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The Importance of Using Language Games in Teaching/Learning Vocabulary for EFL Middle School Learners in Algeria.

Extended Essay Submitted to the Faculty of Arts and Languages as fulfillment of the requirements on the master's degree

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my parents who gave me the meaning of life.

To my beloved wife who supported me without limit in these past five years.

To my brothers and sisters who showed me how to be a big brother.

To my work superior who encouraged me to continue my path.

To my friends/colleagues, each by his/her name.

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In the name of Allah

The first person I dedicate my work to is my beloved mother. It is true you are away from us, but you and your memories never die. Thanks for your support, guidance and prayers all the time. May Allah (SWT) grant you Jannah Firdaws.

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List of abbreviations

- EFL: English as a Foreign Language

- MCQ: Multiple Choice Question

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Abstract

Acquiring the vocabulary of a new language is the fundamental key to facilitate its learning. In Algeria, acquiring the vocabulary of English language starts from middle school where students are being taught English as a foreign language. This process of learning is done by two methods: traditional methods such as memorizing new words and translating words into mother tongue, and using language games as a creative method to teach vocabulary. The focus of this study was to find out the importance of language games in acquiring vocabulary when learning English as a foreign language (EFL) in the Algerian Middle Schools. In this respect, a descriptive research was conducted by distributing an online questionnaire for EFL Algerian Middle School teachers who were randomly chosen. This questionnaire was composed of two parts: the first part collected the personal information about the participants (age, gender, experience, etc.). The second part was composed of 14 questions devoted to explore and investigate to which extent Algerian EFL teachers are using language games in their classes to teach vocabulary, and how effective they see language games as a better means to teach new words for Algerian Middle School EFL student rather than using traditional methods. In addition, to how extent the use of languages games is effective to motivate EFL students and to create the best atmosphere to teach them vocabulary and other materials? Results of this study confirms the importance of using language games to teach vocabulary for Algerian EFL Middle School students, and proves the effectiveness of using language games to motivate and encourage students to be a vivid part of the learning process.

Keywords: language games, traditional methods, effectiveness, EFL students, middle school teachers, vocabulary, importance.

General Introduction

General Introduction

English language in Algeria has the status of a foreign language. Therefore, Algerian learners do not start their English classes until reaching middle school. Consequently, it is a challenging task for teachers and students in this stage to start teaching and learning a new language. One challenge is that these learners are having French as a second language at the same time with English, which is resulted by having negative transfer and interference between the two languages. Furthermore, the real challenge in learning a new language is to start acquiring its vocabulary to communicate with others.

Traditional methods such us memorizing new words, checking multilanguage dictionaries, and translating English words into mother tongue are proven to be less efficient methods to teach vocabulary for many reasons. One reason is that it is more likely to forget words which are learned by heart and being cut from their context. Therefore, the less efficiency of traditional methods, and the importance of learning vocabulary urge language teachers to create new creative methods to teach new words. Hence, language games came to accomplish this goal where learners are having fun and at the same time learning new words in creative methods. These methods help the learner to acquire new vocabularies by putting them in context with real situations, explain new words by acting their function, and different other methods which are going to be mentioned through the literature review of this research.

In addition to the challenge of teaching vocabulary, having a boring class or bored students is a problem for any language teacher. Therefore, language games have proven to be an innovative technique to break the ice between the teacher and the learner, in addition to stimulate and motivate learners to be active learners which will eventually result to have a helpful and cooperative teaching atmosphere.

The main objective of the present study is to confirm the importance of using language games as a method to teach vocabulary for middle school students. The study also aims at finding out the positive outcomes that language games can bring to EFL classrooms. Moreover, this work intends to figure out the effectiveness of language

games in making students learn and enhance vocabulary in an amusing way. To accomplish the research's objectives, an online questionnaire was distributed to Algerian middle school teachers who were randomly chosen in order to have detailed information about their experience with using language games in teaching vocabulary for EFL learners.

The present study attempts to answer the following questions:

1/ To what extent are language games effective in vocabulary learning?

2/ How can language games affect middle school learners?

In the light of the above raised questions, researchers hypothesized that:

1/ Language games are an effective technique to teach vocabulary.

2/ In language games, students are involved, motivated and thus interact more while learning.

The main problem faced to do this study is that the majority of Algerian EFL learners especially beginners are facing difficulties in learning English due to the lack of vocabulary. Further, acquiring a huge amount of words from a new foreign language is a quite challenging. Learners are able to memorize the words taught during the lesson but they easily forget them all over again the next few days. That is mainly due to the traditional method used in teaching which is not so effective. As a result, the teachers need to make their class impressive through integrating language games in teaching vocabulary.

The significance of this study is that it will be of great value to EFL Algerian teachers to give language games more interest by highlighting the importance and the effectiveness of language games for teaching vocabulary for Algerian EFL learners. Moreover, both teachers and pupils will benefit from the use of language games in teaching by improving students' motivation level during the tedious classroom learning process. It is also considered of great importance to curricula and to select the best ways to improve teaching vocabulary by using language games.

Chapter I
Literature Review

1.1 Introduction:

Knowing as much as possible of words in a new language is the first step that learners will first try to accomplish. To do this, a learner tries many strategies to reach his aim. These strategies can be independent strategies where he/she depends on themselves to acquire the vocabulary of a new language, such as learning it through dictionaries or watching movies with subtitles. The second strategy of learning vocabulary is the teacher-learner strategy, which is the case of this study, where the learner depends on his teacher in classroom to learn new vocabulary. In this chapter, it is needed to go through defining some key concepts of this research such as vocabulary and language games. In addition, it is also fundamental to highlight the strategies used by teachers to teach vocabulary; thus, the focus will be on showing the traditional methods of teaching vocabulary versus using language games in classroom for the same purpose.

1.2 Definition of vocabulary:

There are several definitions for the word vocabulary where each definition serves a purpose. The following are some of the well spread definitions of vocabulary:

According to Hornby (1995), "vocabulary is the total number of words in a language." (p.1331)

According to the Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, there are two definitions for the noun "vocabulary": 1- all the words known and used by a particular person. 2- all the words which exist in a particular language or subject.

Further, the knowledge of vocabulary known by a particular person is divided into two groups:

The first group: receptive / passive vocabulary – it is the set of all the words that are understood at reading or listening but not used in the spoken or written expressions.

The second group: productive / active vocabulary – it is defined as the set of all the words that are not only understood, but also used meaningfully while creating new sentences (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary).

To explain more these two previous concepts, Finocchiaro (1974) states that active vocabulary consists of words which students understand, can pronounce correctly and use constructively in speaking and writing. However, passive vocabulary consists of words that those students recognize and understand when they occur in a context and they never use them in communication. In other words, they understand them when they hear or read them, but they don't use them in speaking or writing (p.73).

1.3 What is vocabulary learning?

1.3.1 The limited view:

Vocabulary learning is fundamentally about knowing words. However, the idea of knowing a word is not always well understood. Some say that knowing a word means knowing what a word means. Others say that it means knowing the written form i.e. spelling. These are only two of many aspects of knowing a word (Nation, 1990).

Some parents and teachers encourage having a wide range of vocabulary. However this requires a lot of effort to learn all the words in a dictionary. But is that even necessary? Due to time constraints, it is crucial to strategically decide what words to teach or learn. Therefore, another view was presented to accomplish the missing goals in the limited view.

