word. It is assumed that a given word knowledge that is associated with competent reading is multifaceted, counting not only the understanding of its definitions, but also the understanding of several associated meanings and nuance of word meaning, the understanding of their semantic relations, and the understanding of their meaning in various situations, as well as the comprehension of their many forms (Graves, 2006; Stahl & Nagy, 2006 as cited in Gourari, 2019).

Nagy et al. (1985, as cited in Hu, 2013, p. 488) mention that “vocabulary learning is a gradual process because bits of information are accumulated upon each encounter of the word”. This means that learners’ word knowledge can go from partial to more precise

knowledge. Nation (2000) argues that knowing a word involves knowing its form, meaning, and use; he summarizes the nine aspects needed to know a word in the following table:

Form	spoken	R P	What does the word sound like? How is the word pronounced?
	written	R P	What does the word look like? How is the word written and spelled?
	word parts	R P	What parts are recognizable in this word? What word parts are needed to express the meaning?
Meaning	form and meaning	R P	What meaning does this word form signal? What word form can be used to express this meaning?
	concept and referents	R P	What is included in the concept? What items can the concept refer to?
	associations	R P	What other words does this make us think of? What other words could we use instead of this one?
Use	grammatical functions	R P	In what patterns does the word occur? In what patterns must we use this word?
	collocations	R P	What words or types of words occur with this one? What words or types of words must we use with this one?
	Constraints on use (register, frequency ...)	R P	Where, when, and how often would we expect to meet this word? Where, when, and how often can we use this word?

**Table 2 : What is involved in knowing a word (Nation, 2000, p.40-41)**

R = receptive knowledge, P = productive knowledge.



**Spoken Form:**

“Knowing the spoken form of a word includes being able to recognize the word when it is heard and at the other end of the receptive-productive scale being able to produce the spoken form in order to express a meaning” (Nation, 2000, p. 55). Nation (2000) states that the formation of the spoken form of an English word involves the ability to enunciate the sounds in the term along with the levels of stress of the term's proper syllables if it has multiple syllables. Gathercole and Baddeley (1989) mention that the capability of learners to keep a word in their phonological short-term memory is an essential element affecting vocabulary learning (as cited in Nation, 2000).

**Written Form:**

Nation (2000) declares that spelling is one element that helps to acquire acquaintance with the written form of words. Nation (2000) suggests that spelling and reading are intimately connected. According to some studies, changes in the spelling method are connected to changes in reading method. Reading skills can affect spelling skills, and there is a proof that literacy can impact phonological representations.

**Word Parts:**

Nation (2000) mentions that knowing a word may mean knowing that it is composed of affixes and a stem that can appear in other words; he also declares that using word parts to help recall the meaning of a term is an essential vocabulary learning method. This method demands learners to be familiar with the most common and regular affixes, be able to acknowledge them in words, besides, being able to re-express the meaning of the term using the meanings of its word parts (Nation, 2000).

**Connecting Form and Meaning:**

Generally, according to Nation (2000), learners think that to understand a word requires understanding its pronunciation, appearance or form, as well as its meaning;

However, learners should not only know the word form, and its meaning, but they should also be able to connect the two. As stated by Nation (2000), if the sound of the structure of the word form has a clear relation to its meaning, the form-meaning connection is easier to create.

#### **Concept and Referents:**

A major feature of terms that is most noticeable when looking them up in a dictionary is that they have a wide range of meanings; it is certainly relevant for terms with a high frequency of occurrence (Nation, 2000). As reported by Nation (2000) the terms that have the same structure and part of speech come from two various sources, Old Norse and Latin. However, the terms that have the same form but entirely different meanings are called Homonyms; and these words should be learnt separately as different terms and preferably at various times (Nation, 2000).

#### **Associations:**

Miller and Fellbaum (1991, as cited in Nation, 2000) portray the semantic connections between countless English words. They show that it is important to recognize grammatical forms to portray the hierarchical design of the vocabulary. The most inescapable and significant relationship is synonymy, yet things, modifiers, and action words each utilization favored semantic relations and have their own sort of association. Understanding these relations is valuable for clarifying the implications of words and for making exercises to advance learners' comprehension of words; understanding how the lexicon could be organized is also important for developing restricted vocabularies for defining terms and text reduction. (Miller and Fellbaum, 1991, as cited in Nation, 2000).

#### **Grammatical Functions:**

According to Nation (2000), to utilize a word it is important to understand which grammatical form it is and what syntactic examples it can find a way into. Numerous linguists now believe that the lexicon plays a major, if not essential, role in grammar (Nation, 2000).

**Collocations:**

Nation (2000, p.74) states that “knowing a word involves knowing what words it typically occurs with”. He also mentions that collocations vary considerably in size, type, collocates' closeness, and collocate possible range (Nation, 2000). Miller (1999) reveals that having a cognitive picture of the set of events in which a particular word form may be utilized to communicate a given meaning is a critical component of knowing a word (as cited in Nation, 2000).

**Constraints on Use:**

Nation (2000) points out that most words are not compelled in their utilization by sociolinguistic elements; where there are requirements, the hints for limitations on use can emerge out of the manner in which the word is converted into the main language or from the setting wherein the word is utilized.

**3. Vocabulary Learning Strategies:**

To master the vocabulary level it is important to follow a certain strategy as Harden (2013, p.1713) says “every learning process requires a manner or a strategy to be adapted in order to achieve the main purpose of learning”. However, it should be clear that there is no right or wrong strategy (Schmitt, 2000). It all depends on the vocabulary, the learner and their preference, or their learning capacity, and so on. Some may find a certain strategy effective and beneficial, while others do not prefer working according to it.

Researchers have different definitions of learning strategies. Moursund (2006, p. 126) defines strategy as “a plan of action”. Moreover, Wenden (1987, p.7-8) defines learning strategies as the following: “learning strategies are the various operations that learners use in order to make sense of their learning” (as cited in Harden, 2013, p.1713).in addition, Brown

(1980) sees learning strategies as “a process that may contribute directly to learning” (as cited in Harden, 2013, p.1713).

There are two common strategies, the explicit learning strategy also known as the direct learning strategy, and the implicit or the indirect learning strategy. Ellis (1994, p. 1-2) defines implicit and explicit learning as the following:

Implicit learning is the acquisition of knowledge about the underlying structure of a complex stimulus environment by a process that takes place naturally, simply, and without conscious operations. Explicit learning is a more conscious operation where the individual makes and tests hypotheses in a search for structure (as cited in Laufer and Hulstijn 2001, p. 4).

According to Hulstijn (2001), intentional learning or what is called direct vocabulary learning includes highly planned and structured learning, whereas incidental or indirect learning is when the learner does not want to learn but acquires it anyway it can be classified subconsciously learnt (as cited in Meganathan, Yap, Paramasivam, & Jalaluddin, 2019).

Moreover, Ellis (1994) declares that implicit learning requires attention to the stimuli; however, it does not require any conscious activities, while explicit learning depends more on the conscious ( as cited in Nation, 2000).

Schmitt (2000) argues that incidental learning should be systematically included into the curriculum. He mentioned two reasons why it is important; meeting a term in diverse contexts broadens what is known about it, and the additional exposures help solidify it. Furthermore, Nation (2000) states that learners would be better off focusing on improving their reading since incidental learning from context will increase their long-term vocabulary growth.

On the other hand, as it is mentioned by Schmitt (2000), explicit approaches to vocabulary learning, whether it is delivered by the teacher or self-taught by the learner, can only deliver some lexical knowledge.

As a result, there is no proper way of learning. Both the approaches are important and essential in learning vocabulary. It is impossible to choose or learn through one technique as both of them have their weaknesses and strengths.

#### **4. Vocabulary Teaching Techniques:**

There are many different techniques for teaching vocabulary. Teachers may be using one or more of them or even all. As reported by Sanusi (2009), for the learners to remember the new terms "... it needs to be learned, practiced, and revised" (Sanusi, 2009, p. 6) which means that they need to not only learn the word but also have an activity about it to practice it, and go over it again another time. The following vocabulary teaching techniques are presented by Sanusi (2009):

##### **4.1. Visual Techniques:**

It is such an attractive, motivational, and facilitator technique for learners. It presents the words in a form of a picture, video, gestures, etc. as Gairns and Redman (1980) say "there are three form visual techniques; relia, pictures, and meme or gestures" (as cited in Sanusi, 2009). It helps them to link the word to the shape; they cannot only memorize the word but also know what it means. It creates an image for the learners to help them recall the word whenever they see the visual and vice versa. This technique is the most used one nowadays in middle schools.

##### **4.2. Verbal Techniques :**

Marla, et al (1990, as cites in Sanusi, 2009) divide verbal techniques into four parts:

#### **4.2.1. Definition and Illustration Sentences:**

This means giving the meaning of the word in the same foreign language used in other words, using the same language to facilitate the meaning of the term using other words.

#### **4.2.2. Synonyms and Antonyms:**

Synonyms are the words that carry the same meaning as the original vocabulary that is given. On the other hand, Antonyms are words that have the opposite meaning.

#### **4.2.3. Scale:**

Is the representation of similar words in scales that involves the blend of both the visual and verbal techniques (Sanusi, 2009).

#### **4.2.4. Explanation:**

This means explaining the meaning of the new term in the same language. In other words, it does not depend on the mother tongue; it only uses the foreign language to give a clear explanation to the word.

#### **4.2.5. The Use of Dictionary:**

Dictionaries can also be used to introduce or teach a new vocabulary. There are different types of dictionaries that learners can use to better understand the meaning of a new word or even explore new words. Dictionaries use a variety of techniques also to explain the meaning of words such as definitions, examples, synonyms, antonyms, pictures, etc.

### **5. Vocabulary Selection:**

In order to choose the appropriate vocabulary to teach, it is important to understand its base and nature. Johnston (2007) declares that different scholars agree that there are three

criteria to take into account to make your vocabulary more manageable which are: importance, transferability, and finally, usefulness for generative studies.

### **5.1. Importance:**

The importance of the word needs to be taken into consideration. Not all the words are needed and not all the needed words are used. The teacher needs to select the words or vocabulary that he or she thinks is important to be memorized or known by the learners.

### **5.2. Transfer Ability:**

The teacher needs to make sure that the word that is going to be presented or introduced to the learners can be used in more than one context. In other words, if the word is unfamiliar to the domain or the learners cannot use it frequently then it is not appropriate to them (Johnson, 2007).

### **5.3. Usefulness for Generative Studies:**

According to Johnston (2007), teaching similar terms will help the learners in understanding the meanings of many words. It helps the learners to make links between words that come from the same root and may have a similar meaning.

## **Conclusion:**

To conclude, vocabulary in general is neglected by both teachers and learners as they give more importance to grammar rules learning because it is found easier and comes with less effort especially in Algerian schools. Introducing the words to the learners is not enough, teachers should be aware that they need to put more effort into delivering vocabulary, from strategies they use to the way they present them. They need to pay more attention to the

learners' needs and the course objectives in order to come up with the appropriate strategy to use that can motivate the learners in class to acquire and learn more vocabulary.



# **Chapter Two**

## An Overview on Educational Games

## **Introduction**

Learners' motivation and interests are considered the key for a better and beneficial learning. Many researchers have mentioned the need to provide entertaining and fun activities that at the same time can be helpful and useful for better learning. The teacher plays an important role in enlightening up the classroom atmosphere, for this reason, teachers should provide learners with creative activities that would not only make the learners comfortable and entertained but would also motivate them and facilitate the learning process for them. Educational games could be appropriate for the needed requirements. Educational games can enhance learners' motivation to learn as well as entertain them.

This chapter introduces an overview of educational games. It sheds light on educational game definitions, their types in addition to games' selection. Besides, mentioning and explaining the teacher's role in the class. Finally, it mentions the steps of playing a game.

### **1. Definition of Educational Games:**

A game is an activity or an action designed with particular rules and often is used for the sake of fun and entertainment. Games have always been linked to, entertainment and viewed as an activity with no beneficial outcome. Even in the educational system, some teachers consider it a waste of time and a distraction for the learners; in fact, it can provide the learner with so much more than just fun. Educational games are games used for educational purposes; it combines enjoyment with learning which facilitates the learning process for the learners, some refer to them as game-based learning, serious games, or language games, if it focuses on language learning.

As mentioned by Keese (2012), educational games are games that are intended to educate people about a particular subject and a skill. Noemí and Máximo (2014, p.230) define educational games as "video games or interactive applications whose main purpose is to

provide not only entertainment but also training in areas such as health, marketing, education, etc”.

Hadfield (1996, p.4) defines games as “an activity with rules, a goal, and an element for fun”. Oxford advanced learner’s dictionary (2010, p. 637) defines games as “an activity or a sport with rules in which people or teams compete against each other”. Similarly, al Shamy (2001, p. 15) defines games as “a competitive activity played according to rules within a given context, where players meet a challenge in their attempt to accomplish a goal and win”.

Moreover, Henderson (2005) defines gaming as an informative technique that offers value to learning while at the same time reducing pressure in both, learners and instructors. In addition, Dempsey et al. (1996, p. 2) game is a series of exercises including at least one player. It has objectives, limitations, settlements, and outcomes. A game is rule-guided and artificial in certain regards (as cited in Moursund, 2006, p.26).

## **2. Types of Games:**

It is found difficult to narrow games into a specific type. However, Al Shamy (2001) has divided games into four categories: contents-focused games, experiential games, content-focused games, experiential frame games) taking into consideration two components:

-What is expected from the coach.

