

## **Investigating Iraqi EFL Intermediate School Teachers' Perceptions toward Using Language Games for Learning English**

**By**

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### **Abstract :**

One useful strategy to encourage learning a foreign language is using language games .Using games in language learning is not restricted to any classroom size. Employing games is beneficial for all students since it helps them to view the language as a living means of communication, enables them to try and use it without the feeling of being assessed according to their language skills and at the same time learn useful parts of the language and reinforce knowledge they have already gained.

The study aims at investigating Iraqi EFL intermediate school teachers' perceptions toward using language games for learning English. To fulfill the aim of the present study, a sample of (85) EFL intermediate school teachers taken randomly from different schools .

To achieve the aim of the study , teachers' questionnaire consists of (43) items is applied as instruments .From the analysis of the data, a t-test analysis shows a statistically significant difference according to teacher perceptions toward using language game. It is recommended to use games since they are very effective especially for the intermediate school and games are helpful for the teacher as a procedure for learning language .

### **Introduction:**

#### ***1.1 The Problem and Its Significance***

Language learning is a hard work. Effort is required at every moment and must be maintained over a long period of time. As we need meaningfulness in language learning, and authentic use of the language it is useful to follow and create many different techniques and procedures. That through creative procedure, we can possible to have an interactive environment which may lead to an improvement in learning a foreign language."Games are highly motivating because they are amusing and interesting. They can be used to give practice in all language skills and to practice many types of communication." (Ersoz, 2000:41).

Kim (1995:35) argues that learning should not be always serious and that it is a misconception to think that one cannot learn and enjoy themselves at the same time. In addition to being entertaining, amusing, interesting (Ersoz, 2000:21), and adding fun and variety to the ELT

classroom , games are also considered a welcome change of pace and a refreshing element in learning language which helps break the language classroom routine .The use of games in the teaching process is not applicable restrictively to teaching languages; nevertheless, this is the area this work will focus on.

Some teachers think that language games are a waste of time and prefer not to use them in classroom since games sometimes have been considered only for its one element that is fun. In fact, games can provide English as a foreign language and English as a second language students more than that. Among several strategies used to improve students' proficiency such as visual aids, drama, role-play, and so on, games are another useful strategy to promote students' language proficiency( Kim, 1995:36).

## ***1.2 Aims***

This study aims to Investigating EFL Iraqi intermediate school teachers' perceptions toward using language games in their classes.

## ***1.3 Value***

The study can be useful in :

- a-It can be explored teachers' and perceptions toward the use of language games in the EFL classroom.
- b-The study shows the values of language games as a teaching technique for improving teachers' proficiency.

## ***1.4 Limits***

The study is limited to The Iraqi EFL intermediate school teachers of both sexes (males and females).

## ***1.5 Definitions of Basic Terms***

### ***1.5 .1 Teachers' Perception***

According to Brophy and Good (1974) cited in McKenzie & Turbill (1999:37) a better understanding of teachers' perception system or conceptual base will significantly contribute to enhancing educational effectiveness.

### ***1.5 .2 Language Games***

Hadfield (1999:23) defines games as "an activity with rules, a goal and an element of fun." Games as a teaching method are simple structured activities which may involve little language but are meaningful to students and involve the whole self (cognitively and emotionally), thus creating strong associations with the language used (Fleta, 2009:12).

## ***2. Theoretical Background***

### ***2.1 Learning language by playing***

The definition of “game” is similarly a broad concept. A “game” can be said to be entertainment that simultaneously stresses immersion, interactivity and problem solving, to name a few (Gee & Hayes, 2011:77). According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary (2014), a game is an “activity engaged in for diversion or amusement” or “a gainful activity”. This gives a nice insight into the character of a game, that it distracts students into playing: they learn and gain knowledge while they amuse themselves.

Over the last few years there has been a quite specific interest in using games to teach language. Several studies have concluded that there is indeed much learning going on in game playing, especially in certain social contexts and player configurations. The main thing games can do for language learning is to “situate meaning”. Games associate words with images, actions, goals and dialogue, not just with definitions or other words. Learners come to see how words attach to the world's contexts or situations that they are about and help to create (Reinders, 2012:36). Games are vehicles for competitions and collaboration and as such they have a very similar social function to the language play (verbal duels, jokes, and rituals) (Cook, 2000:128).

### ***2.2 Language Games as teaching method***

According to Azarmi (2011:14), teaching languages by games is one of the best methods for learning foreign languages: as play is the basic means for processing information for youngsters, learning new skills and practicing old ones should be done by adapting childhood games into the learning situation for getting better results. By cleverly incorporating grammar to the game's rules, students should learn or repeat grammar structures and vocabulary while playing. Naturally oral skills are improved simultaneously in the end the talking speed and the fluency of the language learner increases as well. Moreover, the students are mostly not aware that they are practicing a foreign language; they are too immersed in the game.

