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Teaching Pupils EFL by Using Interactive Games

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Abstract

The goal of this study is to find how interactive games can inspire pupils to teach English as a foreign language (EFL). Pre- post tests have been used as a tool for collecting data and given to 60. The pupils have been then divided into two groups of 30, one for control and the other for experimental. The experimental group received games during language. courses and classes, whereas the control group received traditional courses. This study found that most teachers believe games have a positive impact on pupils' achievement in learning English and that using games in the classroom has many educational benefits. Game participation also increased EFL learners' ability to communicate with others.

Keywords: Teaching, English as a foreign language (EFL), Interactive Games, Classroom.

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تعليم طلبة اللغة الانجليزية لغة اجنبية باستخدام الالعب التفاعلية

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المستخلص

تهدف هذه الدراسة الى ايجاد تأثير الالعب التفاعلية على تعليم اللغة الانجليزية لغة اجنبية. استخدم الاختبار التحصيلي القبلي والبعدي كأداة لجمع المعلومات وطبق على عينة تكونت من 60 طالبا وطالبة دارسي اللغة الانجليزية لغة اجنبية. درست المجموعة التجريبية باستخدام الالعب التفاعلية حيث قسمت عينة الدراسة الى مجموعتين تجريبية وضابطة. بينت نتائج الدراسة ان استخدام الالعب التفاعلية له اثر ايجابي على تحصيل الطلبة في تعلم اللغة الانجليزية وان استخدام الالعب التفاعلية في الصف الدراسي يضيف نوع من التشويق مما يعكس الفائدة والايجابية وبالتالي ينمي قدرات الطلبة على التواصل مع بعضهم البعض باستخدام اللغة الانجليزية. الكلمات الدالة: التعليم، اللغة الانجليزية لغة اجنبية، الالعب التفاعلية، الصف الدراسي.

1. Introduction

In addition to the numerous fields in which English is spoken over the world, education is one of them. Generally speaking, listening comprehension is crucial in the sense that students must be able to interpret native speakers or any other multimedia in order to obtain language information from their teachers. Concerning the development of speaking skills in learning a foreign language, Allan, D. (2005) believes that it is critical because it is a fundamental skill for communicating. To increase listening and oral communication skills in English, it is necessary to devote significant time and effort to the development of both skills with Andrea, B. (2011), as a means of becoming more acquainted with the colloquial idioms and collocations that are employed in the language. For example, when it comes to the situation in Ecuador, English as a foreign language (EFL) students have been having difficulties learning the English language, particularly in producing communication due to a lack of confidence in their ability to speak, because the majority of lessons are primarily focused solely on the development of reading and grammar skills rather than oral communication skills by Buckingham, D. (2003).

The use of traditional teaching methods, the low level of knowledge and pedagogical skills possessed by English teachers, and the lack of opportunities for students to practice listening and speaking skills outside of the classroom all have a negative impact on

students' learning progress and academic results. It is therefore necessary to propose appropriate and effective educational tactics, such as the use of games, to encourage students to learn English and participate more actively in the classroom, which has now emerged as a topic of significant importance that requires further investigation and development. A large number of research have been undertaken on the subject in order to establish that games can be utilized as a possible tool for improving and remembering vocabulary. For example, Cornelius-White, J. H. D. (2007), research on vocabulary games was carried out with the purpose of demonstrating that games can be utilized as a possible tool for both improving and retaining language. A further study was carried out by de Freitas, S. (2006), The purpose of this study was to examine whether or not the use of ubiquitous games in learning and teaching English has an impact on the achievement and motivation of English language learners in various settings. In addition, an explanation of how beneficial the use of games in English instruction may be was included, as indicated previously by Fromme, J. (2003). Despite the fact that none of the research presented above address the true issue of pupils' insufficient motivation to perform orally, they do provide some useful information Students' communication skills and creativity are the focus of this project, which aims to develop interactive games that will inspire and support students in making speech and performing better in the English language Gol, M., Zand-Moghadam, A., and Karrabi, M. (2014). It is particularly advantageous for a young child who is learning a foreign language for the first time to engage in games. When children are first learning a new language, it takes some time for them to become acclimated to the sounds and rhythms of the new language by Henry, A., Thorsen, C., and MacIntyre, P. (2021).

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Interactive Games Educative Strategy in Teaching EFL

Pupils' interest and motivation can be increased through the use of interactive games, which can lead to better learning results as well as a boost in Pupils' confidence in speaking English Games encourage learners to sustain their interest and obtain better academic results in the EFL classroom who claims that games have a positive and effective impact on the process of learning a foreign language (Solano, 2017).

Cooperative learning strategies help teachers to promote learning skills and develop friendships in a positive way among diverse groups of pupils. One effective learning strategy from the source *Colorin Colorado* is the Round Table. In round table, teachers present a category (such words that begin with a certain letter) and the pupils take turns writing one word at a time (Weninger and kiss, 2013).