-How the learning is taking place.

### **1.1. Contents-Focused Games:**

As per Al Shamy (2001), in content-centered games, the subject substance of the game is the point of convergence; the game has been planned explicitly to upgrade and facilitate the learning of that specific substance. Additionally, the trainer’s job is to work with the game; although there is in every case some discovering that happens through the demonstration of playing.

### **1.2. Experiential Games:**

As shown by Al Shamy (2001), the main learning that occurs in experiential games and activities comes via the learner's real physical experience; the focal point of the learning is on the action being completed, not on particular equipment. Furthermore, the trainer's position can be crucial to the entire learning experience of players in an experiential game; however, the players' purpose in an experiential game or activity is to experience. The main learning comes from experience, while content can provide extra learning (Al Shamy, 2001).

### **1.3. Content and Experiential Frame Games:**

Al Shamy (2001) declares that frame game is a nonexclusive game format intended for use with various sorts of substance, and she adds that most frame games are content-focused and the trainer acts as both, a designer and a facilitator. Moreover, content-focused frame games are oriented toward subject matter; the games are particularly aimed to enhance and speed the learning of the subject matter that is included in them. Furthermore, the most important advantage to utilize frame games is the minimization of the designing time.

## **3. Teacher's Role:**

In the classroom, the teacher plays more than one role to help and facilitate the learning process for the learner. Further, the teacher manages everything that is going on in the classroom from the learners to the materials.

As mentioned by Harmer (2007), the teacher can be a controller, a prompter, a participant, a resource, and a tutor.

### **3.1. Controller:**

When the teacher plays the role of the controller, he is expected to control the learner's actions and reactions, control what they do and how they do it. The teacher's role as

a controller is more beneficial at the start than at the end as it is more important to give the instructions at the beginning so the learners are aware of how it is going to be. This role has become less important as things changed throughout the years.

### **3.2.Prompter:**

In this role, the teacher motivates and encourages the learner to participate and engage. The teacher is supposed to support the learners as a prompter; however, only when necessary.

### **3.3.Participant:**

And that occurs when the teacher joins the learners in an activity or a task not as a teacher but as a participant. However, he should not be involved in all of the activities only some of them, or else he would not be able to perform the other roles.

### **3.4.Resource:**

The teacher as a resource is considered as a walking library, if the learner has any question or needs any kind of information or explanation about the lesson the teacher is the one to provide it. However, this became old-fashioned because things have changed and developed, the teacher is not the only source of information for the learners, there are books, the internet, magazines, journals, etc.

### **3.5.Tutor:**

The teacher as a tutor helps the learners when needed or asked, he guides as well as gives them advice. However, the teacher should be careful because the learner may become dependent and always in need of support.

Richards & Lockhart (1994) and Brown (1995) also add the following traditional teacher's role (as cited in Renandya, 2012):

### **3.6. Needs Analyst:**

The teacher's job as needs analysts is to gather data about the learners' learning requirements and styles and use the data collected as a base to design the coming courses they going to deal with (Richards & Lockhart, 1994; Brown, 1995 as cited in Renandya, 2012).

### **3.7. Material Developer:**

The teacher controls the materials used in class; he or she chooses the materials needed and that is according to "...curricular requirements, learner needs, his/her own teaching styles, and socio-cultural factors" (Richards & Lockhart, 1994; Brown, 1995 as cited in Renandya, 2012).

### **3.8. Monitor and Assessor of Learners' learning:**

In order to track the learners' advancement or absence of progress the teacher continuously evaluates them and uses the data collected to improve the materials, the teaching method used, or other course improvement purposes (Richards & Lockhart, 1994; Brown, 1995 as cited in Renandya, 2012).

## **4. Game Selection:**

As there are plenty of educational games that can be used in class, the teacher needs to select the most appropriate and relevant one for the learners for better outcomes.

As claimed by Carrier (1990, as cited in Deesri, 2002), the first thing that teachers need to check is the level of the game; the teacher should ensure that it fits the language level of the learners. Second, the game chosen should be appropriate to the content or that specific

class they using it in. Furthermore, teachers need to take into account the learners' characteristics, how old they are, are they highly motivated or not, etc. finally, the time and the day it is presented should also be considered. It is not the same when it is played in the morning as in the afternoon. The same goes with the days, Sunday and Thursday are not the same. Milano and Ullius (1998, as cited in Al Shamy, 2001, p. 94-95) mention in their book "Designing Powerful Training" that good learning activities should be relevant and suitable to the goals, and the content of the course; they help in delivering the idea to the learners; moreover, they should also be suitable to the participants, and the time limitation; besides, it should fit the teacher's competence, as well as, the logical constraints.

Al Shamy (2001) summarizes the elements needed to evaluate the game's usefulness in order to find the appropriate game in the following checklist:

<b>The Ultimate Training Game Assessment</b>					
<b>Game assessed:</b>					
Rate each item: 4 = excellent, 3 = good, 2 = fair, 1 = poor, 0 = awful					
<b>Value as a Game:</b>					
1. fits with content, design, objectives					
2. is challenging and engaging					
3. adds variety and energy					
4. has objective, measurable results					
5. yields worthwhile amounts of learning					
6. has suitable strategy for winning					
7. works with various numbers of players					
8. has a high fun factor					
<b>Learning Issues:</b>					
9. repeats and reinforces key learning					
10. gives immediate feedback					
11. provides safe practice of new skills					
12. develops understanding of concepts					
13. provides meaningful challenge					
14. stimulates many senses					
15. promotes intense dialogue, discussion					
16. provides social contact, group work					
17. has realistic, complex experiences					
18. has analysis, interpretation, reflection					
<b>Trainer Friendly:</b>					
19. has minimal advance preparation					
20. fits time, space and cost constraints					
21. fits trainer competencies					
22. is flexible and adaptable					
23. is non disruptive to surroundings					
24. is easy to transport					
25. you like it!					
<b>Comments:</b>	Add up your ratings and get a total score:				

**Table 3: Game Assessment Checklist (Al Shamy, 2001, p. 97)**



## **5. Steps of Playing a Game:**

After successfully selecting the appropriate game, comes the next step which is applying it in class. As stated by Al Shamy (2001), there are three important steps to follow in playing a game: introducing the game, managing, and lastly, debriefing the game. As it will go much smoother, easier, and be more effective if these steps were followed and respected (Al Shamy, 2001).

### **5.1. Introducing the Game:**

It is considered the first and the most important step. If the game is introduced and explained properly, the goal will be most likely achieved easily. Thus, for an effective and successful game, it is necessary to introduce the game and explain it clearly so the participants would be aware of their role in the game and what they are supposed to do.

According to Al Shamy (2001), there are some elements the instructor needs to take into consideration. First, the teacher's style, as Al Shamy (2001, p.103) said "expectations affect outcomes" meaning the learners' energy reflects the teacher's energy; for this reason, he or she needs to be optimistic and enthusiastic. Second, there is the set up, where the teacher uses both rational and emotional appeals to motivate learners to play the game; next, establish the relevance of the game to the content of the course then try to address reluctance and safety issues (Al Shamy, 2001). The third element is instructions, and that is where the teacher explains the theme of the game and its objectives, as well as, the role of each one of the participants in addition to the place and the time and finally the rules of the game in order to make it clear to everyone (Al Shamy, 2001). Besides, the groups division if needed.

### **5.2. Managing the Game:**

After introducing the game, as explained by Al Shamy (2001) starting the game, monitoring, and finally ending the game, are the three main behaviors that are included in

managing a game. the teachers asks the participants to start playing and his role while they playing is to observe how they are playing and how is the game going. The teacher may also help the players if something unexpected happens or generally when needed and after they finish playing the teacher announces that the game is over (Al Shamy, 2001).

### **5.3. Debriefing the Game:**

“Debriefing is critical to establishing and reinforcing the learning” (Al Shamy, 2001, p.112). The last and the most important step is providing the learners with the feedback and evaluating their work in the game. As well as, discussing it with the learners as it is important to know their opinion on the game and how they felt which would give them a chance or an opportunity to practice the language. Al Shamy (2001) gives an example of the points that should be covered when debriefing a game in the following table:

<b>1. What Happened?</b>	• How did you begin?
	• Roles and responsibilities
	• Easy vs. difficult
	• Any conflict?
<b>2. How Do You Feel?</b>	• Positives? Negatives ?
	• Frustrations, disappointments
	• Satisfactions, successes
	• Other reactions
<b>3. What Did You Learn?</b>	• What worked? What didn't?
	• Cooperation, competition
	• Communication issues
	• Any "do differentlies?"
<b>4. How Does This Relate?</b>	• To your job?
	• Your department?
	• Your company?
	• To our training purpose?
<b>5. Where Do You Go from Here?</b>	• Applications?
	• Further information?
	• Comments, questions, concerns?

**Table 4: Major points to take into consideration when debriefing a game (Al Shamy, 2001, p. 113-114)**

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, educational games do not only encourage and entertain the learners but also teach and facilitate the learning for them as it was explained in this chapter. Besides, it is found hard to teach and learn vocabulary; however, educational games make it easier and fun to memorize new words and to deal with such a difficult task. Furthermore, using a new strategy such as educational games can enhance and rebuild learners' motivation to learn more and see the beauty of the language.

# **Chapter Three**

Research Methodology

and Data Analysis

## **Introduction**

The current study investigates the effect of using educational games on improving learner's vocabulary. This chapter focuses on the practical part of the study. Furthermore, it aims to study the results of the data obtained using certain collecting tools. First, it starts with providing a background of the research methodology then moves to the analysis of the results of the teachers' questionnaire, learners' interview, and the classroom observation. In addition to the aim of each instrument and question used.

### **1. Research Methodology:**

#### **1.1. Research Method:**

The method used in this research study was descriptive; the results are descriptively analyzed.

#### **1.2. Population and Sampling:**

The population chosen in the study was second year pupils at Chikh Saleh Massaoudi middle school in Sidi Okba, Biskra in the academic year 2020/2021. As far as the total number of population is concerned, there were four classes which included 39-42 learners in each. However, due to the covid-19 precautions, each class was divided into two sub-groups. One of the sub-groups was randomly chosen as a sample for the study; it contains 20 learners. The population was chosen for several reasons which are: the fact that they are beginners and educational games are appropriate for their age and level; second year pupils have already dealt with the basics of the language such as the alphabets, the pronouns, etc. and they are in the level where they need and have the ability to obtain as much vocabulary and terms as they can. Moreover, second year pupils are in need to improve their vocabulary learning. Hence,

educational games are an appropriate strategy for second year learners in middle school to help them enhance their vocabulary and facilitate the learning process of vocabulary. Besides, two (02) teachers of the same middle school, Chikh Saleh Massaoudi middle school in Sidi Okba, Biskra, who voluntary joined the study.

### **1.3. Data Collection Tools:**

Three data collecting tools were used to conduct this research. First, a questionnaire for the teachers; which was used to obtain their opinions on the problem, as well as, their thoughts on the use of educational games and their effectiveness in improving learners' vocabulary. Second, a classroom observation that took place four sessions. The aim of this tool is to observe the learners' reactions and attitudes towards educational games. The last data collecting tool was the learners' interview which was used in order to ensure if they genuinely benefited from educational games and memorized the vocabulary learnt.

## **2. Result Analysis:**

### **2.1. Teachers' Questionnaire:**

#### **2.1.1. The aim of the Questionnaire:**

The questionnaire was handed to second year English teachers of Chikh Saleh Massaoudi middle school; the questionnaire was voluntary, only two (02) out of three (03) answered the questionnaire. The aim behind this questionnaire was to collect different opinions of the teachers on the use of educational games and their effectiveness in improving learners' vocabulary.

### **2.1.2. Description of the Questionnaire:**

The questionnaire contained twenty two (22) questions in total and it was divided into three (03) main sections. Each section consisted different questions that vary from close-ended questions to open-ended ones.

The first section dealt with background information of the sample of teachers such as the gender, age, how many years they have been teaching in middle school, the vocabulary level of the second year pupils.

The second section focused on the vocabulary teaching. The first three (03) questions were asked to know whether the teacher introduces new terms in every lesson and which methods or strategies they use in addition to their efficiency. The next two (02) questions which are the fourth (04) and fifth (05) were designed to figure what kind of struggles learners face when they are learning vocabulary and the reason behind it. The last two (02) questions attempted to know what are the strategies they suggest to their pupils in order to facilitate learning vocabulary for them; in addition to the strategy they think is the most affective based on their career and experience in teaching.

Third section shed light on the use of educational games. The first five (05) questions were asked to know if the teacher has dealt with educational games before, which games s/he used, and how often s/he uses this technique, and if it increases the learners' motivation. Questions six (06), seven(07), and eight (08) asked to obtain their opinion on educational games; whether they are suitable for vocabulary learning, and helpful to improve and enhance the learners' vocabulary, and whether they help to memorize easily. Followed by questions nine (09) and ten (10) were designed to know what is special about educational games and what are their advantages. Finally, question number eleven (11) which was designed to study the struggles the teacher may face dealing with such a strategy.