1.3.2 The holistic view:

Nation (1990) proposed a comprehensive list of what it means to know a word. This is a simplified version of the list:

1.3.2.1 Meaning:

a) Do I know the meaning of the word?

b) Does the word have a similar meaning to a word in my language?

1.3.2.2 Form:

a) Can I pronounce/spell the word?

b) Can I recognize the word when I hear/read it?

1.3.2.3 Use:

a) Do I know its grammatical function, such as noun or verb?

b) Do I know words (i.e. collocates) that usually appear with the word?

Table1: What is involved in knowing a word?

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

Source: Adapted from Nation (2001, p. 27).

1.4 Types of Vocabulary:

Risdiana (1997) states that there are four categories of vocabulary:

1.4.1 Listening Vocabulary :

All the words that children recognize and understand upon hearing them in oral context are considered as listening vocabulary. It is also the first vocabulary to develop during the first language acquisition stage, and is also the one that continues to grow most rapidly during the first years of school.

1.4.2 Speaking Vocabulary :

Speaking vocabulary are all the words used by children in everyday speech. It forms the basis for development of the reading and writing vocabulary.

1.4.3 Reading Vocabulary :

Reading vocabulary consists of all the words that children recognize and understand in writing. The students' vocabulary mastery is generally limited when they enter schools. By the time they reach reading maturity in the upper grades, their reading vocabulary overtakes and surpasses their oral vocabulary. The more students read, the larger is their reading vocabulary.

1.4.4 Writing Vocabulary :

Writing vocabulary is the last to develop and includes only the words that children can use in written composition. It is closely tied to spelling instruction.

1.5 Steps in Learning Vocabulary: According to Hatch and Brown (1995) there are five essential steps in learning vocabulary:

1.5.1 Having sources for encountering new words:

The first essential step for vocabulary learning is countering new words, that is, having a source for words. The students' strategy here includes learning new words by reading books, magazines, and newspapers.

1.5.2 Getting the word form:

The second essential step for learning vocabulary is to get a clear image -visual or auditory or both- of the form of the vocabulary item. The significance of this step, knowing the form of the word, becomes noticeable when we try to retrieve the word.

1.5.3 Getting the word meaning:

In this step, the students can get the word meaning more easily from the context, by reading the text or in a conversation, than by just reading the vocabulary list. Moreover, the teacher makes it easier for the students to grasp the word meaning through visual and audio techniques.

1.5.4 Making a strong memory connection between the form and the meaning of the words:

The next step has to do with remembering the vocabulary, and it is done by the consolidation of word, form, and meaning in memory. In this step, the students do exercises which include games in order to make strong memory connection between the form and the meaning of the words.

1.5.5 Using the word:

The last step is using the words, when students seem having a guarantee that words and meaning will not fade from memory once they are learned. Use of word may simply be a form of hypothesis testing, allowing learners to see if the knowledge gained in the other steps is correct.

Based on the explanations above, steps in learning vocabulary can help students learning English vocabulary in the classroom. Those steps also support the students' knowledge about English vocabulary so they can master the language.

1.6 How vocabulary is learned:

The linguist, David Wilkins (1972), states that “without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed.”(pp. 111/112). Young learners usually use labeling when they first start to learn to speak then categorize skills. Further, they develop a network building in which they construct complex ideas. Last, they realize that there are other words such as synonyms and antonyms during this process. (Thornbury, 2002).

There are several approaches and methods that could be used to teach English vocabulary to young learners. One method is using real objects that children could visualize as a good way to learn vocabularies of the language. They need to listen to their teacher using the word and repeat it as well. Another method is the direct method where there is no translation and using the mother tongue is prohibited. The complete sentences in the target language are the only thing used in the classroom. Another method is the Total Physical Response (TPR) which is used a lot by teachers because children are hyper-active and could not concentrate for a long time.

1.7 Traditional methods versus Language games to teach vocabulary:

Nguyen and Khuat (2003) and Uberman (1998) showed that many students are exhausted of learning vocabulary in the traditional ways or methods such as rehearsing, writing words on notebooks or learning vocabulary in a passive way through teacher’s explanations; thus, this has created severe problems with learning skills. Due to that, Nguyen and Khuat (2003) believe that students favor to learn language in a relaxed environment such as vocabulary games. In addition, they believe that in an interesting and communicative class, learners can learn 80% percent of what they are exposed to. Freeman (2002) states that learners enjoy language games besides enjoying communicative involvement in the classroom. He also believes that games can provide a constructive and healthy competition.

In the present study, the researchers' choice of language games method rather than the traditional methods mentioned before to teach vocabulary is justified, as games can encourage the learners discover and volunteer involvement to the learning process. In addition, they can also establish a better bond between teacher and learners, and finally, a well designed language game creates a real communication context in the classroom which is helpful for learners to improve their language skills.

1.8 Definition of game:

To know what a game is, we have chosen three definitions from three different perspectives. The first one was stated by Gibbs (1978, cited in Rixon, 1996), he defines a game as an activity in which students cooperate or compete to achieve the objectives following the imposed rules. The second one has been taken from Hadfield (1998) who defines it as "an activity with rules, a goal and an element of fun" (p.4). The last definition has been extracted from Wright et al. (2006) who use three adjectives to define a game. They refer to a game as an entertaining, engaging and challenging activity where play and interaction take place amongst the learners.

It is deduced that all definitions mentioned before agree about an existence of a goal behind playing games. Thus, in this research the aim of using language games in class is to achieve the goals of teaching new vocabulary for young learners, and acquiring vocabulary while having fun.

Another definition which is directly related to learning is introduced by Martinson and Chu (2008):

> Games are effective tools for learning because they offer students a hypothetical environment in which they can explore alternative decisions without the risk of failure. Thought and action are combined into purposeful behavior to accomplish a goal. Playing games teaches us how to strategize, to consider alternatives, and to think flexibly. (p.478)

The last definition found in the Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics by Richards, Platt, & Platt (1995) where games are defined as "an

organized activity that usually has the following properties: a particular task or objective, a set of rules, competition between players, and communication between players by spoken or written language" (p. 89).

1.9 Types of games:

It is a bit difficult to classify games into categories because categories often overlap. Hadfield (1999) states that there are two ways of classifying language games. She divides language games into two types: linguistic games and communicative games. Linguistic games focus on accuracy, such as supplying the correct antonym. On the other hand, communicative games focus on the 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. Correcting language usage, though still important, is secondary to achieving the communicative goal.

Wright et all. (2006) provide a classification of games depending on students' mental processes which take place while playing the game. This classification includes 08 classes:

1.9.1 Care and share:

This includes all games where the learner shares his personal information in a comfortable way with other learners. This kind of games relates more to invitation than to challenge.

1.9.2 Do: move, mime, draw, and obey:

In this type of games the learner is expected to respond to a read or a heard text with doing something non-verbal.

1.9.3 Identify: discriminate, guess, and speculate:

Here the learner is asked to identify something which is difficult to identify or to hypothesize about something.

1.9.4 Describe:

In this case, the learner is challenged to describe something to another learner, by speaking or writing.

1.9.5 Connect: compare, match, and group:

The challenge for the learner here is to connect, compare, match or group various items of information, such as pictures or texts; this can be both in an objective or subjective way.

1.9.6 Order:

The learner is asked to put various chunks of information into an order of quality and importance.

1.9.7 Remember:

The learner tries to remember something and to communicate it with others.

1.9.8 Create:

The learner is invited or challenged to make a story, write a poem or produce some other kind of material by using their imagination.