Sánchez (2007) says “As a teacher I would like to use this corporate learning strategy because each pupil has the opportunity to participate and develop confidence. This method can be used in every subject such as math, science, language arts and foreign language”. The strategy used is presented in Table (1). Figure (1) shows Effective Teaching Strategies in the EFL classroom (Kupczynski, 2012).

Figure (1)

Effective Teaching Strategies in the EFL classroom



2.2 Teachers in using Games to teach English Language

2.2.1 Teacher's perceptions towards Games

It is an undeniable fact that teaching foreign language (English language) to children can be indubitably daunting and tiring, especially for teachers who have never had any experiences with this certain group of learners. As it has already been mentioned, as learners, children naturally have shorter attention spans than adult learners; however, if foreign language teachers are well aware of characteristics of their learners in the classroom, they will eventually find that teaching those learners is extremely worthwhile. Since learning is invariably changing, teachers do not have any other choices but to keep modifying their teaching methods and approaches. As a teacher of foreign languages, in a purpose of supplementing lesson plans in the classroom, he or she is often found to turn to games. One of all the reasons would be a well demonstration of justification for using games in the classroom. Games are believed to benefit learners in a variety of ways ranging from the cognitive aspects of language learning to more co-operative group dynamics (Malarcher, 1997:133-135).

In addition to this, El Shamy (2001:) stats that by including games in the classroom, it means providing contexts in which the learning materials can be less boring and interesting instead.

3. Methodology

3.1 Design of the Study

For the purposes of this study, we will use a nonequivalent groups design with a pre-test and post-test, which is a type of experimental research design. When a variable cannot be controlled or cannot be provided in experimental research designs, the use of experimental research designs is justified (Karasar, p.99).2007). This research differs from other experimental research models in that the groups could not be defined objectively prior to the use of the pre-test and post-test nonequivalent groups design, which is the model of this research. This method is favored in educational research, particularly in instances when it is difficult to enroll students in an unbiased manner. It is also used in clinical research (Baştürk, 2011).

3.2 Participants

Students in Kirkuk province public elementary schools in the fifth grade participated in the research 2021-2022. Experiment and control groups have been separated into two groups of 30 students for each A and B. There are 30 participants per group. When teaching English, the experimental group used interactive educational games to motivate students, whereas the control group continued to use the main textbook activities program. In both groups, students exhibit the same traits (e.g gender, socioeconomic structure, academic achievement level).

An observation sheet was used to record the influence of employing interactive educational games technique on students' learning. It took eight weeks and a variety of activities based on the textbook's material to complete the research.

3.3 Data collection tools

In order to acquire the data for this study, we used the following tools:

3.3.1 Personal information

Teachers created this form to collect data regarding pupils' demographics, including their gender, Students' living arrangements, including whether or not they have their own bedrooms, the parents' educational and professional backgrounds, as well as their own. Prior to the development of the final forms, this form was also examined by field experts.

3.3.2 Lessons plans

The lessons plans were conducted by the teachers based on textbook used by the Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Education for the fifth- grade primary school of English language class for school year of 2021-2022. The topics of the lessons plans were selected and discussed with the classroom teacher. The textbook and activity book provided reinforcement for these concepts over the course of the six-week process implementation period.

3.3.3 Experimentation using games to improve speaking and writing abilities

In this study, researchers used an interactive gaming method to address concerns about improving students' abilities to listen, talk, and write. Listen and repeat, miming and role play, question and answer, spelling, alphabet cards, and guessing games are some of the most common types of games used in EFL instruction.

3.3.4 Each game is provided with instructions as below

- The first game was listen and do game. The teacher gives some sentences in form of instructions and pupils should listen carefully and pay attention to act what the teacher asked them. For example when the teacher says (stand up, sit-down, hands up, hands down , clap ...etc.), Pupils will learn to enforce their listening skills and they learn to immediately make the connection between hearing the teacher voice and taking action.
- The second game was miming and role play, pupils played in pairs and create conversation about the dialog topic. Each pupil takes its role in speaking and use language in real situation. This game enables pupils to organize the information and practice vocabulary to help them remember new words or to review words. This game allowed showing pupils' creativity and improving their speaking skills.
- The third game was about question and answer strategy. The teacher hanged pictures of a group of animals on the whiteboard, and wrote some sentences, then; he or she asked pupils various questions about the names of animals and the adjectives of each animal. The teacher asked pupils to complete the sentences by reviewing the previous knowledge they

had. It might be all the pupils integrating in question and answer strategy. This game helps pupils practice asking and answering questions and develop speaking and writing skill.

- The fourth game was spelling game strategy that based on memorizing and remembering vocabulary which encourages pupils to develop their writing skills and they were motivated to practice spelling.

The teacher divided pupils into two teams and drawn a line from the center of the whiteboard. Have each team stand in a line one behind the other. The teacher says the word for each group, then the first team member of each team races to the board and has to write the first letter. For this example the word **Football** for group **A** and the word **Cycling** for group **B** each team member that is at the board would have to write the first letter for each word. Team members swiftly hand off the marker to one another after they've written their initial letter to ensure that no member is left behind. That which finishes first wins.