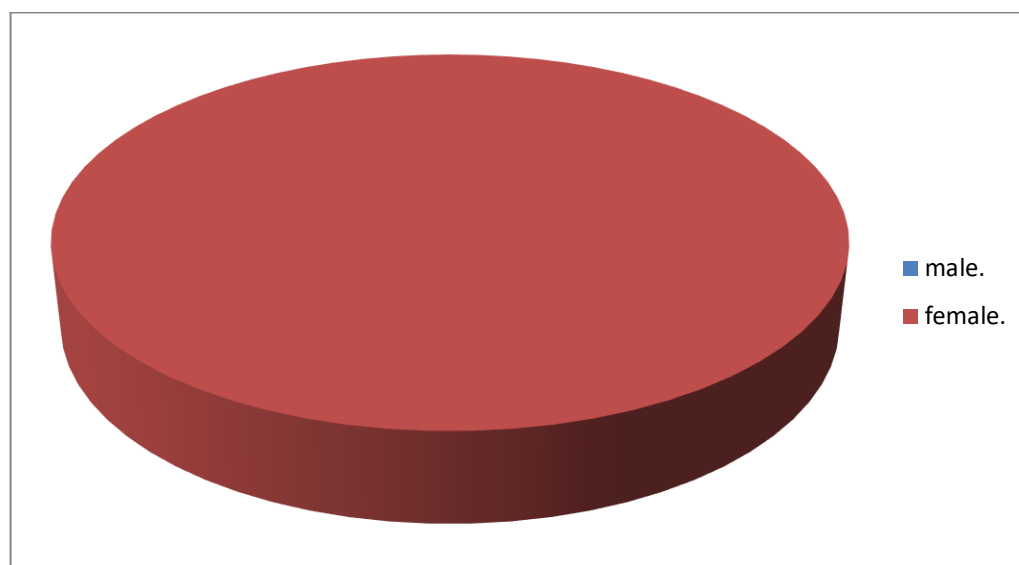
### 2.1.3. Analysis of the Questionnaire:

#### Section one: Background information

##### Question 01: Gender

Gender	participants	Percentage
Female	02	100%
Male	0	0%

**Table 5: The Distribution of Teachers' Gender**



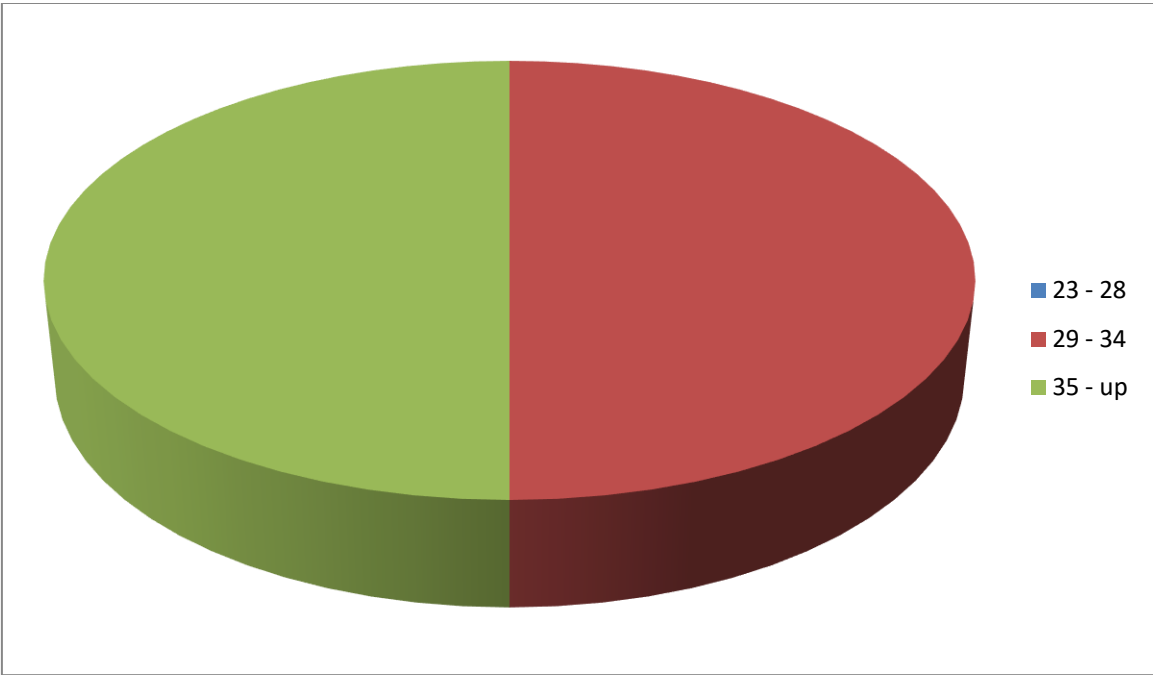
**Figure 1: Teachers' Gender**

The results of this question, as it is shown on the table above, reveal that all of the teachers are from the same gender. Two (02) out of two (02) of the participants are females which leads to the conclusion that most of the English teachers are females.

##### Question 02: Age

Age	Participants	Percentage
23–28	00	0%
29–34	01	50%
35– up	01	50%

**Table 6: Distribution of Teachers' Age**



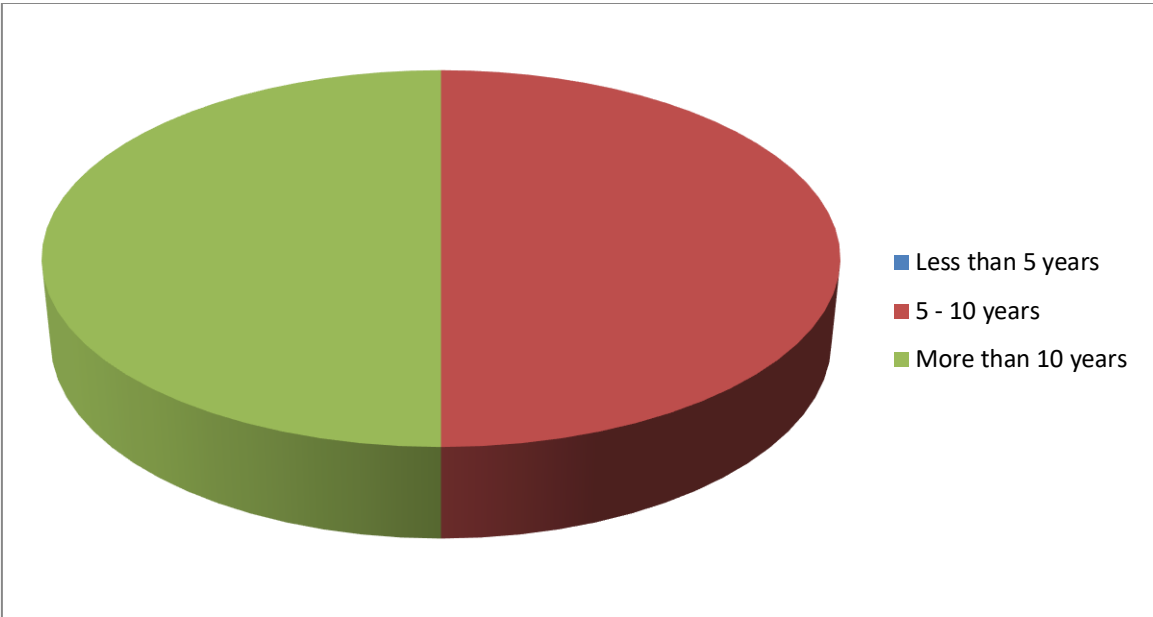
**Figure 2: Teachers' Age**

The results of this question show 50% of the participants are from the age of 29-34, whereas the other 50% are from the ages of 35 – up. This shows that teachers come from different ages which means they have different experiences and ways of teaching according to their age.

**Question 03: How many years have you been teaching in middle school?**

Years of experience	participants	percentage
Less than 5 years	0	0%
5 – 10 years	01	50%
More than 10 years	01	50%

**Table 7: Distribution of Teachers' Teaching Career**



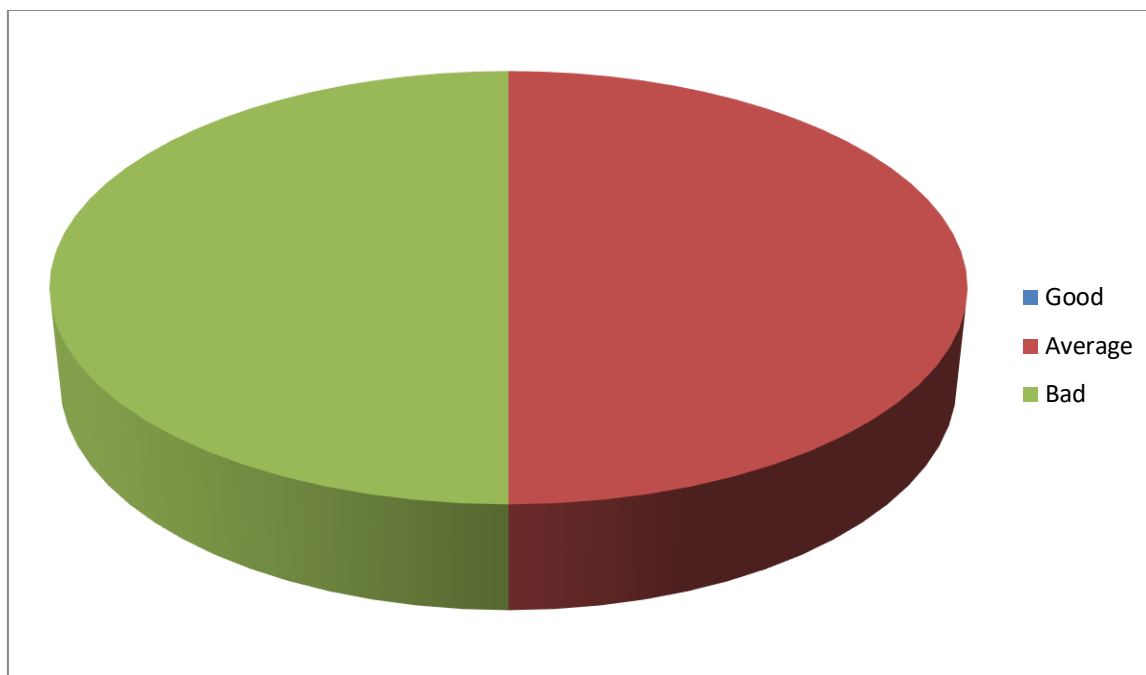
**Figure 3: Teachers' Experience in Teaching**

the table of results show that 50% of the participants have from 5 to 10 years of experience, whereas the other 50% have more than 10 years experience in teaching. However, it can be said that both of the teachers are skilled.

**Question 04: How would you describe 2<sup>nd</sup> year pupils' vocabulary level?**

Options	Participant	Percentage
Good	00	0%
Average	01	50%
Bad	01	50%

**Table 8: Distribution of the Vocabulary Level of the Learners**



**Figure 4: The Vocabulary Level of the Learners**

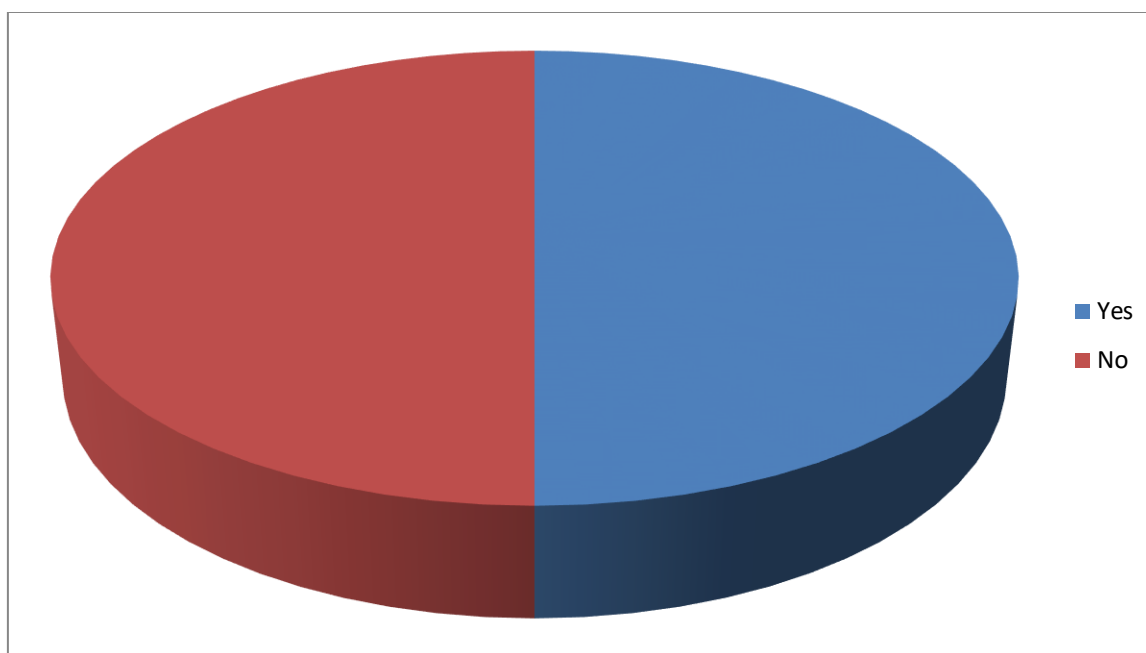
The participants in this question were asked to describe the vocabulary level of the second year learners and the results show that 50% of the participants classified it as bad and the other 50% classified it as average. As a result, some pupils neglect learning vocabulary and they are not aware of its importance.