Haldfield (1999:43) adds: “language Games can be used at all stages of the progression from controlled to free practice, serving at one end of the range as a memory aid and repetition drill, at the other as a chance to use the language freely and as a means to an end rather than an end in itself. They can also serve as a diagnostic tool for teacher, who can note areas of difficulty and take appropriate remedial action.” Haldfield further emphasizes the effective use of games. Students are always lazy to do the tasks. Therefore, games are used suitably in the way in which learners are led to participate in the games so that learners can have a chance to practice

or use the new language items they have just learnt eagerly and willingly instead of forcing them to do the tasks unwillingly. It is more effective in a way that students can play and learn at the same time(Ibid).

### ***2.3 Language Games' Characteristics***

In a nutshell, as mentioned by Caillois (1957:32) “A game is as activity that must have the following characteristics: fun: the activity is chosen for its light-hearted character

- separate: it is circumscribed in time and place
- uncertain: the outcome of the activity is unforeseeable
- non-productive: participation is not productive
- governed by rules: the activity has rules that are different from everyday life
- fictitious: it is accompanied by the awareness of a different reality”
- There are many kinds of games designed for different levels as well as topics, so that students with different language proficiency levels can enjoy and gain the best results from them.

### ***2.4 Why Language Games***

There are a number of reasons that games deserve a place in the language classroom.

*First of all*, they are fun, which are extremely important, because they can help activate students who may have been inactive before, due to lack of interest. Keeping students active is vital because teachers will never be able to actually teach students anything unless they can get them to participate in their own learning process.

*Second*, games also play a big part in helping participants build relationships, and to feel equal. Playing games in the classroom can also help create a friendly and positive atmosphere where seat arrangement can differ from game to game, and thus cause diversity from the norm which can be extremely helpful in keeping an exciting learning environment.

*Third*, the reason most people want to learn a language is to be able to use it in real situations, for example, when travelling. Games can be a very good way to practice this skill because they can easily be used to reenact various situations from real life and provide students with practice in their fluency. Also, by using games in the classroom the teacher is giving his students a bigger role, and he himself is stepping out of the frontline which is a positive thing because it allows students to take on more responsibility. Also that allows students to do more on their own, and that can very well result in an increase in their confidence level. (Langran & Purcell,1994:12-14).

*Fourth*, language students need to be exposed to the language in a variety of situations, which is a need games can fulfill. Language students also need to be ready to take on the experience, keeping their minds open and being willing participants. Again, games make this possible.

*Fifth*, language students need to be emotionally, involved meaning they need to feel something while they are exposed to the language. Strong emotions, such as happiness, excitement, amusement and suspense allow students to feel positively about their learning situation and are therefore likely to have a positive effect on language learning.

*Sixth*, games are good for shy students and students with low confidence, and that applies specifically when playing takes place in smaller groups because then they get a chance to speak in front of fewer audience instead of having to express themselves in front of the whole class. Also it is sometimes easier to open up and forget the shyness when playing a game because the atmosphere is not as serious and more emphasis is put on fluency rather than grammatical correctness (Langran & Purcell.1994:12-14).

Another reason why games are often used in language classes is that they lower students' stress in the classroom. In conventional classrooms, there is a lot of stress put on students trying to master the target language.

Gardner, whose theories that humans have eight intelligences, claims that when exploring a certain topic in school it can, and should, be approached in 6 different ways in order to maximize the chances of reaching all students in the classroom. One of these ways is "the personal way", where the ultimate goal is to see if it is possible to approach a specific topic by using, for example, role play, or other interactions (Gardner 2006: 142). In addition, Armstrong (2000:43) suggests board games as a teaching strategy that might suit students with interpersonal intelligence because they provide an excellent setting for interaction between students.

## **2.5 When Should Language Games be Used?**

Both teachers and students will profit, if the teacher is open to the students suggestions and ideas. It is also good idea to enclose the students in the planning process and encourage them to take part. As Harmer (2004:12) suggests: Good teachers are able to balance the serious study of English with the more entertaining activities that they think their students sometimes need. By watching their classes and asking their students what they think and feel, they can select a judicious blend of activity and style. Games can be used to enhance any part of the lesson. They can be used to present, practice, recycle or assess any language. They can be used to develop listening, speaking, reading and even writing skills. Games should

be seen as learning activities which can enhance students' language development if used systematically with clear goal-setting.

Current gaming theory supports active learning as a motivation stimulus (Cummins, 2000:538). Simulation and gaming theory, which was started as a mathematical method of interactive decision making, may be used in language learning contexts where the language of negotiation and decision making is sought. It is commonly used as a type of competition where the ultimate response or best product is desired. In the language learning environment, it is a good tool for encouraging and motivating students to put their best foot forward.

## ***2.6 Classifications of Language Games***

Classifying games into categories can be difficult because categories often overlap. Hadfield (1999:31) explains two ways of classifying language games. *First*, language games are divided into two types: linguistic games and communicative games.

- Linguistic games focus on accuracy, such as supplying the correct antonym.
- Communicative games focus on successful exchange of information and ideas, such as two people identifying the differences between their two pictures which are similar to one another but not exactly alike. Correct language usage, though still important, is secondary to achieving the communicative goal.