1.10 Techniques used in language games' activities:

According to Hadfield (1999), the simplest games' activities are based on some techniques. Some of these techniques are explained as shown below:

- Information gap game: Its technique is based on exchanging information between students, in order to complete a task successfully.
- Guessing games: here the student deliberately withholds information and others try to guess it.
- Search games: here the whole class is involved where everyone has one piece of information, and players have to collect as much as possible information to fill up a questionnaire.
- Matching games: in this case also the whole class can be involved, and participants need to find a matching card or picture for a given word.
- Exchanging games: players have a given article and they have to barter cards or ideas which are satisfactory for both sides.

1.11 The values of games (advantages of Games in learning and teaching):

Lukianenko states that using language games is highly important due to several reasons:

- Games help students to make and sustain the effort of learning, because learning a language requires a serious effort.
- Games encourage students to interact and communicate.
- They help to create a meaningful context for language use;
- Games lower anxiety especially when played in small groups;
- Games can involve all the basic language skills, i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
- They can encourage students to draw on analysis, synthesis, evaluation;
- They foster a more positive attitude toward the classroom experience – more attention, better attendance, better participation;
- They improve retention, decision-making skills, and comprehension of general principles.

1.12 How to Use Language Games:

Langran & Purcell (1994) revealed some steps on how a teacher should use his language games efficiently:

1.12.1 Define the structures and vocabulary: when a teacher wants to reinforce a particular language structure or an area of vocabulary which has recently been introduced, he needs to make sure that what he is asking learners to do actually

requires them to use this language and not other languages which they have not yet met.

1.12.2 Choose a relevant topic: It is important to make sure that the situations and topics which a teacher chooses should be relevant to the learners and their future use of the language.

1.12.3 Check the logistics: most of language games rely on interacting pairs and groups. So, it is very important to check that what students are asked to do will actually work smoothly. Because learners often need to take notes while they are moving around talking to different people. It is useful to have a set of clipboards or by the use worksheets on card instead of paper.

1.12.4 Use a suitable room: for a teacher who uses a lot of language games, using a suitable room, games should have a formal area for learners to sit, with or without tables, and a flexible area where they can stand or sit, and move around, depending on the given activity.

1.12.5 Prepare the activity: Language games should be prepared due to the complexity of some game activities, such as role-cards games which require detailed preparation that can take a lot of time.

1.12.6 Check for key words: most language games need a few key words that are essential to success. Learners need to be able to catch others' attention, introduce themselves and say things like *excuse me, please, sorry, could you say that again, No, I'm not the person you are looking for*, etc. As the group uses more language games, learners will build up a register of such phrases.

1.12.7 Give clear instructions and demonstration if necessary: To play the game, learners need to know the rules. Therefore, a teacher should explain them as clearly as possible. Concerning the language to use for the explanation, it will depend on the group.

1.12.8 During the activity: monitor, prompt, be on hand: A teacher should monitor the work sensitively, without inhibiting it, and without stopping the flow by constant correction.

1.12.9 Stop the game at the right time: in a group activity, some language games come to a natural end. However, with others this end is more difficult. In pair work, some pairs will finish before others. The teacher does not want people to sit around waiting for others to finish. Thus, it is useful to have some extra activities ready for this moment. As a general rule it is better to stop the game too soon rather than too late.

1.13 When to Use Language Games:

It is highly important not to take language games as filling-gap activities, such as when learners are feeling bored, or using them without a purpose of learning. Lee (1979) finds that a game "should not be regarded as a marginal activity filling in odd moments when the teacher and class have nothing better to do." (p.3). Therefore, there are many cases to be considered to help the teacher know when to use or when to add a game in his class:

Upadhyay (2019) gives some cases about when to use games:

- Games can be both used to open or to close a lesson.
- Games can be used to punctuate long formal teaching units and renew students' energy before returning to more formal learning.
- Games can act as a testing mechanism for finding out the areas of weakness in language proficiency.
- Games can be used to relieve tension after a test or concentrated practice

1.14 The related research works of teaching vocabulary games (Previous Studies):

The first study was entitled 'The Effectiveness of Using Language Games in Teaching Vocabulary' which is a recent study done to obtain a master degree in applied linguistics. It was undertaken by Ms. Ilhem DARFILAL in 2015 at the University of Telemcen, Algeria. She proposed language games as a method to teach vocabulary, and chose a sample of third year students at El Aid Aal-Khalifa Middle School, Tlemcen, Algeria as a case study where 32 Students were randomly chosen, in addition to 03 teachers of English. The aim of the study was to highlight an examination of the effective vocabulary improvement through entertainment. To do so, she conducted a descriptive study through using different instruments. First, a questionnaire was devoted to EFL teachers to examine their attitudes towards vocabulary and their concerns about language game as a technique to teach vocabulary. Second, an interview was used to reveal students' opinions after having participated in a language game inside the classroom. Third, an observation was made during three sessions in one week;

The research tried to answer the following questions:

- How can a language game be more than just fun?
- How do language games affect the middle school learners' vocabulary learning?

The result of her work showed the effectiveness of using language games method in improving EFL middle school students' vocabulary knowledge. These students proved to have learnt nearly all the unfamiliar words that they have seen in the first session. Also, they were highly motivated and interested. Accordingly, she concluded that language games should be used in teaching vocabulary.

The second study was an experimental study done at Hebron University, Palestine, under the title of "The Effect of Games on Vocabulary Retention" in 2018. The study aimed to figure out the efficiency of using games inside the classroom. This study was conducted during the first semester of 2018/2019 and lasted for 2 months. The sample

was composed of 20 students who were listed and selected randomly from Dar Assalam School in Herbron, Palestine. Researchers in this study used two instruments to collect data: the first was a pretest which had been given to learners before the start of the study, and a posttest which was given at the end of study. The second instrument was the use of class observation, in which the researchers observed students' reaction towards games. The findings of the conducted research revealed that using language games inside classrooms has a great positive effect on students' vocabulary performance and that it is a way to familiarize students with new information which leads to develop their language and communicative skills.

The third study is entitled 'The Effect of Using Language Games on Vocabulary Retention of Iranian Elementary EFL Learners' which is a study that was undertaken in 2014 at the University of Islamic Azad in Iran by Marzieh Taheri. It aimed at investigating the effect of using language games on elementary students' vocabulary retention. The sample consisted of 32 students selected from the same level of proficiency, then divided into two groups of 16 students. The first one, which is the control group, adopted the traditional method of teaching vocabulary such as definitions and drill. For the second group, which is the experimental group, students were exposed to language games as a technique of learning vocabulary. The experiment lasted for one month where the group had one session each week. At the end of the experiment, the researcher administered three vocabulary tests for both groups. The first posttest investigated the students' immediate vocabulary learning in two different methods. After two weeks the second posttest was administered to both groups to determine the delayed effect of learning again with and without the treatment which is language games. Four weeks after the second posttest, the third posttest was administered to determine the participants' ability of retention in both groups. The findings of the conducted research revealed that the effect of the game-like activities was more significant in the delayed time than the immediate one.

Chapter II Methodology and Data Analysis

2.1 Introduction:

This chapter is dedicated for the methodology used in this research to investigate about the hypotheses presented in the general introduction: 1/ Language games are an effective technique to teach vocabulary, 2/ in language games, students are involved, motivated and thus interact more while learning. Hence, a questionnaire was directed to teachers from different middle schools in Algeria. This methodology chapter includes the research design, the sample population, research instrument, and procedure for data collection.