**Section Two: Vocabulary Teaching**

Question 01: **Do you introduce new terms in each lesson?**

Options	Participants	Percentage
Yes	01	50%
No	01	50%

**Table 9: Introducing New Terms Each Lesson**



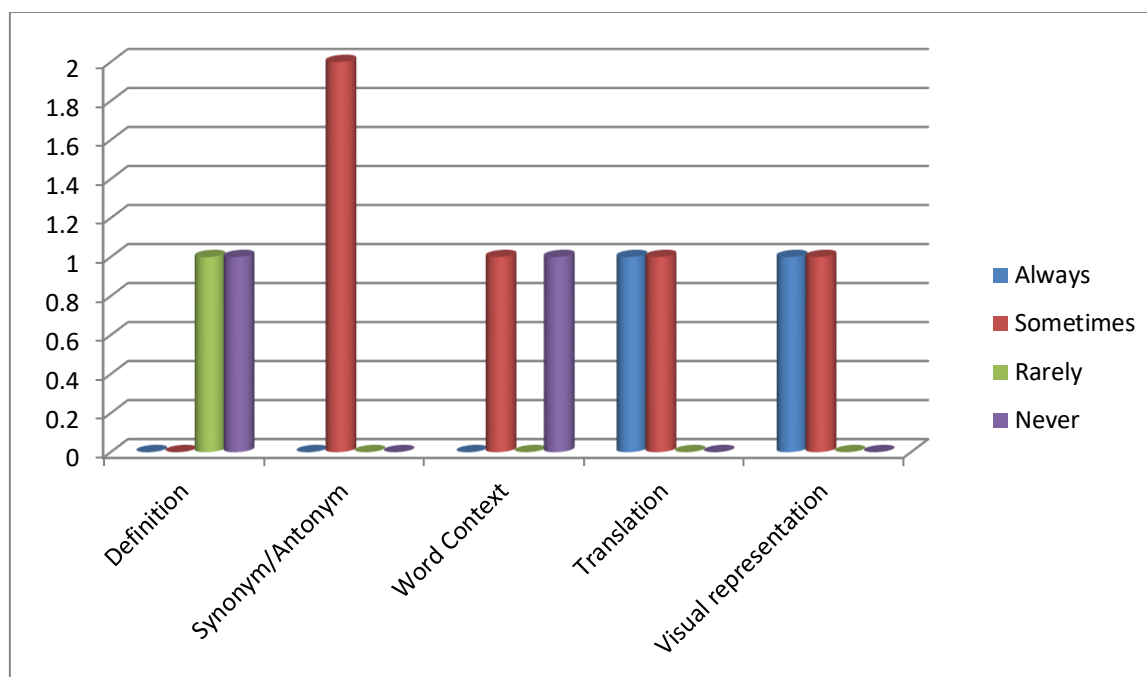
**Figure 5: Introducing New Terms Each Lesson**

The results have shown that one (01) out of two (02) of the participants which represent 50% of the participants answered with yes and the other answered with a no. 50% of the teachers introduce new terms each lesson. Since English class is the only place some of the learners get to learn the language, the teacher tries to provide as much needed vocabulary as they can to enrich the lexical storage of the pupils.

**Question 02: What kind of methods do you rely on to introduce new vocabulary?**

Options	Always		Sometimes		Rarely		Never		total	
	Participants	Percentage	Participants	Percentage	Participants	Percentage	Participants	Percentage	Participants	Percentage
Definition	0	0%	0	0%	01	50%	01	50%	02	100%
Synonym/ Antonym	0	0%	02	100%	0	0%	0	0%	02	100%
Word context	0	0%	01	50%	0	0%	01	50%	02	100%
Translation	01	50%	01	50%	0	0%	0	0%	02	100%
Visual representation	01	50%	01	50%	0	0%	0	0%	02	100%

**Table 10: Methods Used to Introduce New Words**



**Figure 6: Methods Used to Introduce New Words**

This question was asked to investigate the methods teachers use to introduce new vocabulary to pupils. As it is shown in the previous table, definition strategy is either rarely or never used by the participants; however, for synonym/ antonyms the two (02) participants stated they rely on it sometimes. Word context method is sometimes used by one of the participants and never used by the other. Furthermore, one of the participants always relies on translating the words for the pupils, whereas the other participant stated that she uses it only sometimes. Similarly, visual representations are always used by one of the participants and sometimes used by the other. As a result, the most used methods are translation and visual representation and the least used one is definitions. Moreover, definitions are mainly based on memorization which is the learner's biggest nightmare; pupils at a young age would rather not make any effort to learn. Memorization does not occur if the learner does not understand what s/he is memorizing which complicates it for them. Translation is considered an easier technique because it is technically a short way to learn vocabulary since they get the translation of the word in their mother tongue, Arabic. Finally, visual representation is a fun

method to use; pupils get to see pictures of the things they are learning which triggers their imagination.

**Question 03: How would you describe the efficiency of those strategies?**

Each one of the participants depends on a different kind of techniques when introducing vocabulary. "Visual representations are very fruitful" as one of the participants answered. Visual representations are helpful since the pupils get to see how the thing that represents the word looks like. However, it does not work with all the English words. The other participant said that translation is much easier for the pupils to memorize the words. As much as it is easy, it will lead the learner to depend on the mother tongue.

**Question 04: In your opinion, what is the biggest challenge the pupils face in learning vocabulary?**

Both of the participants agreed on one answer; pupils struggle in memorization, they do not memorize words for a long time and they forget about what they learnt as soon as they finish the term. In addition, they tend to depend on the mother tongue which may complicate the process of understanding and memorizing.

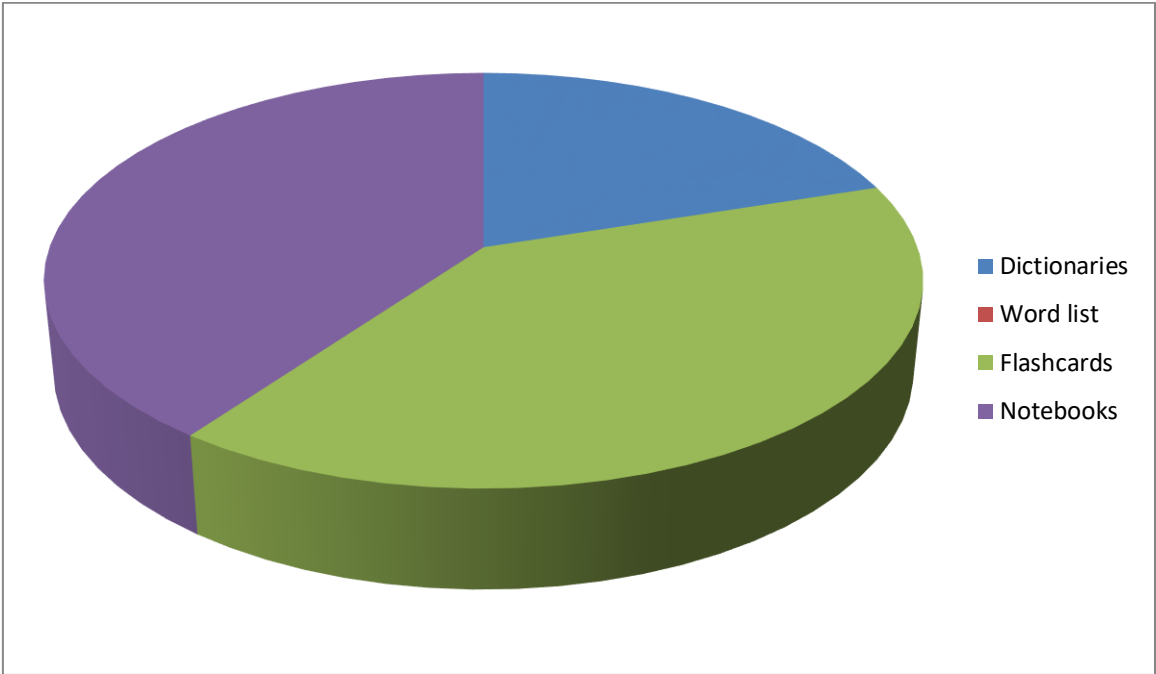
**Question 05: What is the reason behind it?**

The reason behind the memorization struggle from the participants' point of view refers to the huge amount of words they are supposed to learn in a short term. The amount of words presented in the English syllabus is unreasonable. In addition, pupils do not get the chance to practice or use the words they learnt outside the classroom since the language is not commonly used in the outside society.

Question 06: **Which techniques do you advice your pupils to use to learn new words?**

Options	Participants	Percentage
Dictionaries	01	20%
Wordlist	00	0%
Flashcards	02	40%
Notebooks	02	40%

**Table 11: The Techniques the Teacher Advices the Learners With**



**Figure 7: The Techniques the Teacher Advices the Learners With**

As it appears in the table, flashcards and notebooks are the ones with the highest percentage (40%) and word list is the one least percentage (0%) then dictionaries comes with 20%. Flashcards and notebooks are useful techniques for the pupils to learn vocabulary according to the results whilst wordlist is non-useful. Wordlist is a difficult technique for such beginners; it depends on memorization by heart; the learner is given a list of words that he may have never seen before and is asked to memorize them. Usually, visual representations work best for beginners thus, flashcards are more useful then wordlists; in addition, it allows



you to reorder the words to the order you are more comfortable with. Moreover, notebooks can also be beneficial; learners write words they have come across in the lecture and may add some more information or explanation that may facilitate understanding it; they can also add a drawing if they learn more through visual representation. Furthermore, note books give the freedom to the learner.

**Question 07: Based on your experience, what are the best strategies that you found effective with the learners?**

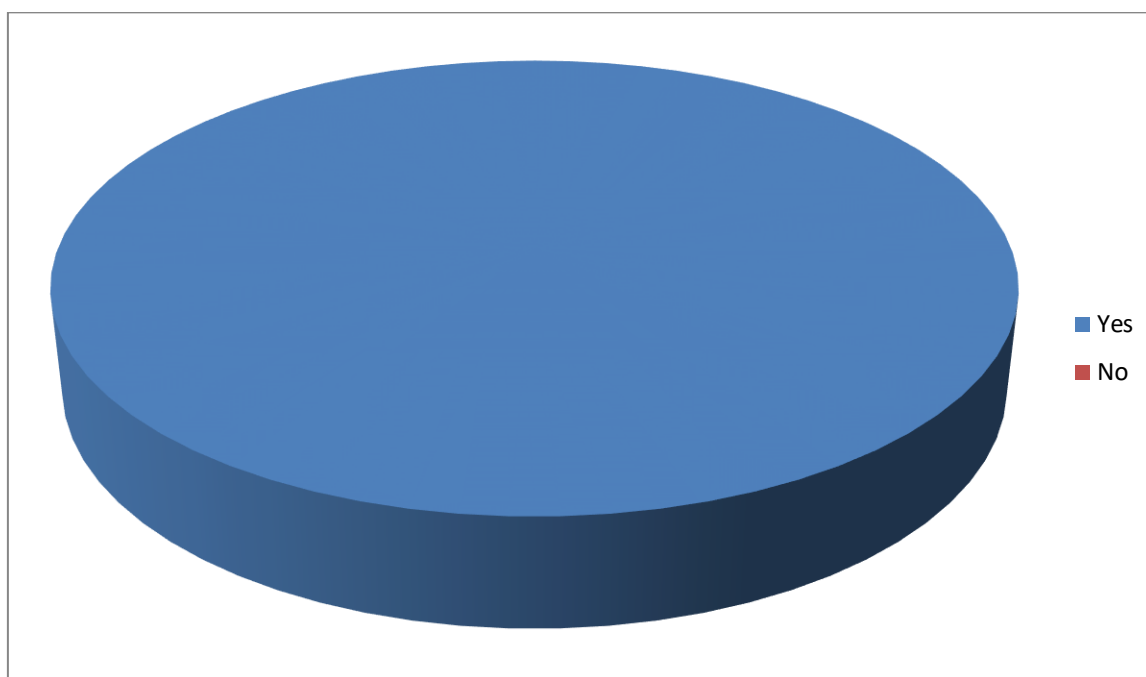
Both of the teachers said that pictionary is the most effective strategy with the learners. Due to the short time and lack of materials, pictionary is extremely helpful.