*Second*, Hadfield (ibid) classifies language games into many more categories. Together with the classification of games as linguistic games or communicative games, some games will contain elements of more than one type. Sorting, ordering, or arranging games. For example, students have a set of cards with different products on them, and they sort the cards into products found at a grocery store and products found at a department store. Information gap games. In such games, one or more people have information that other people need to complete a task. For instance, one person might have a drawing and their partner needs to create a similar drawing by listening to the information given by the person with the drawing. Information gap games can involve a one-way information gap, such as the drawing game just described, or a two-way information gap, in which each person has unique information.

According to Lee (2000) (cited in Pham, 2007:15), games have been classified into many kinds:

- Structure games which provide experience of the use of particular patterns of syntax in communication
- Vocabulary games in which the learners' attention is focused mainly on words

- Spelling games
- Pronunciation games
- Number games
- Listen-and-do games
- Games and writing
- Miming and role play
- Discussion games.

Another classification of games by McCallum (1980:64) consists of seven kinds:

- Structure games
- Vocabulary games
- Number games
- Conversation games
- Writing games
- Role play and dramatics

It is shown that the classifications of games from the above linguists are common in a way that each kind of games focuses on a language item or a skill for the purpose and the content of the lesson. Therefore, teachers should be careful of choosing the most suitable game for each lesson so that learners and teachers can benefit the most from these games.

Lee Su Kim, the author of the work *Creative Games for the Language Class*, states that there is a common perception that all learning should be serious and solemn in nature, and that if one is having fun and there are hilarity and laughter, then it is not really learning (Lee 1995:23). However, she adds that it is possible to learn a language as well as to enjoy oneself at the same time, and one of the best way to do so is by using educational games. The justification for using games in a foreign language classroom can be found in the fact that students can benefit a lot by learning through games. Many experienced writers ensure us that games have educational value. The afore mentioned author gives us reasons for using games: they may represent a break from the usual routine, but they can also be highly motivating and challenging. Furthermore, games are a successful encouragement for students to interact, communicate and sustain the effort of learning and they provide a meaningful context for language use, generate fluency, lower anxiety and introduce fun and relaxation.

## ***2.6 The advantages of using games in language teaching and learning***

According to Wright, Betteridge and Buckby (1984:11),

“Language learning is hard work. Effort is required at every moment and be maintained over a long period of time. Games help and encourage many learners to sustain their interest and work.” “Games help the teacher to create contexts in which the language is useful and meaningful. A little different, according to Richard-Amato (1996: 10), even though games are often associated with fun, we should not lose sight of their pedagogical values, particularly in foreign language teaching and learning. Games are effective as they create motivation, lower students' stress, and give language learners the opportunity for real communication. Yet, there has been much prejudice that games are just for fun, not for educational purposes. Conversely, Kim (1995: 23) disagrees with the above prejudice. He says that there is a common perception that all learning should be serious and solemn in nature and that if one is having fun and there is hilarity and laughter, then it is not really learning. One of the best ways of doing this is through games. Though different in the viewpoints, the linguists want to emphasize the ultimate aim of using games in teaching is that teachers want a better lesson in which their students benefit much . Some of the common advantages of using games in language teaching and learning language are recapitulated as follows:

### ***2.7.1 Games motivate learners***

Harmer (1998: 3) asserts that: “Motivation is some kind of internal drive that encourages somebody to pursue a course of action....The motivation students bring to class is the biggest factor affecting their success.” Finding an effective way to motivate learners is always the interest of teachers, researchers and linguists. As Hansen (1994: 118) states, “Games are highly motivating and entertaining, and they can give shy learners more opportunity to express their opinions and feelings.” Games are highly motivating since they are amusing, interesting and at the same time challenging. The activities in a game get all the students to move around, activate their mental capacities and stimulate neural networks, thus motivating learners in learning and retention. At that time, students who are shy also attend the activities with fun, forgetting their shyness and feeling of fear. Further, games add interest to what students might not find interesting. Sustaining interest can mean sustaining effort.

As Wright, Betteridge and Buckby (2005:64) hold, “Games also help the teacher to create contexts in which the language is useful and meaningful. The learners want to take part and in order to do so must understand what others are saying or have written, and they must speak or write in order to express their own point of view or give information. Thanks to games, shy language learners will have more chances to speak and show their feeling and opinions in English as much as they can.”

The use of innovative educational games in the classroom can increase enthusiasm and reinforce previously presented didactic information. It is also a positive, interactive alternative method of teaching and information sharing. In addition, team learning and active peer-to-peer instruction are strongly reinforced by educational games. Games increase students' involvement, motivation, and interest in the material and allow the instructor to be creative and original when presenting topics (Bailey, 1999:46).

### ***2.7.2 Games improve learners' language acquisition***

Thanks to the motivation and interaction created by games, students can acquire their lessons better and more interestedly than other ways (Avedon & Sutton-Smith, 1971:23).