2.2 The Research Design:

This study attempts to investigate how important is using language games for teaching vocabulary for EFL Algerian Middle School students. Therefore, the research is conducted by publishing an online questionnaire designed by "Google forms" in order to be answered by Algerian Middle School teachers of English language. Afterward, the data is collected and prepared to be analyzed then interpreted.

2.3 The Sample Population:

Polit et al, (2001) state that "sampling involves selecting a group of people, events, behaviors, or other elements with which to conduct a study."

The population of the current study comprises a number of 49 middle school teachers of English Language in Algeria who are randomly chosen.

2.4 The Method Used:

The data collected in our research will be quantitatively analyzed.

2.5 Research Instrument:

2.5.1 Teachers' Questionnaire:

A questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of a set of questions that has been broadly acknowledged for its efficiency in conducting research since it allows researchers to collect the more complete and exact data from respondents. Nonetheless, researchers conducting the present investigation see the questionnaire as the more appropriate tool to collect accurate data for the purpose to obtain reliable results. "The questionnaire has become one of the used means of collecting information. If well-constructed; a questionnaire permits the collection of reliable and reasonably valid data on a simple, cheap, and timely manner," (Anderson and arsenaul, 2005, p.170)

The data of this study has been obtained by using an online teacher's questionnaire which is structured into two parts:

Part one includes 04 questions about:

Participants' personal information: age, gender, academic qualification, and participants' experience in English language teaching. Part two includes 14 questions about:

The teachers' point view on the importance of using language games in teaching English as a foreign Language and vocabulary in particular in Algerian Middle Schools. 10 questions were in the form of the Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, uncertain, disagree, strongly disagree), in addition to closed-ended questions (yes or no/MCQ).

2.6 Validity and reliability:

2.6.1 Validity of the questionnaire:

To ensure the validity of the research's questionnaire, this latter was exposed to a jury of two university professors and three EFL teachers. All of them agreed on its content and structure. The final form of the questionnaire was drawn out after taking their comments, opinions and advices into consideration.

2.6.2 Reliability of Teachers' Questionnaire:

In order to examine the reliability of the study tool, Cronbach Alpha was used. The coefficient alpha of the tool had a good reliability of 0.68. (see table (2))

Table 2: The Cronbach's Alpha for the Online Questionnaire

	N° of Items	Chronbach's Alpha	N° of cases
Online Questionnaire	10	0.681	49

2.7 Population of Teachers' Questionnaire:

The population of this questionnaire was middle school teachers of English Language in Algeria. The sample comprises 49 English Language middle school teachers.

2.8 Procedure of the Questionnaire Distribution:

The purpose of this questionnaire is to obtain data about the importance of the use of language games to teach vocabulary. This study questionnaire was designed by the use of the online application for surveys "Google forms", and then an online link was created. This latter was sent by email to a number of middle school teachers here in Medea, and these teachers spread it through the same means to their colleagues, and in the same manner the link was spread among other EFL teachers from different middle schools in the country to reach 49 teachers at the end of the10th day of the procedure.

The anonymity of the teachers participated in the survey was guaranteed, and all of them were thanked by the researchers for their collaboration

2.9 Results related to the teachers' questionnaire:

The results of the teachers' questionnaire are presented into two parts .Part one includes 04 questions regarding the participants' personal information such as, age, gender, academic qualification, the participants' experience in English language teaching. Part two includes the responses of participants to the questions related to their point of view regarding the use of language games to teach vocabulary.

2.9.1 Part one: Participants' personal information:

As mentioned above the personal information includes: age, gender, academic qualification, and the participants' experience in English language teaching.

2.9.1.1 Age of the participants:

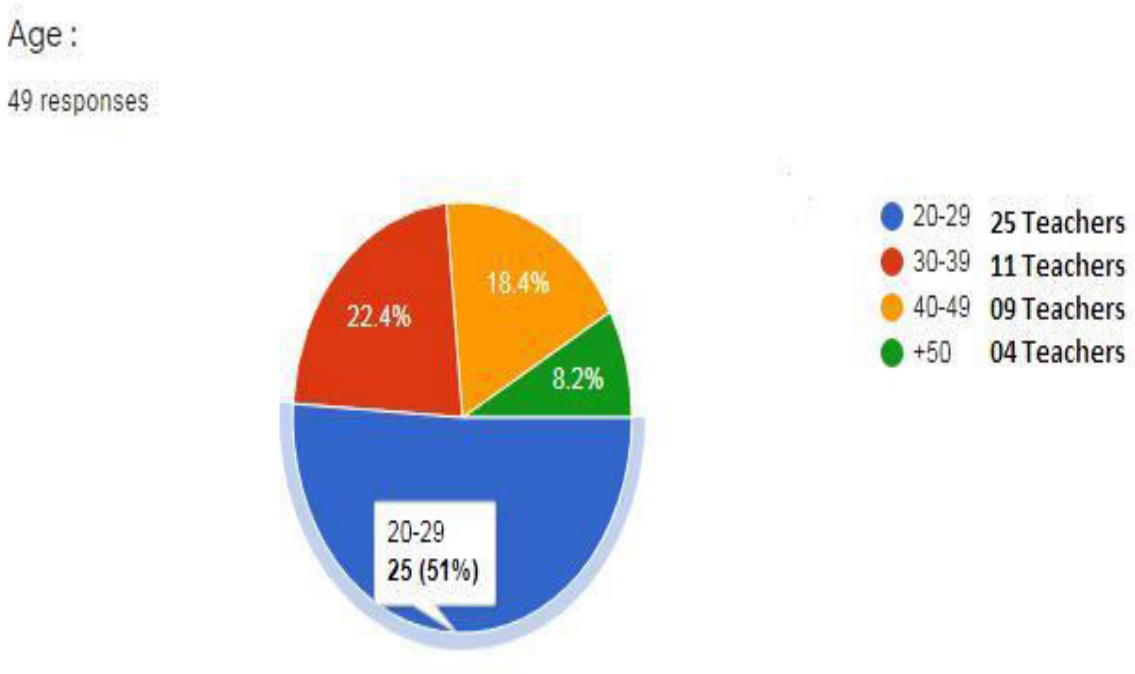


Figure 01: Results of the Age of Participants.

The pie chart given above indicates that 25 from 49 participants belong to the range of age between 20 and 29 years old. These participants represent more than 50% of the participants in this questionnaire. The remaining are 22,4% of participants whose their age varies from 30 to 39 years old. In addition to 18,4% of the participants have from 40 to 49 years old of age ,and only 8,2% is the percentage of the teachers who have more than 50 years old which is represented by 04 teachers .

This result reveals that the majority of teachers participated in this questionnaire are young teachers who did not reach 30 years of age.