**Section Three: The Use of Educational Games**

**Question 01: Have you ever used educational games to teach vocabulary?**

Options	participants	Percentage
Yes	02	100%
No	0	0%

**Table 12: The Use of Educational Games**



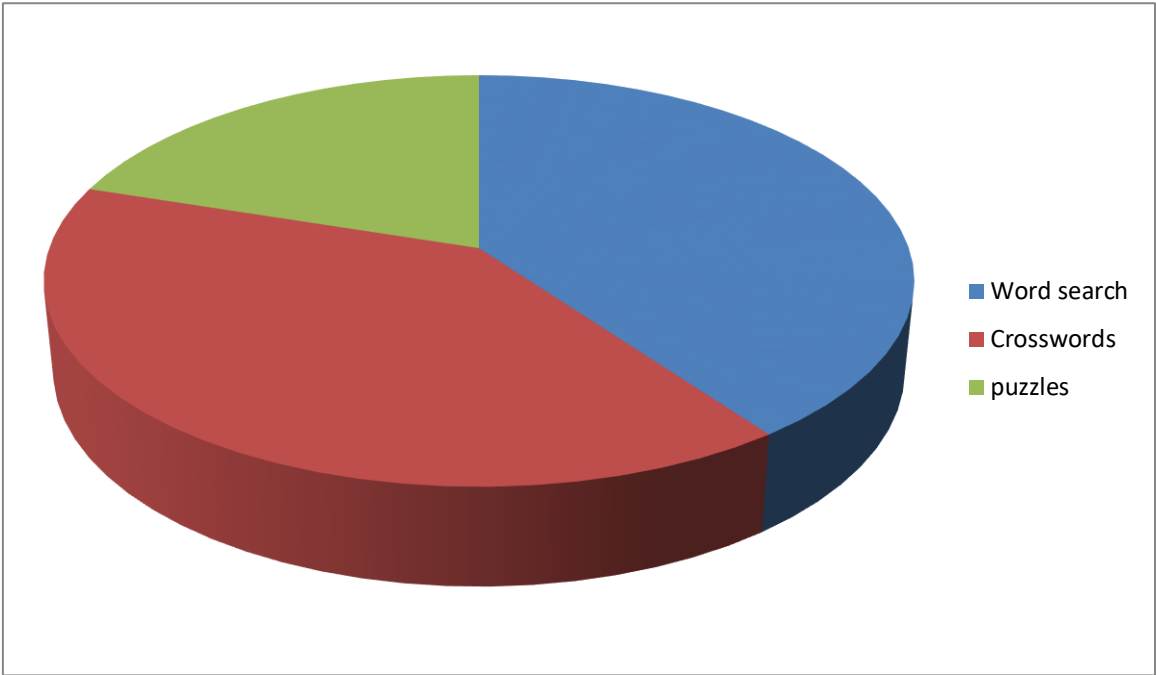
**Figure 8: The Use of Educational Games**

The data in the table above reveals the results of the question asked, whether the teachers have used educational games before or not. 100% of the participants answered with yes. Both of the teachers have tried and dealt with such a technique. Thus, it is concluded that such a technique is well known and acknowledged among middle school teachers which also mean they are aware of its benefits and outcomes.

**Question 02: If yes, what kind of educational games do you use?**

Options	Participants	Percentage
Word search	02	40%
Crosswords	02	40%
Puzzles	01	20%

**Table 13: Different Kinds of Educational Games Teachers Use**



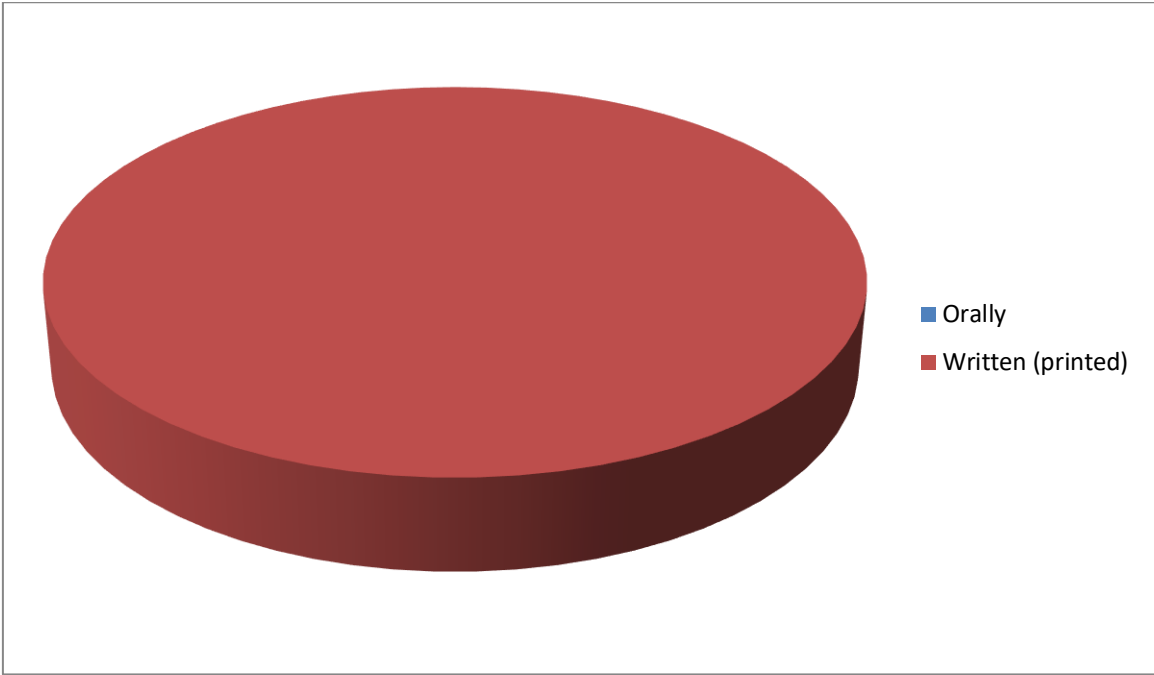
**Figure 9: Different Kinds of Educational Games Teachers Use**

As it is shown in the previous table, crosswords and word search are the most used games in the classroom, both of the teachers use them. However, only one teacher has used puzzles. The participants have mentioned only three (03) games as a maximum which proves that educational games are not commonly used in the classroom.

Question 03: **How do you usually present educational games?**

Options	participants	Percentage
Orally	0	0%
Written (printed)	02	100%

**Table 14: The Types of Activities Used to Present Educational Games**



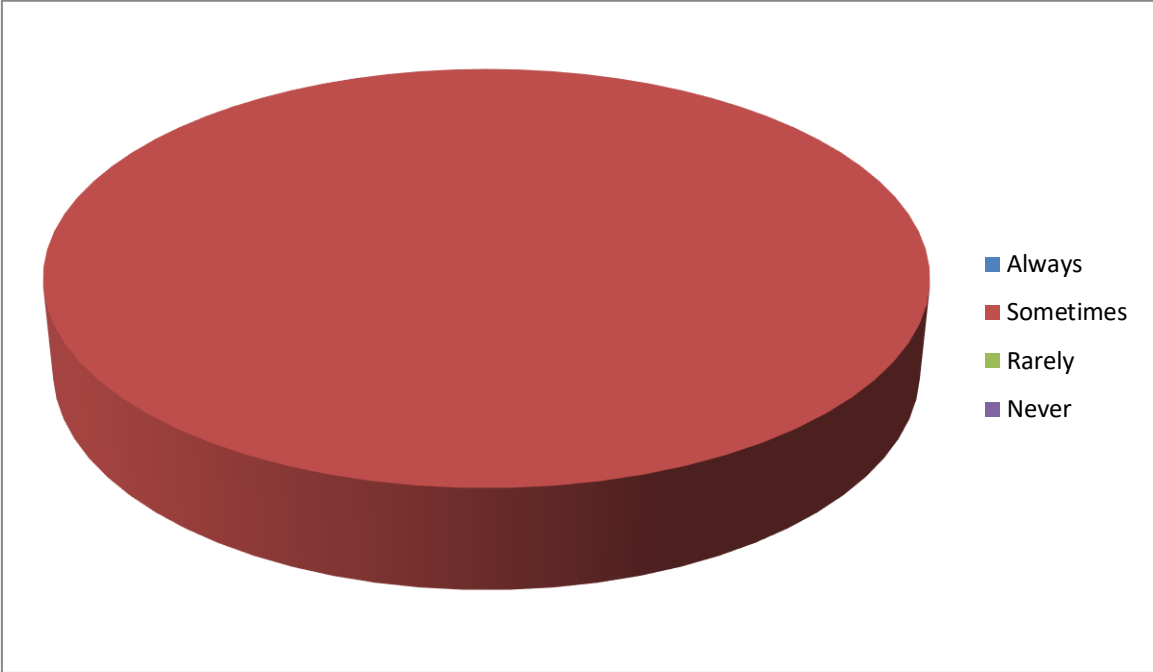
**Figure 10: The Types of Forms Used to Present Educational Games**

The results show that two (02) out of two (02) which represent 100% of participants chose the written form and 0% chose the oral form. The written (printed) form is the most common form to present educational games. Teachers have only tried one form of activities to present such a method which may be because of time constraints, they may have used complex games that need a long explanation to the game's rule or games that take a long time to draw in the board. However, sometimes written (printed) form activities are the reason games are accused of time-consuming; instead of using such a form why not use a simple game that can be presented orally and have the same benefits to save time, there are plenty kind of games.

Question 04: **How often do you use educational games in the classroom?**

Options	Participants	Percentage
Always	0	0%
Sometimes	02	100%
Rarely	0	0%
Never	0	0%

**Table 15: The Amount of Time Educational Games are Used in the Classroom**



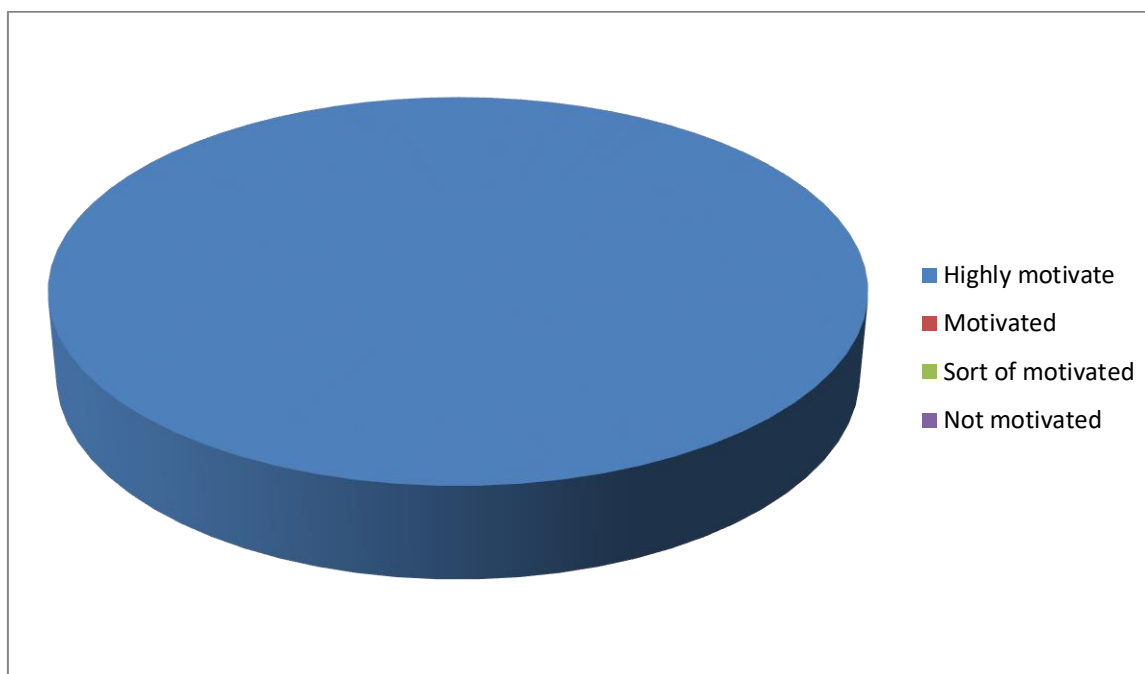
**Figure 11: The Amount of Time Educational Games are Used in the Classroom**

In this question, teachers were asked about the frequency use of educational games. All of the participants (100%) said that they use them sometimes. Clearly, every teacher has a certain way of teaching that differs from one to another thus, there is always a preferable way.

Question 05: **How would you describe learners' motivation when using educational games?**

Options	Participants	Percentage
Highly motivated	02	100%
Motivated	0	0%
Sort of motivated	0	0%
Not motivated	0	0%

**Table 16: Learners' Motivation during the Game**



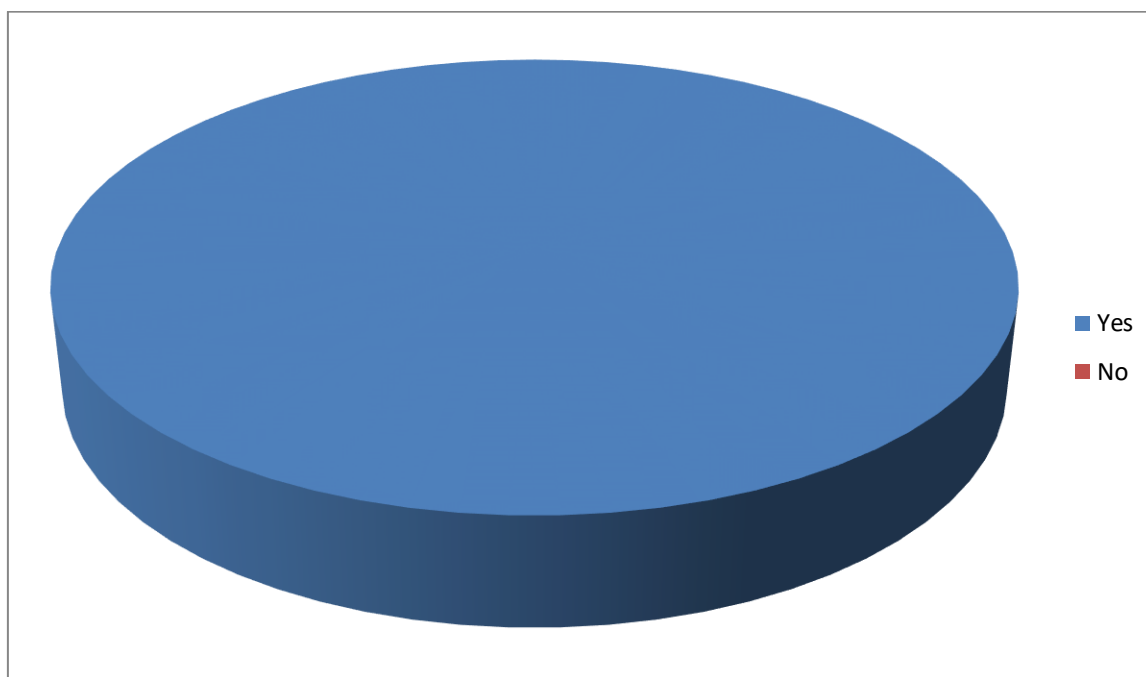
**Figure 12: Learners' Motivation during the Game**

In this question the teachers were asked to describe the learners' motivation when they are playing. 100% of the participants support the idea of educational games highly motivate pupils. Moreover, Educational games increase pupils' motivation to learn; they encourage them to engage and participate in the classroom, and pay attention. Such entertaining activities create a positive classroom atmosphere which allow the learners to be more comfortable participating in the activity.