Games can stimulate and encourage students to participate in the activity since naturally they want to beat the other teams... Apart from having fun, students learn at the same time. They acquire new language. Students begin to realize that they have to use the language if they want others to understand what they are saying (Schultz & Fisher, 1988). Furthermore, Richard-Amato (1988: 147) emphasize, "Games can lower anxiety, thus making the acquisition of input more likely." It is clear that in the easy, relaxed atmosphere which is created by using games, students remember things faster and better (Wierus, 1994: 218).

The importance and usefulness of games in foreign language learning has become more and more vital in the current world. Basic lesson activities such as written exercises and chapter translations tend to be tedious after a while. In order for the teacher to invent motivating and fun language learning experiences for students, games can be used to link the spare time of the students to learning. By using games in foreign language learning students can learn grammar, vocabulary and oral skills unconsciously in a supervised situation (Gee & Hayes (2011:42).

### ***2.7.3 Games promote learners' interaction***

Interaction comprises the nature of classroom pedagogy and classroom behavior. Pair or group work is one of the main ways to promote interaction. As Jacobs & Kline Liu (1996:12) express, many games can be played in pairs or in small groups, thereby providing a venue for students to develop their skills in working with others such as the skill of disagreeing politely and the skill of asking for help. In most games, learners have to play in groups in which everyone has a turn, encouraging everyone to take a turn, rather than letting others do all the talking and other actions, and discouraging one or two people from shutting out others. Naturally when playing games, students are trying to win or to beat other teams for themselves or on the behalf of their team. They are so competitive while

playing since they want to have a turn to play, to score points and to win. In the class, learners will definitely participate in the activities. Therefore, in groups or in pairs, they are more willing to ask questions, communicate and discuss with their partners and think creatively about how to use English to achieve the goal. The competition in the games gives students a natural opportunity to work together and communicate in English with each other a lot.

#### ***2.7.4 Games increase learners' achievement***

As far as we know, games can involve all the basic language skills, i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and a number of skills are often involved in the same game (Lee, 1995:31). Further support comes from Zdybiewska (1994: 6): "...games are a good way of practicing language, for they provide a model of what learners will use the language for in real life in the future exercises that practice and utilize the new language have been completed, games can then be introduced as yet another means for enabling greater comprehension." As strongly emphasized above, games can motivate learners, promote learners' interaction, and improve learners' acquisition. As a result, games can increase learners' achievement, which means that learners' test scores, ability of communication, some skills, knowledge of vocabulary, or other language skills can improve. Riedel (2008:19) emphasizes the advantage of games in improving learners' achievement, "We are teaching a new generation of students, which requires unconventional teaching strategies be put into practice in the classroom. And when schools use the games, the student benefits speak for themselves--a greater desire to learn and higher test scores." In brief, games prove to be a useful tool employed regularly in language teaching. Games not only offer learners a highly motivating, relaxing class, but most importantly meaningful practice to all language skills. Consequently, games can motivate learners, promote learners' interaction, improve their acquisition and increase their achievement.

A variety of games, role plays, simulations, and task-based communication activities have been prepared to support Communicative Language Teaching classes. These typically are in the form of one-of-a-kind items: exercise handbooks, cue cards, activity cards, pair-communication practice materials, and student-interaction practice booklets. In pair communication materials, there are typically two sets of material for a pair of students, each set containing different kinds of information. Sometimes the information is complementary, and partners must fit their respective parts of the "jigsaw" into a composite whole. Others assume different role relationships for the partners (e.g., an

interviewer and an interviewee). Still others provide drills and practice material in interactional formats (Richards & Rodgers, 1986:80).

### ***2.8 Using language games in EFL Intermediate students classes***

Intermediate students have already gathered vast amount of knowledge and skills regarding the target language. They have already built the relationship; they are usually aware of and realize the fact that the language is a real thing spoken by real people, rather than mere lists of words and set of rules. They are able to use the language actively and therefore the ground is set for more complicated games if desired. Games for these students are an essential part of a lesson, nevertheless, it brings the refreshment and enjoyment to the teaching-learning process, and it is an occasion to use the target language in an active manner. It is very important that the students use the language without prior careful thinking about a correct way to express themselves. An instinctive and immediate reactions and use of language reinforces the language abilities further and helps the students to adopt it as one of their basic skills.

Teenage students are sometimes not an easy group to teach, inclusive of languages. The difficulties may be many. To name some, it can be their own dislike towards either the foreign language or anything they are required to learn, their personal problems which do not enable them to get absorbed in the learning process or a classroom atmosphere with their colleague students before whom they feel embarrassed or wanting to make a spectacle of themselves. To overcome the negative attitude, the teacher must carefully assess what activities, and of course games, too, they should be asked to execute. A game in a class of teenage students could be a disaster as well as it can be a great success in bringing the pupils together, making good classroom atmosphere, making the students to forget all other obstacles they felt they had before (Petty, 2004:255).

### ***2.9 Teachers' Perception***

According to Brophy and Good (1974) in McKenzie & Turbill (1999:77) a better understanding of teachers' perception system or conceptual base will significantly contribute to enhancing educational effectiveness.

Similarly, Hargreaves & Fullan (1991:31) emphasize teachers' thought process as the base for what teachers do in practice. It is what teachers think, what teachers believe and what teachers' do-at the level of the classroom that ultimately shapes the kind of learning.