2.9.1.2 The gender:

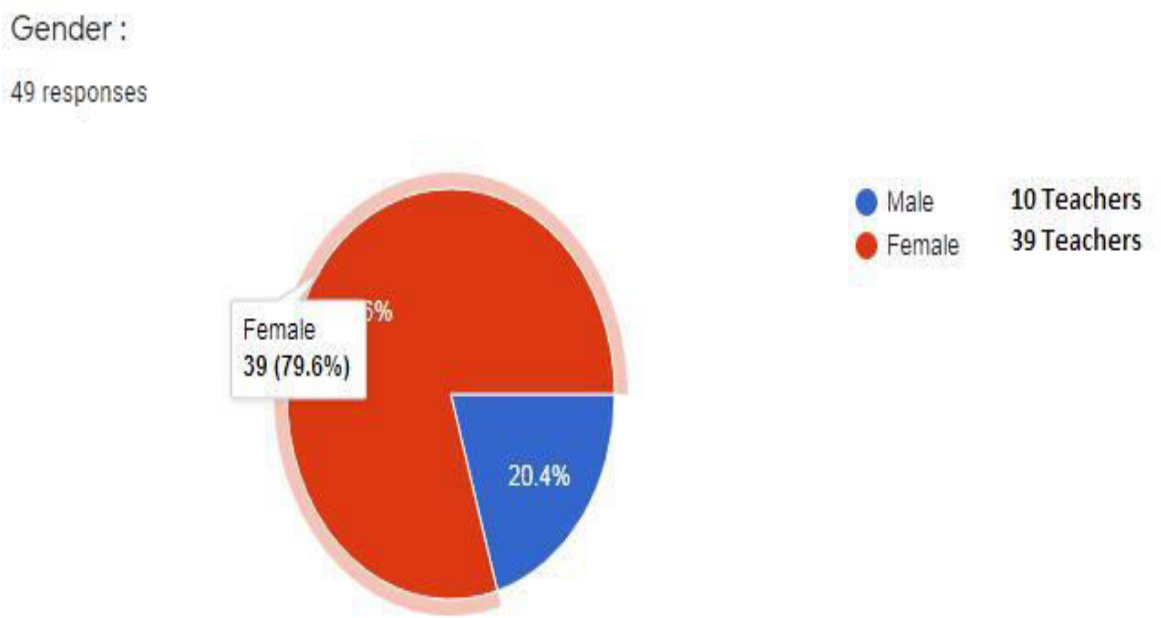


Figure 02: Results of the Gender of Participants.

The pie chart given above represents the percentage of each gender male and female of the questionnaire's participants. It shows that 39 participants are female participants, which represents almost 80% of the teachers, and 20,4% is the percentage of male teachers participants in this questionnaire.

It is noticeable that the amount of female teachers participated in this research is way too far from the male teachers.

2.9.1.3 Academic qualification:

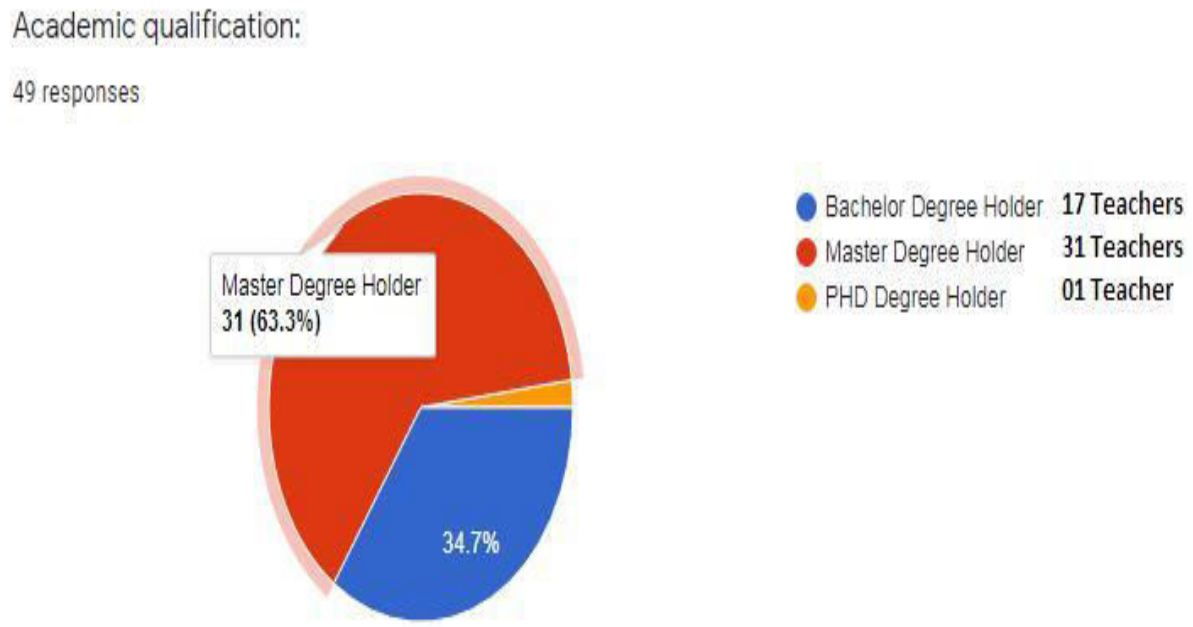


Figure 03: Academic Qualification of Participants.

The pie chart given above reveals that 63,3% of teachers involved in this questionnaire hold a Master degree, which means that 31 from 49 teachers have a Master degree in English language . Whereas, 17 teachers hold a Bachelor degree and only one teacher has a PHD degree.

The result obtained is related to the first result concerning the age of participants, where the majority were between 20 and 29 years old. This result has a direct relation with the middle schools teachers' contests of the last years in Algeria, where holding master degree was a condition to participate in these contests.

2.9.1.4 Teaching Experience:

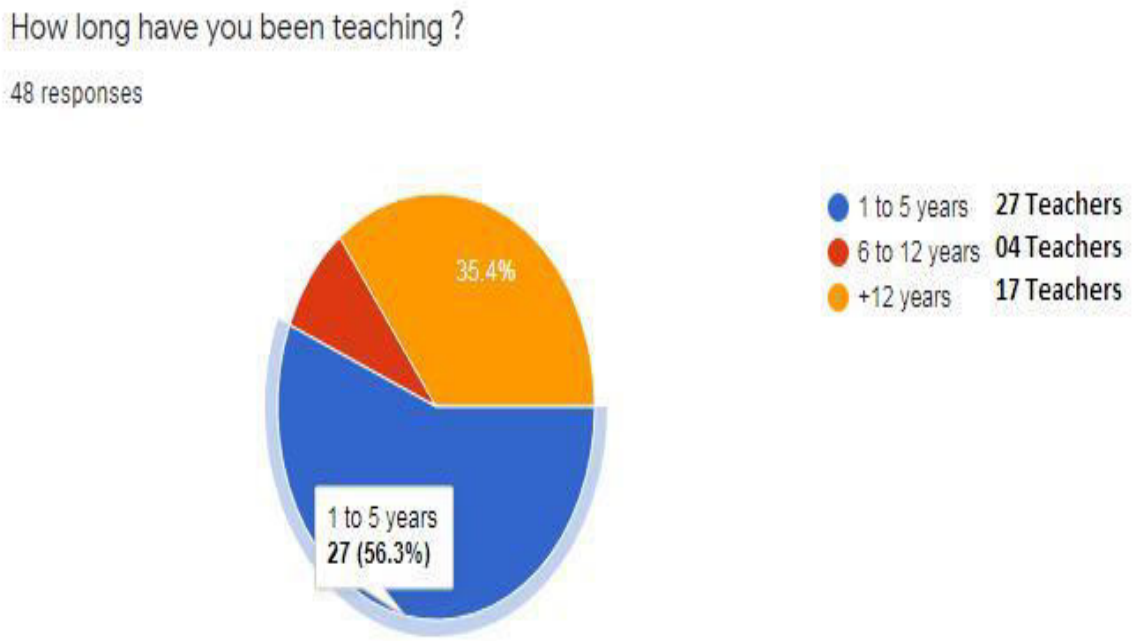


Figure 04: Teaching Experience of Participants.