Question 06: **Do you think the use of educational games is suitable to present vocabulary?**

Options	Participants	Percentage
Yes	02	100%
No	0	0%

**Table 17: The Opinion of the Teacher on the Suitableness of Educational Games on Vocabulary**



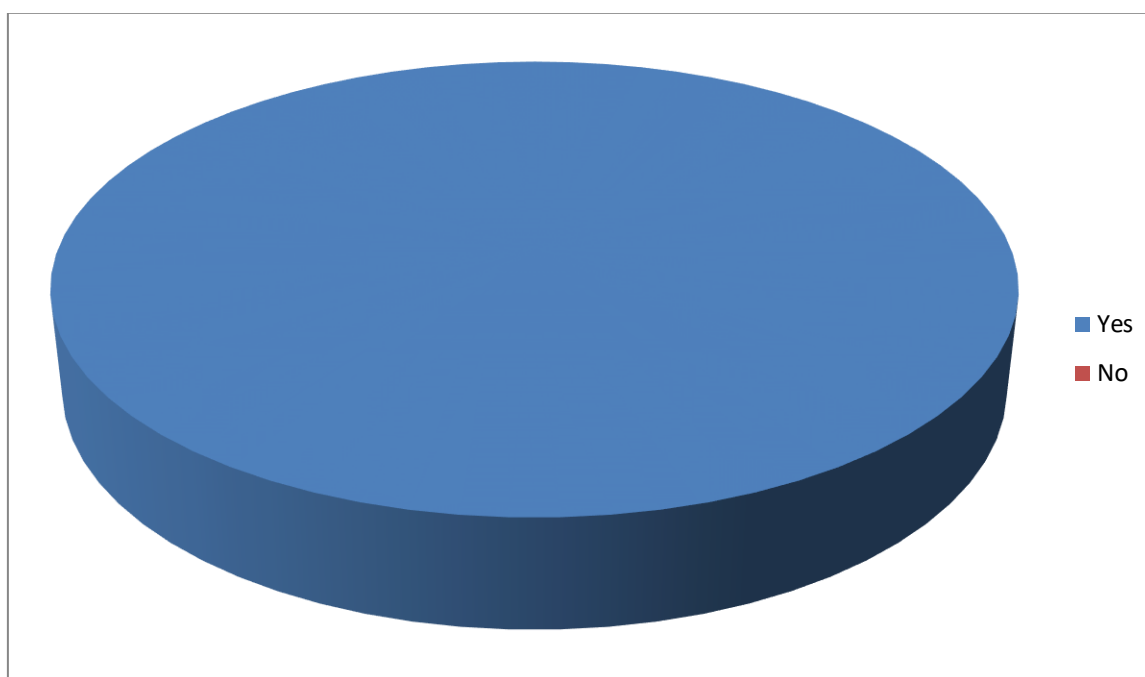
**Figure 13: The Opinion of the Teacher on the Suitableness of Educational Games on Vocabulary**

According to the data shown in the previous table, 100% of the participants think that educational games are a suitable strategy to learn vocabulary. Games mostly deal with words; they are seen as the most appropriate strategy for learning vocabulary especially for beginners. Not only it provides information and teaches but it also creates a fun and enjoyable atmosphere.

Question 07: **In your opinion, do educational games help improve learners' vocabulary? Justify, please.**

Options	participants	Percentage
Yes	02	100%
No	0	0%

**Table 18: the Teachers' Opinion on the Educational Games Usefulness**



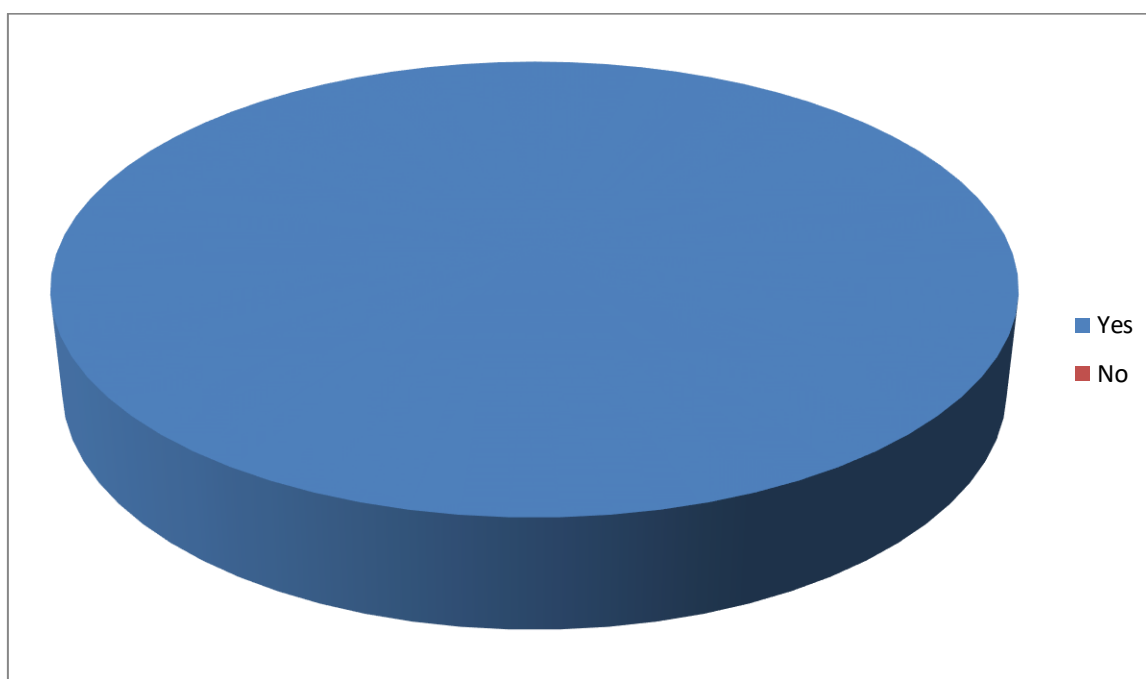
**Figure 14: The Teachers' Opinion on the Educational Games Usefulness**

The results of this question show that two (02) out of two (02) participants which represent 100% of the participants agree that educational games are useful for vocabulary learning. They justified their answers saying that educational games are very motivating and facilitate the tasks given. Clearly, the teachers have used them during the lesson to present one of the activities given to the learners.

Question 08: **Do you believe that the use of educational games is appropriate to facilitate memorizing new vocabulary?**

Options	participants	Percentage
Yes	02	100%
No	0	0%

**Table 19: The Teachers' Opinion on the Appropriateness of Educational Games Concerning Memorizing**



**Figure 15: The Teachers' Opinion on the Appropriateness of Educational Games Concerning Memorizing.**

Along with the previous table, according to the teachers' opinions, educational games are also appropriate for memorization. Games can improve brain function which leads the learner to focus and concentrate on what is going on. Therefore, they facilitate the memorization process.

Question 09: **What distinguishes educational games from other methods?**

The two participants have agreed on one thought which is educational games create a positive, entertaining, and fun atmosphere in the classroom which help the pupils to get out of their shy phase and engage in the game; thus, they learn unconsciously.



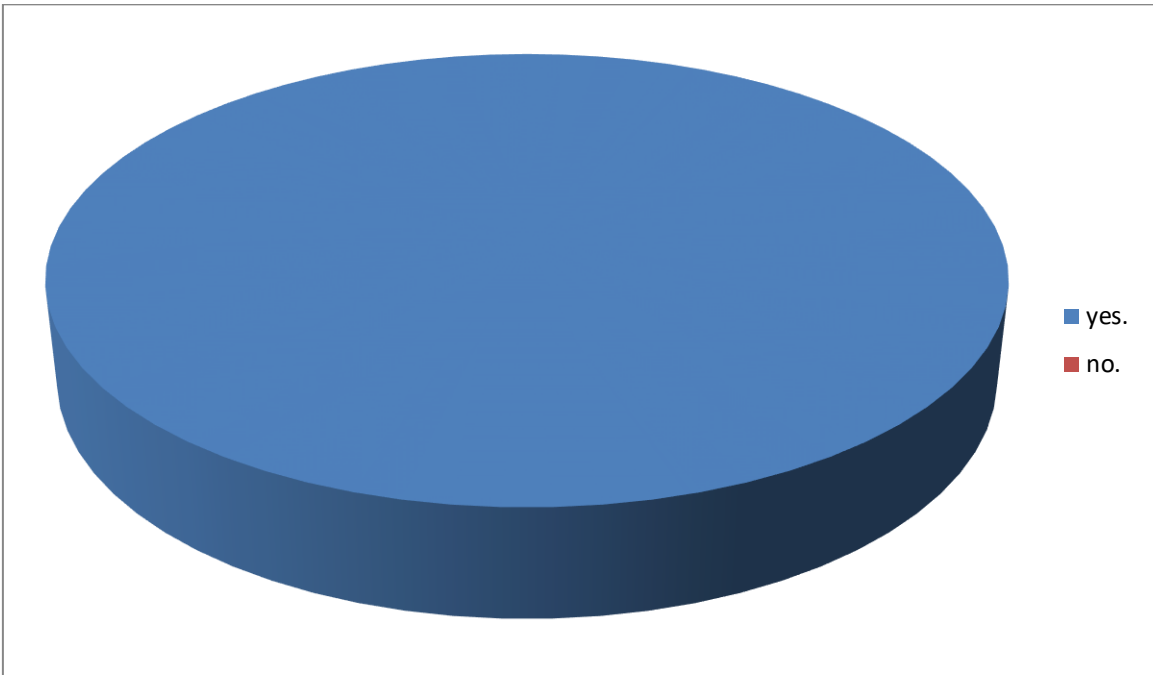
**Question 10: What are the advantages that using educational games may offer?**

The participants have mentioned plenty of advantages such as: they increase pupils' motivation to learn; create such an amusing and delightful vibe in the classroom; they also create a healthy competition between the learners; help introvert and shy learners to express their thoughts and engage with others comfortably. As a result, educational games have plenty of advantage that can benefit the pupils in their learning process.

**Question 11: Would you face any challenges using educational games in every lesson? If yes, what kind of challenges?**

Options	participants	Percentage
Yes	02	100%
No	0	0%

**Table 20: The Possibility of Facing a Problem Using Educational Games in Every Lesson**



**Figure 16: The Possibility of Facing a Problem Using Educational Games in Every Lesson**

According to the data the table above shows, the teachers face some challenges using educational games in every lesson. One of the participants mentioned the financial problems;

since they present them in a printed form and according to the large number of the pupils they cannot provide them all the time. On the other hand, the other participant mentioned the time; according to her, games are time-consuming and it is hard to always specify some time for them.

#### **2.1.4. Results Discussion:**

The analysis of the teachers' questionnaire revealed that even though the teaching methods differ from one teacher to another; however, all of the teachers agree on the importance of teaching and learning vocabulary. Moreover, findings revealed that teachers usually use traditional techniques to teach vocabulary which explains the unsatisfying vocabulary level of the second year learners. The reason behind the lack of use of games refers to the financial problems and time management since they only tried the printed (written) form and they use them for an activity during the lecture hence, it takes time from the lesson. Furthermore, the analysis has shown that teachers agree that educational games facilitate the learning and memorization of vocabulary. In addition, they are beneficial to increase the motivation of the learner.

### **2.2. Classroom Observation:**

#### **2.2.1. The Aim of the Classroom Observation:**

In order to gather more data to this research, a classroom observation was conducted. The aim of this collecting data tool was to gather data inside the classroom and the pupils study the learners' attitudes towards educational games. Moreover, investigate more details concerning the classroom management in other words check whether such a method is time-consuming and not suitable to be applied every day as it is suggested by the researcher or not.

### **2.2.2. The Procedures of the Classroom Observation:**

The observation took place on April, 2021 at Chikh Saleh Massaoudi middle school with second year learners. Three (03) lessons were attended during that period; each took forty five (45) minutes due to the covid-19 precautions.

The materials that were needed to be used were handed to the teacher and explained carefully. The researcher's role was to sit back in the classroom and observe the learners' attitude and take notes since the observation tool was field notes.