-The fifth game was Alphabet Cards game which is a great way to reinforce recognition of the letters of the Alphabet or the sounds they represent. Pupils learn about the Alphabet Cards game how to name the letters and how to order the letters. In this game the teacher had two sets of Alphabet Cards that consist of an alphabet card **A – Z** and divide the cards among all the pupils in a line and play ABC song. As it plays each pupil must hold up their corresponding Alphabet Card. Or for example the teacher mentions the English word “orange” the pupils must arrange the alphabet cards into a word orange onto a whiteboard.

A guessing game was the final round of play. Playing a guessing game can help you enhance your English language abilities, including your ability to talk, listen, read, and write. Students' vocabulary grows as a result of this. Real-world examples of countable and uncountable goods, such as bottles of water, apples, sugar, chocolate bar boxes, cups of tea and lemonade and bread and cookies were used by the teacher, then divided class into two groups of **15** pupils in each, the teacher presented them a sample of objects, pupils had to guess the object’s name and they should know to which item it relates whether countable or uncountable items, so the pupils gained the self-assurance to speak more freely, and they were able to recognize the suggested objects, allowing them to expand their vocabulary.

4. Analysis of the Results

The experimental and control groups in the EFL 5th primary courses used a variety of activities to meet the goals of the study. For six weeks, the teacher in the experimental group taught English as a foreign language utilizing an interactive educational game technique. The classroom teacher in the traditional education program lesson taught English to the control group using the fundamental teaching-learning method described in that session. Table 1 lists the events that took place in each of the groups.

Table (1) Course design

Phase	Control group	Experimental group
Week one Pretest	The teacher applied a diagnostic test (pretest) and explained the activities that were taught during the set-up period	The teacher applied a diagnostic test (pre-test) and explained the activities that were taught during the set-up period
Week two	The pupils worked on speaking and writing activities by identifying the	Teacher applied listen and do game strategy to help pupils to identify and connect

My nationality	main ideas and supporting details about the topic using tracks from the CD provided in the textbook.	sounds with actions to improve their listening skills.
Week three Check my understanding	The teacher read a paragraph aloud to the class, and the students listened attentively. Later on, they worked on activities that were provided in the textbook.	In pairs pupils conducted miming and role-play game strategy to communicate with each other in order to improve their speaking skills.
Week four What is it like	Pupils looked at the pictures about the topic lesson and answered the questions proposed in the text book.	Teacher and pupils both conducted question and answer games strategy. Teacher wrote some adjectives about some animals with their pictures on the whiteboard and asked pupils to say the names of the animals.
Week five Sports I like	Students worked using photographs from the textbook to identify and write the sports they were interested in.	Pupils in two teams played a spelling game onto the whiteboard to identify the spelling word of sports
Week six from A-Z Food and Drink	Pupils worked on a matching activity and practiced speaking using the vocabulary from the text book.	Pupils played alphabet cards to find out the letters in order to the correct word.
Week Seven a What we items Can See?	Students worked with pictures presented in the text book and write The words under each picture	In two groups students played guessing game to recognize Based on using countable or uncountable items the objects available.
Week Eight Posttest	Teacher administrated a posttest	Teacher administrated a posttest

The results of the diagnostic (pre-test), which are reported in Table (2), showed that the majority of students lacked the vocabulary to converse effectively in the target language. Due

to past knowledge and abilities gained from attending classes, only a few students were able to demonstrate a high degree of proficiency.

Table (2) Result of Pretest

Category	Experimental group	Control group
Excellent	5	6
Good	6	9
Fair	8	8
Poor	11	7
Total	30	30

A posttest of the experimental students was administered by their teacher at the conclusion of the research, and the results are shown in Table 3 below.

Table (3) Results of posttest

Category	Experimental group	Control group
Excellent	8	7
Good	10	6
Fair	10	7
Poor	2	10
Total	30	30

Students in the experimental group were able to improve their speaking and writing skills, as well as their vocabulary and pronunciation, by using the games strategy. Furthermore, students were willing to compete, which demonstrated their enthusiasm for games and their motivations to play them and take risks in language practice.

Students-to-student and student-to-student connection was also shown to be considerably enhanced as games allowed for more engagement and a better classroom environment. Furthermore, it was noted that students developed more confidence in producing spontaneous speech and their ideas were articulated in the target language simply and spontaneously, and fear was also reduced. Students in a control group, on the other hand, exhibited different outcomes in terms of vocabulary acquisition because their activities were limited to those in the textbook and did not include much interaction between them.

4. Conclusions

This study is to investigate the impact of interactive games on students' learning to pursue the teachers in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL). During the observation, the instructors noted the students' enthusiastic involvement and use of English. In addition to showing a great degree of concentration by engaging in each and every

activity on their own, they established a strong bond with their peers and the teachers who guided them.

According to the findings of this poll, the vast majority of teachers believe that games have a positive influence on students' attitudes toward learning English and that incorporating games into the classroom serves a range of educational objectives. The findings of the post-test demonstrated that pupils had made the anticipated improvements in their spoken English proficiency level.

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