The pie chart given above shows that 27 from 49 teachers have a teaching experience of less than 05 years, this number is represented by 56,3% of teachers, and it is the highest percentage of teachers who participated in this questionnaire. The remain teachers are 17 teachers with a long teaching experience of more than twelve years of teaching, and the rest are 04 teacher with an experience that varies from 06 to 12 years.

This result also comes to emphasize the fact that the majority of participants are young teachers with a fresh experience of less than five years of teaching in middle school.

2.9.2 Part two: Teachers' point of view on the importance of using language games in teaching English vocabulary in middle school.

2.9.2.1 Do you use language games in your classes to teach vocabulary?

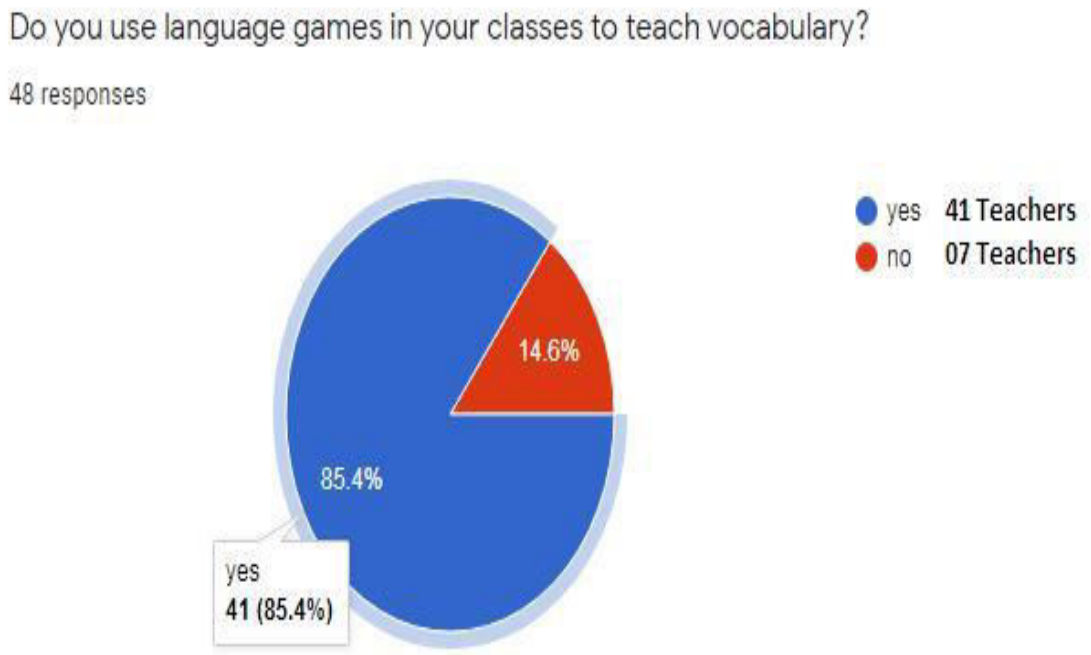


Figure 05: Percentage of Teachers Using Language Games.

The given pie chart depicts that 41 teachers, which represents 85,4% of the whole number of participants, answered with yes for this question. The remaining 07 teachers gave a no answer.

As a result, an important number of middle schools teachers in Algeria utilize language games as a means to teach English for EFL students and mainly to teach vocabulary.

2.9.2.2 Traditional methods (translation, using dictionary, etc.) for teaching vocabulary are an effective way than using language games:

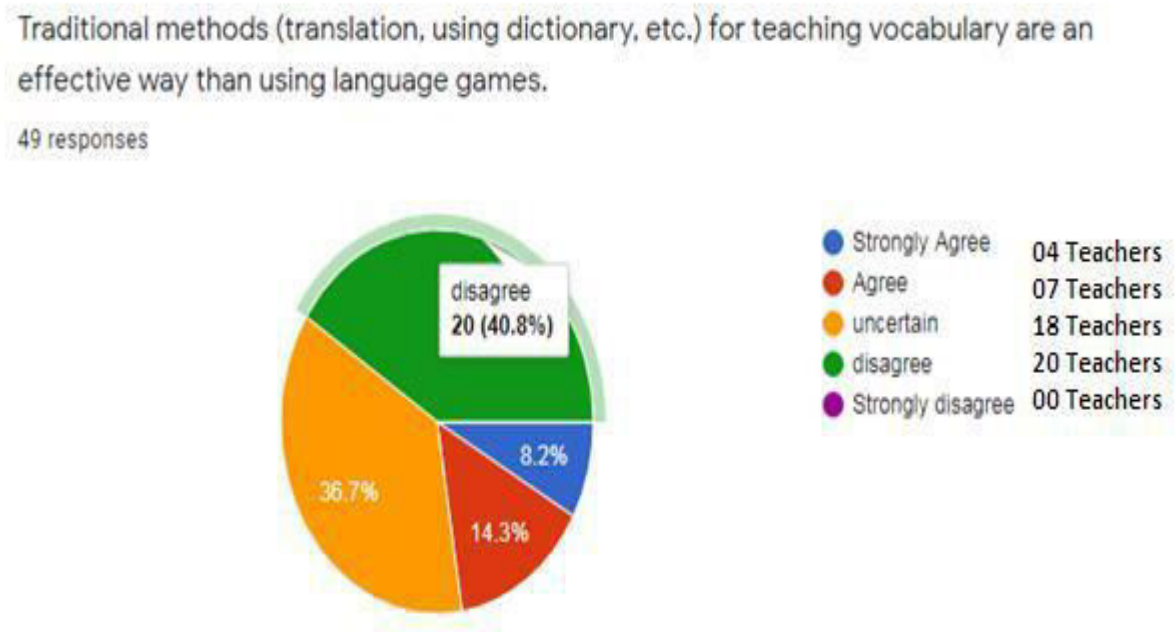


Figure 06: The Effectiveness of Traditional Method Versus Language Games.

The above pie chart shows that 40,8% which is the majority of teachers disagree about the effectiveness of using traditional methods for teaching vocabulary versus using language games for the same purpose. In addition, 20 teachers were confused and uncertain about this effectiveness. The remaining are 07 teachers who agreed, and 04 teachers strongly disagreed with the proposition.

The researchers think that the disagreement of the majority in this question is due to a comparison made by teachers between using traditional methods versus using language games in teaching vocabulary for EFL students through their years of experience.

2.9.2.3 Do you think that language games are important in teaching vocabulary?



Figure 07: The Importance of Language Games to Teach Vocabulary.

The pie chart above shows that almost 98% of the teachers involved in this study believe that language games are important in teaching vocabulary. Only one teacher answers negatively to this question.

This outcome emphasizes on the teachers' agreement about how important is teaching vocabulary by using language games for EFL students in Algeria.

2.9.2.4 Language games provide a practice with the various skills of learning (Speaking, writing, listening and reading):



Figure 08: Language Games and Language Skills .

The above pie chart indicates that 27 of teachers agreed on that language games provide a remarkable practice for the four language skills (Speaking, writing, listening and reading). Furthermore, the remaining 22 teachers boosted the statement by strongly agreed with it.

The result shows that it is common sense among the participants that language games give a practice for the four language skills.