This implies teachers' beliefs and understandings about learning and teaching, their beliefs and perceptions about the nature and purpose of the curriculum, using many methods and effective techniques, their

current classroom practices, and teachers' and/or administrators' perceptions of changes in the school culture all have potential to contribute to enhance learning. Thus, to enhance learning as a result of change in school culture needs time and is a process not one time activities.

### 3. Procedures of the Study

#### 3.1 Population and Sample

The total number of the teachers' population of this study is the EFL Intermediate teachers school of the General Directorate of Al –Rasafa the second which distributed between male and female .

To achieve the aims of the study, the researcher has randomly chosen the sample of this study which is the 85 EFL Intermediate teachers school of the General Directorate of Al –Rasafa the second .

#### 3.2 Instrument

In order to achieve the aims of the study, a questionnaire has been constructed to be the main instrument used .

##### 3.2.1 Construction of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire is typically composed of a series of items which approximates the underlying construct through a sample of behaviors and its quality is linked to the degree this sample is representative of the construct (Bartolucci *et al*, 2015: 5).

In order to gain information about the EFL intermediate teachers' perceptions toward using language games in their classes in Iraq a questionnaire has been constructed drawing on the following sources:

- Related literature: They are books, journals, and articles related to the problem of the research .

- Consulting specialists in the fields of ELT, and linguistics;

The rating scale includes the following options:

always(1) , often (2), sometimes(3) , rarely(4) , and never(5), as shown in (Table 1).

(Table 1)

**Questionnaire for Intermediate School Teachers**

| Components and Items |                                                                                                                  | Always | often | some-time | rarely | never |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|-------|-----------|--------|-------|
|                      | <i>Language acquisition</i>                                                                                      |        |       |           |        |       |
| 1                    | Language games increase students' ability to read and comprehend other language materials outside the classroom. |        |       |           |        |       |
| 2                    | Games are interesting and entertaining                                                                           |        |       |           |        |       |

|    |                                                                                               |  |  |  |  |  |
|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| 3  | They promote students' knowledge of vocabulary items which they need in real life situations. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4  | They increase students' familiarity with the use of expressions in their context.             |  |  |  |  |  |
|    | <i>Classroom activities</i>                                                                   |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5  | Games do not allow me enough time to spend on other classroom communicative activities.       |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6  | They demand a lot of time and may consume allotted lesson time                                |  |  |  |  |  |
| 7  | They make lesson interesting and full of fun.                                                 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8  | They cause cultural conflicts that hinder comprehension.                                      |  |  |  |  |  |
| 9  | They increase competition                                                                     |  |  |  |  |  |
| 10 | They introduce students to how language is used in the real world.                            |  |  |  |  |  |
| 11 | They allow for participation a large number of students                                       |  |  |  |  |  |
| 12 | They improve students' cultural understanding                                                 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 13 | They allow for participation a large number of students                                       |  |  |  |  |  |
| 14 | They promote students communicative competence and generate fluency                           |  |  |  |  |  |
| 15 | They encourage learning by doing                                                              |  |  |  |  |  |
| 16 | The emphases is on high-order learning outcomes and thinking skills.                          |  |  |  |  |  |
| 17 | They help to overcome cultural barriers to language learning.                                 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 18 | They introduce students to how language is used in the real world.                            |  |  |  |  |  |
| 19 | They affect classroom management and discipline                                               |  |  |  |  |  |
| 20 | They enable students to see the progress of classmate                                         |  |  |  |  |  |
| 21 | They construct trusting relationship between teachers and their students                      |  |  |  |  |  |
| 22 | They promote students learning styles.                                                        |  |  |  |  |  |
| 23 | They encourage noise in class                                                                 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 24 | They enable students to see the progress of classmate.                                        |  |  |  |  |  |
|    | <i>Better language game level to start at :</i>                                               |  |  |  |  |  |
| 25 | Beginning levels of language learning.                                                        |  |  |  |  |  |
| 26 | Intermediate levels of language learning.                                                     |  |  |  |  |  |
| 27 | Advanced levels of language learning.                                                         |  |  |  |  |  |

|    | <i>Learner motivation</i>                                                               |  |  |  |  |  |
|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| 28 | Language games make the lesson learnable                                                |  |  |  |  |  |
| 29 | They make students share their learning experience                                      |  |  |  |  |  |
| 30 | They decrease the complexity of text                                                    |  |  |  |  |  |
| 31 | They motivate students' learning enthusiasm                                             |  |  |  |  |  |
| 32 | They help in learning to avoid boring                                                   |  |  |  |  |  |
| 33 | They can motivate students for problem solving                                          |  |  |  |  |  |
| 34 | They make students feel frustrated                                                      |  |  |  |  |  |
| 35 | They can satisfy students' needs                                                        |  |  |  |  |  |
|    | <i>Language Skills</i>                                                                  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 36 | They may develop students' writing styles.                                              |  |  |  |  |  |
| 37 | They can promote listening skill                                                        |  |  |  |  |  |
| 38 | They can focus on students' language proficiency more than textbook do                  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 39 | They may direct students towards different cultural content                             |  |  |  |  |  |
| 40 | They can increase students percentage of learning new vocabulary                        |  |  |  |  |  |
| 41 | They can increase students' familiarity with the use of grammar rules in their context. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 42 | They can be integral part for learning language skills                                  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 43 | They can support communication skills                                                   |  |  |  |  |  |

### 3.2.1.1 Face Validity of the Questionnaire

To say that an instrument has face validity merely affirms that it looks like it measures what is supported to measure (Dumont, 2010:336) .