### **2.2.3. Analysis of the Classroom Observation:**

#### **First Session:**

After the researcher entered the classroom and introduced herself at 1:20 p.m as the session started, she sat back and observed as the lecture started. The teacher started with silencing the learners and asked them to open their copy books and she started to write in the board activity number one as the pupils followed. When they finish with an activity they move to the next one; write it first in the board then the teacher gives the pupils about five (05) minutes to try then they answer it together. The teacher seemed to depend on the visual representation technique; she mostly used pictures to present certain terms. In some cases, she used synonyms and antonyms when the learner does not recall or know a word. The number of the participants was less than a half, only 6 to 8 pupils were engaged with the activities and they were mostly pupils who sit in the front; most of the learners were not interested. Fifteen minutes (15) were left before the session ends and the pupils were given the freedom to do what they want because they were done with the activities and everything before times ends.

#### **Second Session:**

The researcher has explained to the teacher beforehand what is needed to be done in the session and handed the material (puzzle game) and explained them carefully. As usual, the researcher sat back in the classroom as the session started. After dealing with all the activities

that are supposed to be covered in that session, about fifteen (15) minutes was left; Most of the pupils stopped talking and paid attention to what the teacher was doing on the board as she was drawing the puzzle in the board and explained the game which took her five (05) minutes. The puzzle introduced five words of junk food and five other words of healthy food because they were dealing with "Me and my health sequence" and the keyword was "health". Most of the pupils participated in the game even the ones in the back who were totally uninterested before; everyone was guessing words and trying to find the right answer first somehow it turned into a competition who will solve and know more words than the other. The learners were highly motivated and did not depend on any other source, not even their copybooks.

### **Third Session:**

The third session game was the hangman. The game was explained to the teacher before the class starts. After the lecture, ten (10) minutes were left so the teacher explained the game to the pupils and confirmed that they understood what their role in the game is; it took her less than five (05) minutes this time because the instructions were simple and did not have much preparation. The vocabulary they were dealing with in the game was a mix between illnesses and food, mostly words they dealt with before. Most of the pupils participated and competed between each other since there was a prize for the winner, a chocolate bar for each learner who answers correctly. The prize built more motivation into them. Moreover, the pupils' answers were more accurate and did not make as much mistakes as in the first game; keep in mind that they are dealing with similar vocabulary (food and illnesses). As the session ended the pupils asked the teacher to play a similar game next session and expressed their excitement for it.

### **2.2.4. Results Discussion:**

The classroom observation revealed the learners' attitude towards educational games as well as the time management. Learners' have shown a positive reaction; they were excited,

happy and most importantly, they were highly motivated. Nearly all of the learners engaged and interacted with the game; the ones who were silent and not interested in the first session got involved in the game and they were enjoying it during the next sessions. This data collection tool has also confirmed that there can be at least ten (10) minutes left at the end of the session; therefore, the teacher can devote it to vocabulary learning using educational games. Furthermore, a significant change in the learners' vocabulary was noticed; they made fewer mistakes as they were more confident in their answers.

### **2.3. Learners' interview:**

#### **2.3.1. The aim of the interview:**

After the classroom observation, all of the twenty learners (20) were interviewed. The interview was used to obtain and study their opinion about educational games and to make sure they are beneficial and helpful for them as well as to investigate whether they helped in memorization or not.

#### **2.3.2. Description of the interview:**

A semi-structured interview was used in this study. It consisted of seven (07) questions that differ; some of them are close-ended questions and some others are open-ended questions. Moreover, the questions were translated to Arabic, the mother tongue of most of them, taking into consideration the level of pupils in English language. The first question seeks to know whether the learners are interested in English language. The next three (03) questions were asked to know if the learners give importance to learning vocabulary and what they use to do so. Lastly, the questions five (05), six (06), and seven (07) were set to study their reaction to educational games and if they benefited from them.

**2.3.3. Analysis of the interview:**

Question 01: **Do you love English language?**

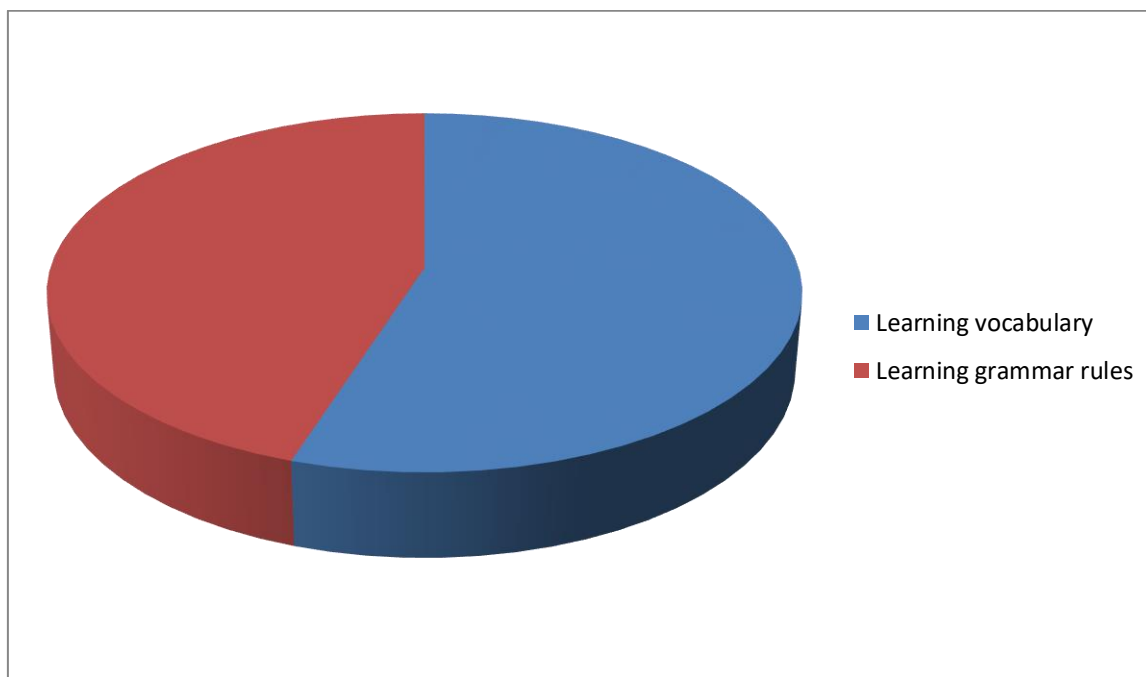
All of the twenty (20) pupils have answered with yes and described their interest in English language. Most of them were comparing it to French language and explained how it is easier than French; the word “uncomplicated” was heard from more than one learner during that interview when describing English language.

Question 02: **Do you give more importance to learning vocabulary or grammar rules? Why?**

The answers have shown that eleven (11) out of twenty (20) chose learning vocabulary over grammar rules.

Options	participants	percentage
Learning vocabulary	11	55%
Learning grammar rules	09	45%

**Table 21: Pupils' Choice of the Most Important Learning Activity**



**Figure 17: Pupils' Choice of the Most Important Learning Activity**

The ones who chose to learn vocabulary as more important mostly justified their answer with “because I want to be able to communicate using English” here are some examples of the answers received:

- Vocabulary allows me to form a good sentence.
- I want to understand words that are written in the book without checking the translation or asking the teacher for help.
- I want to be able to communicate with people in Facebook in English.
- I want to learn vocabulary to understand foreign people in free fire game and talk to them.

In the other hand, the pupils who prioritized grammar rules justified their answer with the fact that it is hard for them to learn vocabulary and claimed that learning rules of grammar is easier than learning new words that they will eventually forget about.

**Question 03: Do you like learning new words in English?**

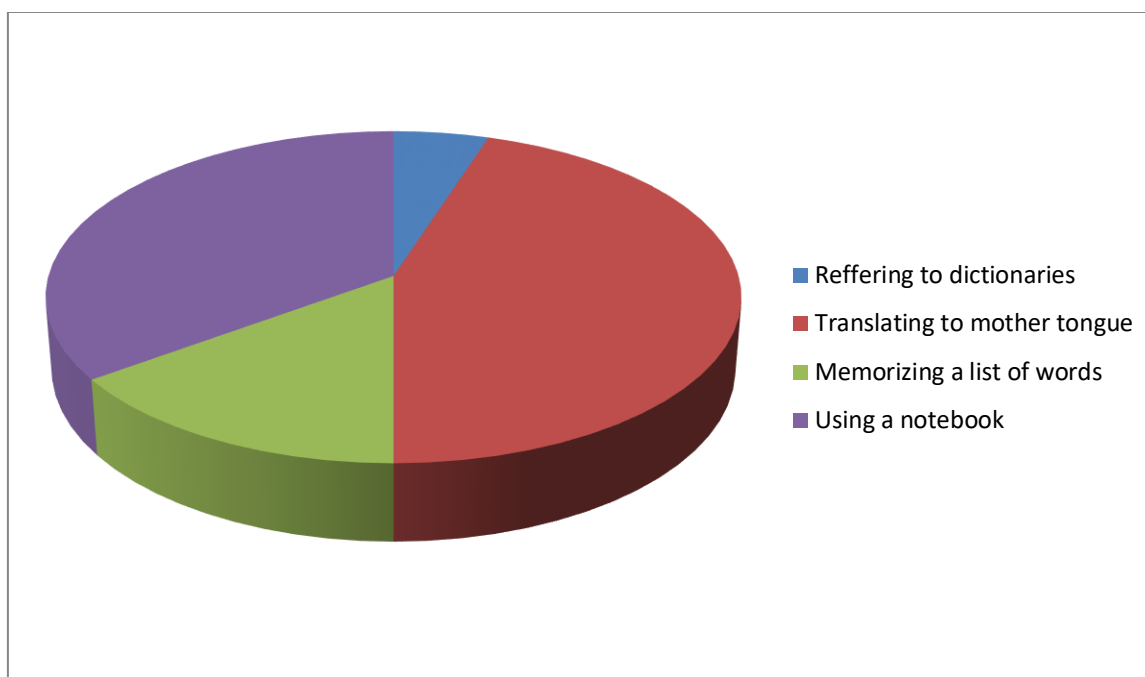
All of the interviewed pupils answered with yes. They explained saying they want to learn the language and be able to communicate using it. Some of them said they feel excited and happy when they learn new terms and how they try to use it in class to make their teacher proud.

**Question 04: Which technique (such as referring to dictionaries, translation, memorizing a list of words, using a notebook, etc.) do you usually use to learn new vocabulary?**

The following table shows the results of this question:

<b>The technique</b>	<b>participants</b>	<b>The percentage</b>
<b>referring to dictionaries</b>	01	5%
<b>Translating to mother tongue</b>	09	45%
<b>Memorizing a list of words</b>	03	15%
<b>Using a notebook</b>	07	35%

**Table 22: The Techniques that Pupils Use to Learn Vocabulary**



**Figure 18: The Techniques that Pupils Use to Learn Vocabulary**

As shown in the table, translation is the most used technique by the pupils; nine (09) out of twenty (20) learners prefer to use translation rather than other techniques mostly because they understand what the word means. Follows it, the use of notebooks; as most of foreign language teachers ask the pupils to buy a notebook for this specific purpose, learn new words. Then, the least selected technique was dictionaries; not many pupils own a dictionary or know how to use it.

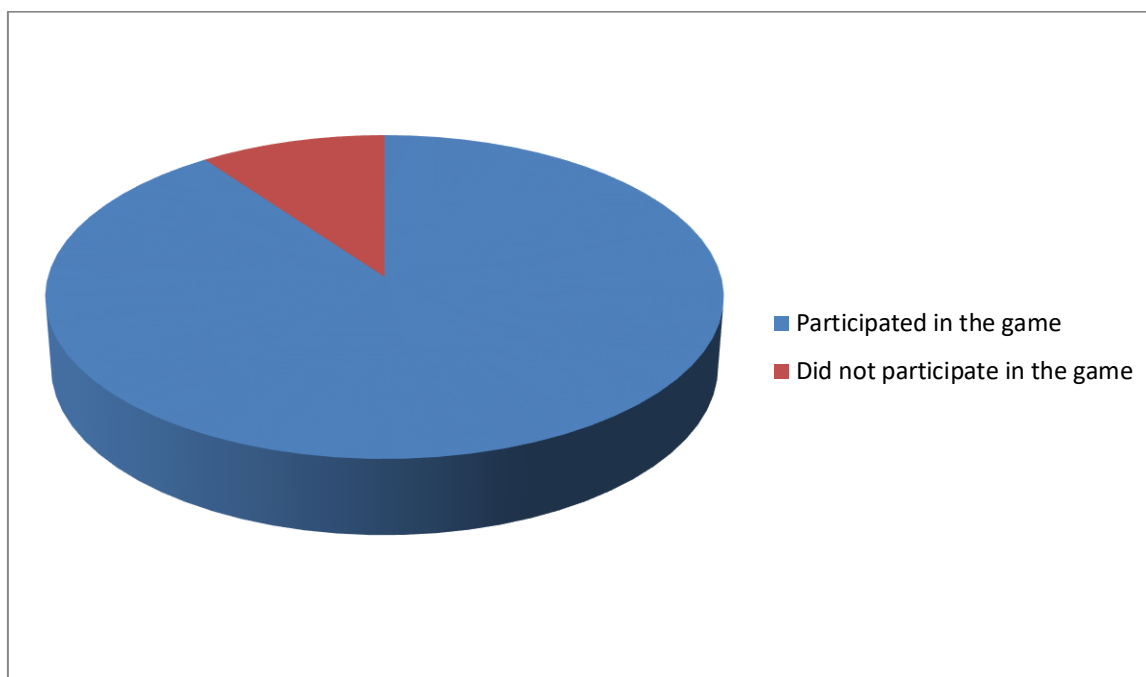
**Question 05: Did you participate in the educational games performed in the classroom? How did you feel?**

Most of the participants answered with yes who expressed their feelings as “happy”, “excited”, “wanted to play more”, “did not feel the time passing” and such more positive expressions were expressed by the pupils when they were talking about their feelings towards the games they participated in. However, two (02) learners said no because they were shy. They expressed their feelings as positive as the one who participated. This shows that pupils are interested in playing games and the atmosphere they create in the classroom.