2.9.2.5 According to your experience, which skill do language games enhance more?

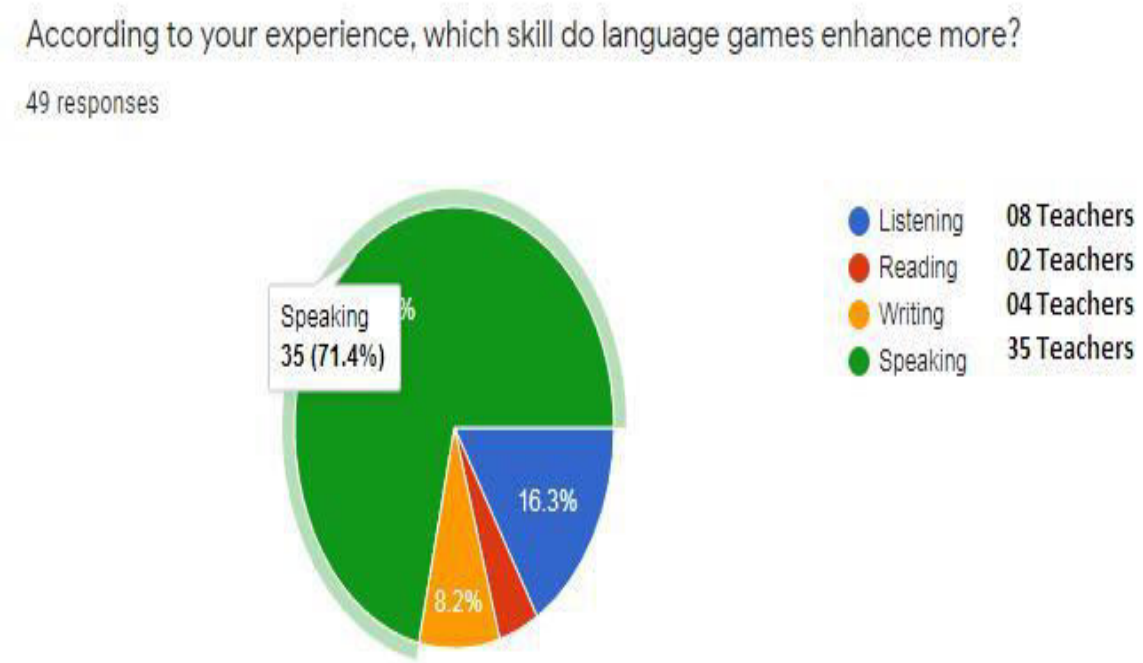


Figure 09: Language Skills enhanced by Language Games.

The pie chart indicates that 35 teachers which represent 71,4% of the whole participants agree that speaking is the skill enhanced more by language games. The remaining teachers chose listening as the second enhanced skill by language games 16,3%, writing as the third enhanced skill 8,2%, and reading as the last skill enhanced by language games.

Speaking is a fundamental skill that has to be enhanced by teachers of languages. Answers of this question reveal that Algerian Middle School teachers agreed on that language games enhance the speaking skill of students more than the other skills.

2.9.2.6 As a language teacher, you use educational games when:

- You feel that the game is a better means to teach vocabulary ( )

- You want the learners to memorize vocabulary easily ( )

-You want the classroom to be more dynamic and interesting ( )

- Just for fun ( )

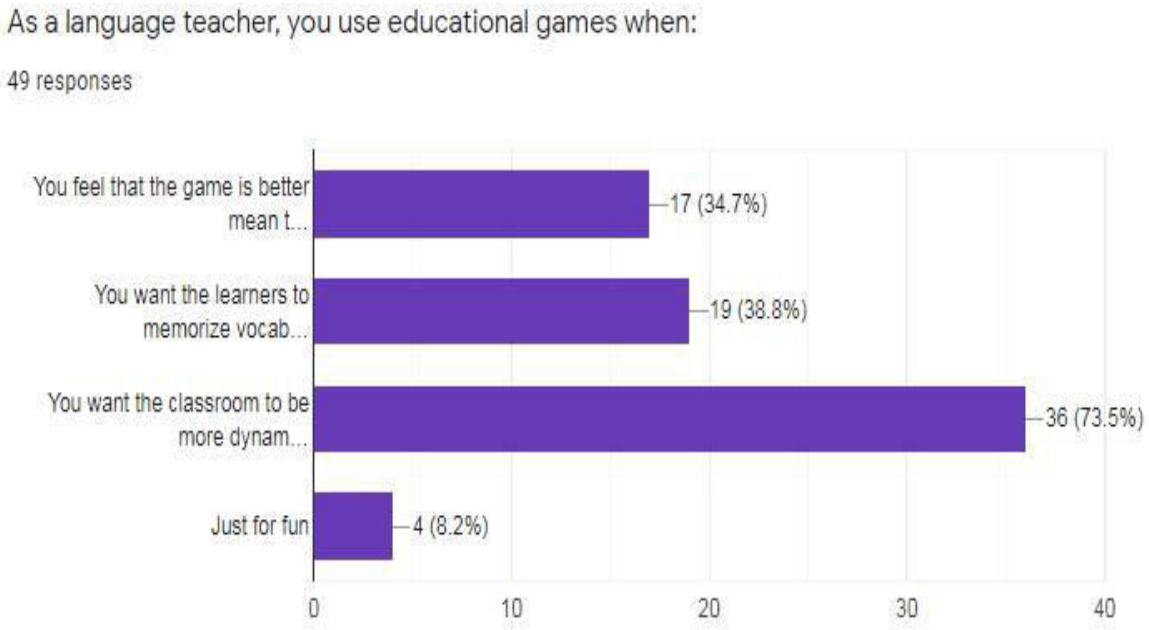


Figure 10: Situations when to use Language Games.

In this MCQ, 73,5% of teachers agree on that they often use language games in the situation when they want the classroom to be more dynamic and interesting. Other situations which had almost the same percentage are when teachers feel that the game is a better means to teach vocabulary, and when teachers want learners to memorize

vocabulary. The last option in the question which is using language games just for fun was chosen by only four teachers.

According to the answers, it is shown that the first reason behind the use of language games by Algerian Middle School teachers is their need for having more dynamic and active classroom. The last option chosen is using language games just for fun, this emphasizes on the conscious decision taken by teachers about choosing language games.