In order to ensure the face validity of the questionnaire, its first version has been exposed to \*the experts in the fields of linguistics and methodology of teaching EFL .

The experts have been requested to judge whether the components of the questionnaire are suitable or not. In the light of the experts' views some items have been added and others have been omitted. However, the items 12 & 14 from the teacher' questionnaire have been changed .

And, the final form of the teachers' questionnaire consists of 43 items distributed into five components: 1.=4 , 2.=19 , 3.=3, 4.=8 , 5.=8.

### 3.2.1.2 Construct Validity

It is stressed systematized reflexivity exploring how the researcher's theory had changed in response to the data (Newton & Shaw , 2014:4). In order to find out the construct validity, the questionnaire has been applied to

the pilot sample. Then, the construct validity has been achieved by using "Pearson Correlation Formula" .

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\*The jury of experts were:

- Prof, Satha Alsaadi, University of Baghdad, College of Education for women.
- Asst. Prof. Jinan **Ahmad khaleel**, PH.D Language and Linguistics, University of Baghdad, College of Education for women.
- Asst. Prof., Shaima Mahdi Saalh, PHD, Methodology, University of Baghdad, College of Education for women.
- **Instr**, Bushra Ni'ma Rashid , PHD, Language and Linguistics, University of Baghdad, College of Education Ibn Rushed for human sciences.
- Instr, Hiba Esmail Gharib , PHD, Language and Linguistics, University of Sulaimanyah.

### 3.2.1.3 Reliability of the Questionnaire

Reliability means repeatability or consistency. A measure is considered reliable if it would give us the same observation over and over again (Trochim *et al*, 2015) .A questionnaire is reliable when it yields the same results over a given time.

However, the questionnaire has been readministered to the same pilot sample after two weeks. The statistical manipulation of the data has been obtained from the two administrations. By using Pearson Correlation Coefficient formula the result yields 0.81 ,whereas ,by using Alpha Cronbach Formula the result yields 0.82 .

### 3.2.1.4 Pilot Administration of the Questionnaire

After ensuring the validity of the questionnaire, a pilot version is administered to a sample of Twenty English language teachers have been chosen randomly from different intermediate school for the pilot administration. Regarding the time allocated for The pilot sample is excluded from the total sample of the study .

Results of the pilot administration can be a good indicator for making any necessary modifications in the final version of the questionnaire and to determine the effectiveness of the items in the light of the subjects' responses.

### 3.2.1.5 Final Administration of the Questionnaire

The Final version of the questionnaire was distributed to the participants at the mid of August 2015 .

The teachers were asked to give their views on the items according to scale. The period of distributing and receiving the copies of the questionnaire lasted from the mid of August to the mid of September 2015.

## 4.Data Analysis and Results

### 4.1 Results

In order to investigate the aim of the study which reads "Investigating Iraqi EFL Intermediate School Teachers' Perceptions toward Using Language Games for Learning English". The responses of the subjects were investigated by using the mean and the hypothetical mean formula .The mean score of the subjects was (160) compared with the hypothetical mean (129). Results mean that the mean is higher than the theoretical mean except items number 17-39 and 42 have no statistical significance comparing with the rest items.

This proves that there is statistically significant differences at in the Iraqi EFL intermediate school teachers' perceptions toward using language games.

**Table (2) : Weighted Mean of the Questionnaire items**

| Components and Items        |                                                                                                                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4  | 5  | weighted average | Weight percentile |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|----|----|------------------|-------------------|
| <i>Language acquisition</i> |                                                                                                                  |   |   |   |    |    |                  |                   |
| 1                           | Language games increase students' ability to read and comprehend other language materials outside the classroom. | 1 | - | 2 | 13 | 2  | 3,8333           | %77               |
| 2                           | They are interesting and entertaining                                                                            | - | 2 | 6 | 7  | 3  | 3,6111           | %72               |
| 3                           | They can increase students' knowledge of vocabulary items which they need in real life situations.               | - | 3 | 8 | 3  | 4  | 3,4444           | %69               |
| 4                           | They may increase students' familiarity with the use of expressions in their context.                            | - | 6 | 3 | 8  | 1  | 3,2222           | %64               |
| <i>Classroom activities</i> |                                                                                                                  |   |   |   |    |    |                  |                   |
| 5                           | They do not allow me enough time to spend on other classroom communicative activities.                           | - | 1 | 4 | 3  | 10 | 4,2222           | %84               |
| 6                           | They demand a lot of time and may consume allotted lesson time                                                   | 1 | - | 8 | 7  | 2  | 3,5000           | %70               |
| 7                           | They make lesson interesting and full of fun.                                                                    | - | 2 | 3 | 8  | 5  | 3,8889           | %78               |
| 8                           | They cause cultural conflicts that hinder comprehension.                                                         | - | 1 | 8 | 6  | 3  | 3,6111           | %72               |
| 9                           | They can increase competition                                                                                    | - | 5 | 5 | 6  | 2  | 3,2778           | %66               |