Options	participants	percentage
Participated	18	90%
Did not participate	02	10%

**Table 23: The Results of Participation in Games**



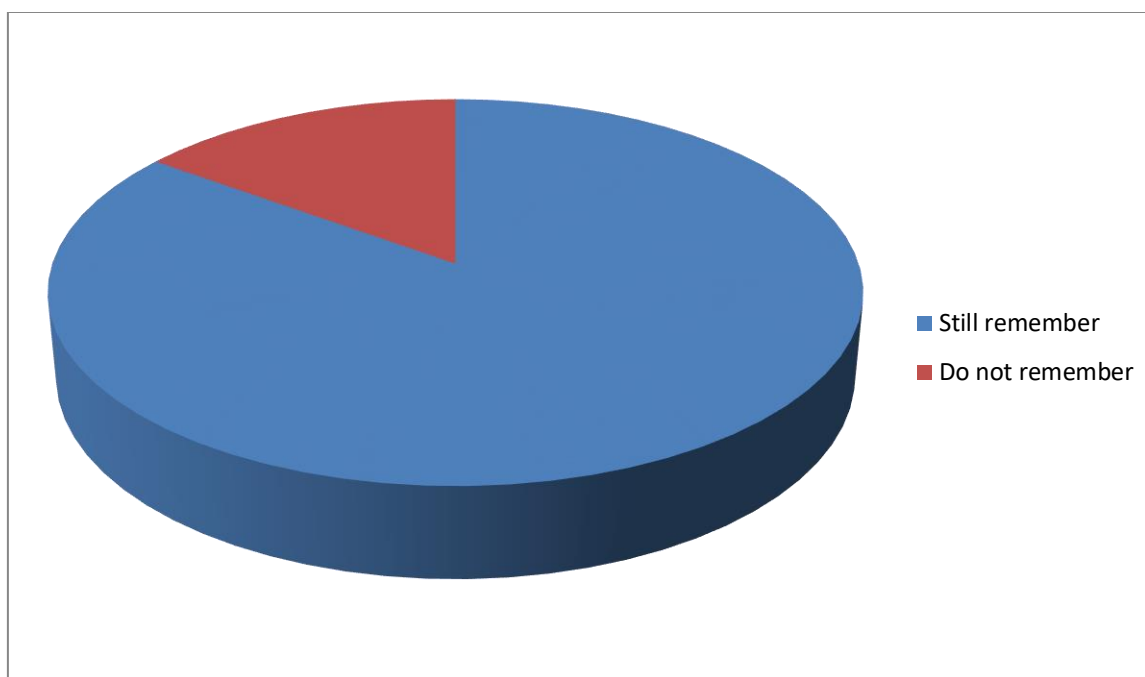
**Figure 19: The Results of Participants in Games**

**Question 06: Do you still remember the words you learnt from the educational games?**

The answers revealed only three (03) learners could not remember all the words they practiced in the game. This shows that learning through entertainment facilitates the memorization to the learners.

Options	participants	percentage
Still remember	17	85%
Do not remember	03	15%

**Table 24: The Remembrance of Words after the Game**



**Figure 20: The Remembrance of Words after the Game**

Question 07: **Do you want to keep learning English language this way?**

All of the participants answered with yes. This leads to one conclusion which is that pupils have accepted this technique and favorite it more than the other traditional techniques.

#### **2.3.4. Results Discussion:**

Overall, the results of the learners' interview showed support and acceptance towards the use educational games and a strategy of learning vocabulary. Most of the learners are aware of the importance of vocabulary learning in learning a foreign language as they expressed their need of learning new vocabulary. Moreover, they expressed their joyfulness and comfortableness towards the atmosphere that educational games provided and how confident they get when they play; they unconsciously find themselves engaged in the activity. Furthermore, the results revealed that educational games are more effective and beneficial for them than the other strategies they usually use to learn vocabulary; they are easier and do not take much effort because most of the times the pupils learn unconsciously.

**Conclusion:**

This chapter was dedicated to the analysis and discussion of the research data. Three data collection tools were used in this research for different purposes; a questionnaire for teachers, an interview for pupils, in addition to classroom observation. The analysis has revealed that educational games are beneficial and helpful to improve learners' vocabulary. Therefore, the hypotheses of the current research have been tested and proven to a large extent.

### **General conclusion**

One of the major obstacles that EFL learners face is lack of vocabulary. Vocabulary is an essential part in learning a foreign language; learning a language demands a large vocabulary knowledge; the more words you know, the better you will be able to express yourself properly and understand what is delivered to you. Teachers sometimes struggle to find the appropriate method to use for their learners to teach them vocabulary that can facilitate the learning process for them. Numerous of studies have revealed that entertaining techniques such as games can be helpful for vocabulary teaching and learning.

This current study was conducted to investigate the effect of using of educational games to improve learners' vocabulary. The study aimed to answer the research questions and confirm the research hypotheses which state that pupils' vocabulary will be enhanced if educational games are continually used; and the pupils will acquire and memorize vocabulary easily if entertaining games are used.

The study contained three chapters, the first two chapters were concerned with the theoretical background of the two variables, vocabulary and educational games, whereas the third chapter dealt with the field work. The first chapter provided the definition of vocabulary and its types and shed light on some strategies used for vocabulary learning as well as teaching in addition to vocabulary selection. The second chapter was devoted to educational games. It sheds light on educational game definitions, their types in addition to games' selection. Furthermore, it mentioned and explained the teacher's role in the class. Finally, it described the steps of playing a game. Lastly, the third chapter dealt with the practical part. It aimed to study, analyze, and discuss the results of the data obtained from the research collecting tools that were used in this study, a questionnaire for the teachers, classroom observation, and an interview for the pupils. First, it started with providing a background of the research methodology then moved to the analysis and the discussion of the results of the

teachers' questionnaire, learners' interview, and the classroom observation. In addition to the aim of each instrument and question used.

Overall, the results of the data analysis have answered the research questions which were: Does the continual use of educational game help to enhance pupils' vocabulary? Does the use of entertaining games help the pupils memorize easily? And what is the pupils' reaction to the educational games performed? In addition, they confirmed the research hypotheses. It was proven that the continual use of educational games improves the vocabulary knowledge or storage of the learners as well as helps in facilitating the memorization for the pupils. Moreover, the use of entertaining and fun techniques such as educational games creates a positive atmosphere in the classroom that helps the pupils to learn and enjoy at the same time.

### **Recommendations:**

Based on the findings of this research study, the following recommendations may help both, teachers and learners:

#### **For teachers:**

- Teachers should be aware of the importance of vocabulary in learning a foreign language.
- Teachers should devote more time to vocabulary learning especially that English class is the main if not the only source for the pupils.
- Teachers should not give the pupils the end result easily; they should give the learner a chance to try and gain it by him or herself.
- Teachers should encourage the pupils to use the language outside the classroom to practice their vocabulary.
- Teachers should use the vocabulary that they have dealt with in previous sessions to try to remind the learners with it so they would not forget about them completely.
- Teachers should avoid using traditional and boring techniques when they introduce new terms; instead, they should use entertaining and fun methods that makes the learner enjoy learning such as educational games. Teachers need to be more creative.
- Teachers should use simple, easy, and interesting games that can be easily understood by the pupils and take a short time. They should take into consideration the pupils' opinion because if they find the game boring then it is as if they did nothing.
- Teachers should not stick only to written form activities but try and use oral ones; they can be done in a short amount of time and does not coast them anything.

#### **For learners:**

- Learners need to make an effort to improve their vocabulary and not only depend on the teacher.
- Learners should be aware that vocabulary is as much important as grammar rules.

- Learners should practice the language outside the classroom; sometimes it is difficult to remember words that are not used so often.
- Learners should not depend on mother tongue; they should try to avoid translation as much as possible because it will affect their learning process of the language.
- Learners can use educational games at home also for self-learning. Since the internet is easily accessible nowadays, there are plenty of online educational games they can play on their computer or smart phones.
- Educational games enable learners to memorize words easily.

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## Appendices

### Appendix One: Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear Teacher,

The following questionnaire is part of a study that is investigating **the effect of using educational games on improving learner's vocabulary.**

Your participation in this study is appreciated. The data you provide will be securely stored and anonymised. Please read the questions carefully before answering.

Thank you for taking time to fill in this questionnaire.

#### *Part One: General Information*

---

1. Gender: Male  Female
2. Age:
3. How many years have you been teaching in middle school?
4. How would you describe 2<sup>nd</sup> year pupils' vocabulary level?  
good  average  bad

#### *Part Two: Vocabulary teaching*

---

1. Do you introduce new terms in each lesson?  
Yes  No
2. What kind of methods do you rely on to introduce new vocabulary?

Options	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Definition				
Synonym/ Antonym				
Word context				
Translation				
Visual representation				

If others, specify please.

.....

3. How would you describe the efficiency of those strategies?

.....

4. In your opinion, what is the biggest challenge pupils face in learning vocabulary?

.....

.....

5. What is the reason behind it?

.....

.....

6. Which technique do you advise your pupils to use to learn new words?

- Dictionaries

- Word list

- Flashcards

- Notebooks

7. Based on your experience, what are the best strategies that you found effective with the learners?

.....

### *Part Three: The use of educational games*

---

1. Have you ever used educational games to teach vocabulary?

Yes

No

2. If yes, what kind of educational games do you use?

.....

3. How do you usually present educational games?

Orally

written (printed)

4. How often do you use educational games in classroom?

Always       Sometimes       Rarely       Never

5. How would you describe learners' motivation when using educational games

Highly motivated       Motivated       Sort of motivated       Not motivated

6. Do you think the use of educational games is suitable to present vocabulary?

Yes       No

7. In your opinion, do educational games help improve learners' vocabulary?

Yes       No

Justify please .....

8. Do you believe that the use of educational games is appropriate to facilitate memorizing new vocabulary?

Yes       No

9. What distinguishes educational games from other methods?

.....  
.....

10. What are the advantages that using educational games may offer?

.....  
.....

11. Would you face any challenges using educational games in every lesson?

Yes       No

12. If yes, what kind of challenges?

.....

If you have any comments or suggestions feel free to write it down

.....  
.....

Thank you so much for your time.

## Appendix Two: Learners' Interview

### The questions:

1. Do you love English language?
2. Do you give more importance to learning vocabulary or grammar rules? Why?
3. Do you like learning new words in English?
4. Which technique (such as referring to dictionaries, flashcards, word list, notebook, etc.) do you usually use to learn new vocabulary?
5. Did you participate in the educational games performed in the classroom? How did you feel?
6. Do you still remember the words you learnt from the educational games?
7. Do you want to keep learning English language this way?

### الأسئلة:

1. هل تحب اللغة الانجليزية؟
2. هل تعطي الأهمية الأكبر لتعلم مفردات اللغة أو قواعد اللغة؟
3. هل تحب تعلم مصطلحات جديدة باللغة الانجليزية؟
4. ما هي التقنية (على سبيل المثال: استعمال قواميس, بطاقة استذكار, قائمة كلمات, مفكرة, الخ) التي تستعملها عادة لتعلم مفردات جديدة؟
5. هل شاركت في الألعاب التعليمية التي أجريت في القسم؟ كيف شعرت؟
6. هل لازلت تتذكر الكلمات التي تعلمتها من الألعاب التعليمية؟
7. هل تريد المواصلة في تعلم اللغة الانجليزية بهذه الطريقة؟

## الملخص

يواجه أغلبية متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية بعض التحديات في تعلم المفردات ، حيث يعتبرها البعض مبهمة وصعبة . ومنه، تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التحقق من فعالية الألعاب التعليمية في تحسين الرصيد اللغوي للمتعلمين وتعزيزها، وزيادة وعي متعلمي اللغة الأجنبية فيما يخص أهمية تعلم المفردات، وكذلك إبراز أهمية استخدام الألعاب التعليمية كأسلوب مفيد في تعلم المفردات. لتأكيد فرضيتي البحث ، والتي ادعت أن مفردات التلاميذ سيتم تحسينها إذا تم استخدام الألعاب التعليمية باستمرار، وأن التلاميذ سيكتسبون المفردات ويحفظونها بسهولة إذا تم استخدام ألعاب مسلية؛ أجريت دراسة وصفية باستخدام ثلاث أدوات لجمع البيانات ، استبيان لمعلمين (02) متطوعين ، ملاحظة صفية لدراسة سلوك التلاميذ والتحقيق في إدارة الوقت ، بالإضافة إلى مقابلة للتلاميذ (20) الذين تم اختيارهم بشكل عشوائي. علاوة على ذلك ، أظهرت النتائج التي تم الحصول عليها أن الألعاب التعليمية هي تقنية مفيدة لتعزيز مفردات المتعلمين لأنها تساعد على تسهيل التعلم والحفظ. ومنه، فقد تم تأكيد الفرضيات.