|                                             |                                                                          |   |   |    |    |    |        |     |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|----|----|----|--------|-----|
| 10                                          | They may introduce students to how language is used in the real world.   | - | 1 | 3  | 6  | 8  | 4,1667 | %83 |
| 11                                          | They allow for participation a large number of students                  | 2 | 3 | 2  | 10 | 1  | 3,2778 | %66 |
| 12                                          | They improve students' cultural understanding                            | 1 | - | 2  | 12 | 3  | 3,8889 | %78 |
| 13                                          | They cab allow for participation a large number of students              | - | 3 | 4  | 9  | 2  | 3,5556 | %71 |
| 14                                          | They promote students communicative competence and generate fluency      | - | - | 4  | 8  | 8  | 4,1111 | %82 |
| 15                                          | They may encourage learning by doing                                     | 1 | 8 | 1  | 4  | 4  | 3,1111 | %62 |
| 16                                          | The emphases is on high-order learning outcomes and thinking skills.     | - | 2 | 7  | 5  | 4  | 3,6111 | %72 |
| 17                                          | They help to overcome cultural barriers to language learning.            | 3 | - | 5  | 4  | 6  | 2,7222 | %54 |
| 18                                          | They introduce students to how language is used in the real world.       | 1 | - | 3  | 9  | 5  | 3,9444 | %79 |
| 19                                          | They can affect classroom management and discipline                      | - | 1 | 4  | 10 | 3  | 3,8333 | %77 |
| 20                                          | They enable students to see the progress of classmate                    | - | 3 | 10 | 2  | 3  | 3,2778 | %66 |
| 21                                          | They construct trusting relationship between teachers and their students | 1 | 1 | 2  | 9  | 5  | 3,8889 | %78 |
| 22                                          | They can promote students learning styles.                               | 1 | 3 | 8  | 4  | 2  | 3,1667 | %63 |
| 23                                          | They encourage noise in class                                            | 1 | 4 | 3  | 7  | 3  | 3,8889 | %78 |
| 24                                          | They may enable students to see the progress of classmate.               | - | 1 | 2  | 5  | 10 | 4,3333 | %87 |
| <i>Better language game level to start:</i> |                                                                          |   |   |    |    |    |        |     |
| 25                                          | Beginning levels of language learning.                                   | - | 1 | 7  | 5  | 5  | 3,7778 | %76 |
| 26                                          | Intermediate levels of language learning.                                | - | 1 | 4  | 10 | 3  | 3,8333 | %77 |
| 27                                          | Advanced levels of language learning.                                    | - | 1 | 1  | 6  | 10 | 4,3889 | %88 |
| <i>Students motivation</i>                  |                                                                          |   |   |    |    |    |        |     |
| 28                                          | They make the lesson learnable                                           | - | 1 | 1  | 3  | 13 | 4,5556 | %91 |
| 29                                          | They make students share their learning experience                       | - | 1 | 3  | 6  | 8  | 4,1111 | %82 |
| 30                                          | Think they decrease the complexity of text                               | - | - | 4  | 5  | 9  | 4,2778 | %86 |
| 31                                          | They can motivate students' learning enthusiasm                          | - | 1 | 6  | 4  | 7  | 3,8889 | %78 |
| 32                                          | They help to avoid boring                                                | - | 3 | 3  | 3  | 9  | 4,000  | %80 |
| 33                                          | They can motivate students for problem solving                           | - | 1 | 2  | 4  | 11 | 4,3889 | %88 |
| 34                                          | They may make students feel frustrated                                   | - | 4 | 3  | 4  | 7  | 3,7778 | %76 |
| 35                                          | They satisfy students' needs                                             | - | - | 4  | 7  | 8  | 4,2222 | %84 |
| <i>Language Skills</i>                      |                                                                          |   |   |    |    |    |        |     |
| 36                                          | They may develop students' writing styles.                               | 2 | 2 | 5  | 2  | 7  | 3,5556 | %71 |
| 37                                          | They can promote listening skill                                         | 1 | 3 | 5  | 4  | 5  | 3,5000 | %70 |

|    |                                                                                         |   |   |   |   |    |        |     |
|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|----|--------|-----|
| 38 | They can focus on students' language proficiency more than textbook do                  | - | 2 | 5 | 7 | 4  | 3,7222 | %74 |
| 39 | They may direct students towards different cultural content                             | 1 | 6 | 6 | 3 | 2  | 2,9444 | %59 |
| 40 | They can increase students percentage of learning new vocabulary                        | - | 1 | 4 | 5 | 8  | 4,1111 | %82 |
| 41 | They can increase students' familiarity with the use of grammar rules in their context. | 1 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 8  | 3,7778 | %76 |
| 42 | They can be integral part for learning language skills                                  | 1 | 9 | 4 | 3 | 1  | 2,6667 | %53 |
| 43 | They can support communication skills                                                   | - | 1 | 1 | 3 | 13 | 4,5556 | %91 |

## 4.2 Discussion of the Results

The research sought to disclose teachers' reasons for using games in an English language classroom. Some of the Iraqi EFL intermediate school teachers have negative perception towards using games as a learning technique. Some of them think that the language game is nothing more than losing time and that it does not have any educational value on student language acquisition. The others believe that a language game has its educational value in classroom activities, but use it rarely in their classes. Finally, there are few teachers who recognize the values and advantages of language games on students motivation, and learning language skills. This research has likewise been based on the supposition that although game means fun, it also has its educational value. And for this reason, it should be introduced in language classes. Through language games students are able to realize their own as well as their classmates' progress in learning language. This type of activity can also be a perfect way for practicing and learning a language since it usually includes a variety of language structures that students will later use in everyday situations. Consequently, a language game can be used for presentation, as a warm-up activity, for practicing and learning vocabulary and grammar, for improving language skills or simply as a break from drilling and finally, as a reward.

## 4.3 Conclusions

Considering language games in general and data analysis, the following major conclusions are proposed:

1-Language games ought to be at the heart of teaching foreign languages, games should be used at all stages of the lesson, provided that they are suitable and carefully chosen.

2-Language games should be treated as central, rather than peripheral, to the foreign language teaching.

3-It is important to choose an appropriate time and integrate them into the regular syllabus and curriculum.

4-Teachers should be aware of the benefits of using language games as well as look after the right proportion of games with relation to other lesson activities in order not to overuse the games, which need to be implemented meaningfully to be able to serve their educational purposes.

5-Some teachers think that language games are a waste of time and prefer not to use them in classroom since games sometimes have been considered only for its one element that is fun. In fact, games can provide EFL students more than that .Among several strategies used to improve students' proficiency such as visual aids, drama, role-play, and so on, games are another useful strategy to promote students' language proficiency

6-All agree that even if games resulted only in noise and entertained students, they are still worth paying attention to and implementing in the classroom, since they motivate learners, promote communicative competence and generate fluency and may have a significant role in improving a second language acquisition.

7-The last point to be highlighted here, that the students may be very different and have different priorities ,so the teacher needs to know his/her students needs. This helps mainly to tailor the lesson style and activities to the concrete students needs, which enables to run the lessons smoothly and with joy.

#### **4.4 Recommendations**

In the light of the findings achieved and the conclusions derived , the researcher recommend the following:

1-Syllabus designers have to allocate time and give more emphasis to the language games when they design any text for language learning .

2-English language teachers should focus on using language games in order to facilitate learning process when they teach grammar ,vocabularies, literature, and the other language skills .

3-English language teachers should develop their skills in language teaching by using novel techniques in teaching such as web sites ,educational sources, and promote online webinars to share ideas and exchange experience for effective teacher development through collaborate extensively with colleagues.

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## استقصاء آراء مدرسي اللغة الانكليزية العراقيين في المدارس المتوسطة نحو العب اللغة في تعليم اللغة الانكليزية استخدام

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العراق / وزارة التربية

### الملخص:

إنّ إحدى الاستراتيجيات المفيدة لتشجيع تعلم لغة أجنبية هي استخدام العب اللغة. كما ان استخدام الألعاب في تعلم اللغة لا يقتصر على أي حجم الصفوف الدراسية. توظيف الألعاب في تعلم اللغة هو مفيد لجميع الطلاب لأنه يساعدهم على عرض اللغة باعتبارها وسيلة الحياة للتواصل، وتمكنهم الطلبة من استخدامها دون الشعور كونها وسيلة للتقييم والاختبار وفقاً لمهارات الطلبة اللغوية، وفي الوقت نفسه تعلم أجزاء مفيدة من اللغة وتعزيز المعرفة التي اكتسبت بالفعل. تهدف الدراسة إلى معرفة تصورات مدرسي المدارس المتوسطة في العراق تجاه استخدام الألعاب اللغة كوسيلة لتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية. ولتحقيق هدف الدراسة الحالية، تم اختيار عشوائياً (85) مدرس من مرحلة الدراسة المتوسطة من مدارس مختلفة. وقد استخدم الاستبيان كأداة في هذه الدراسة ، والذي تألف من (43) فقرة لمدرسي المرحلة المتوسطة.

لقد أظهرت النتائج ،ومن خلال استخدام الاختبار التائي ، وجود فرق ذات دلالة إحصائية وفقاً لتصورات مدرسي المرحلة المتوسطة نحو استخدام العب اللغة. وقد أوصي انه من المستحسن استخدام الألعاب في تعلم اللغة بوصفها وسيلة فعالة جداً خاصة بالنسبة لمرحلة الدراسة المتوسطة، وتعتبر من الاجراءات والتقنيات الحديثة المفيدة في تعلم اللغة.