2.9.2.7 Language games make students more involved and motivated while learning:

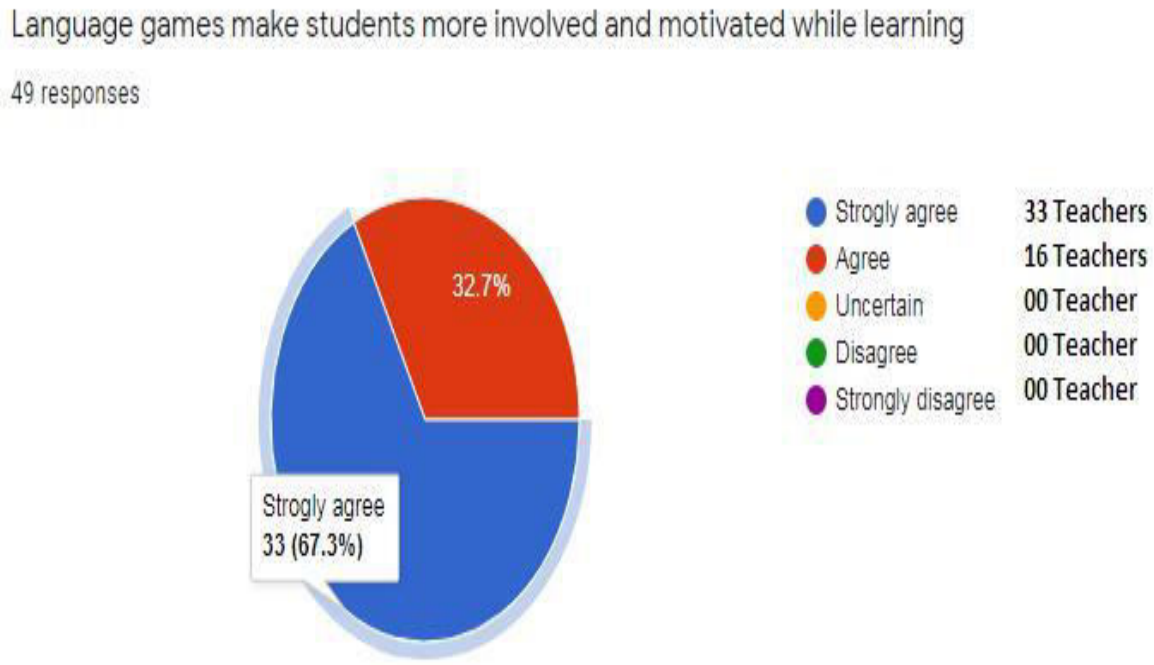


Figure 11: Language Games and Students Motivation.

The above pie chart shows that more than 67% of teachers which is represented by 33 teachers strongly agreed that language games make student more motivated and involved in learning. Nevertheless, the 16 teachers left also agree on this option.

Teachers who participated in this study highlighted that it is important to keep their students motivated and involved in learning, and their means to achieve this goal is by using language games in their classroom.

2.9.2.8 Language games reduce the fear of making spelling and pronunciation mistakes:

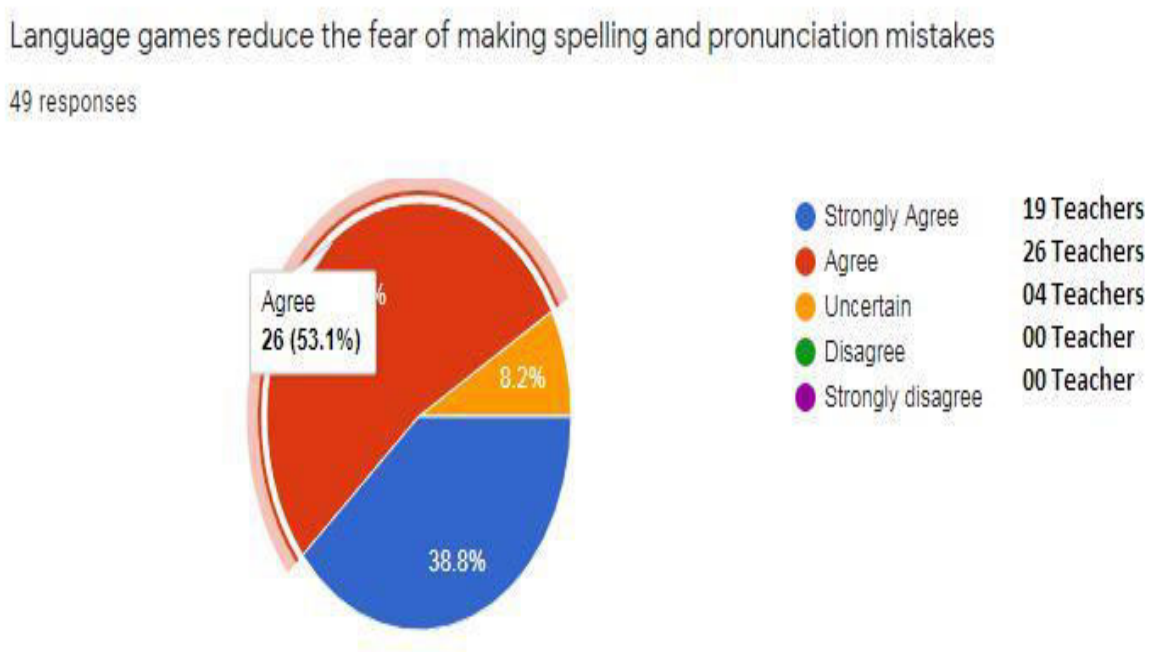


Figure 12: Language Games and The Reduction of Spelling Mistakes .

In this pie chart, the majority of teachers (53,1% agree, 38,8 strongly agree) agreed on that the use of language games reduce the fear of making spelling and pronunciation mistakes. The four remaining teachers were not sure about the answer.

Trough their remark in classroom, many Algerian Middle School teachers of English gave a total agreement about the help that language games put on reducing the fear of having grammar mistakes by their students.

2.9.2.9 Language games promote better communication competence that construct a cooperative environment:

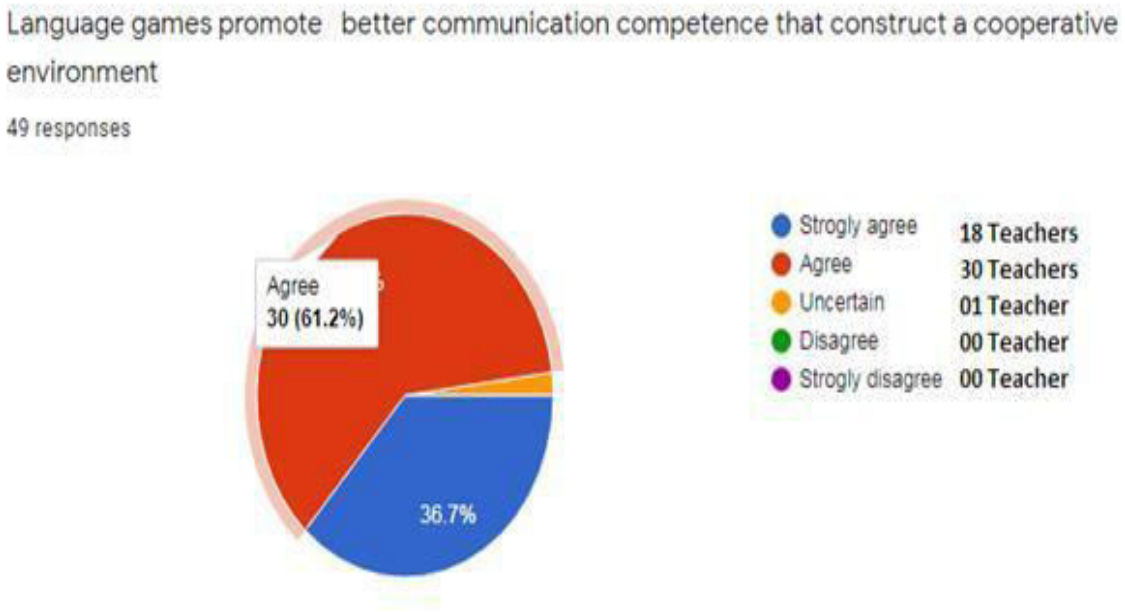


Figure 13: Language Games and Communicative Skills.

The pie chart depicts that 30 teachers agreed on that language games promote better communication competence which construct a cooperative environment. In addition, 18 teachers were strongly agreed with the statement.

Researchers think that it is due to experience that participants gave the agreement about how language games promote a better communication skill for EFL middle school students in Algeria.

2.9.2.10 Language games break the ice between the teacher and student that positively influence their relationship.

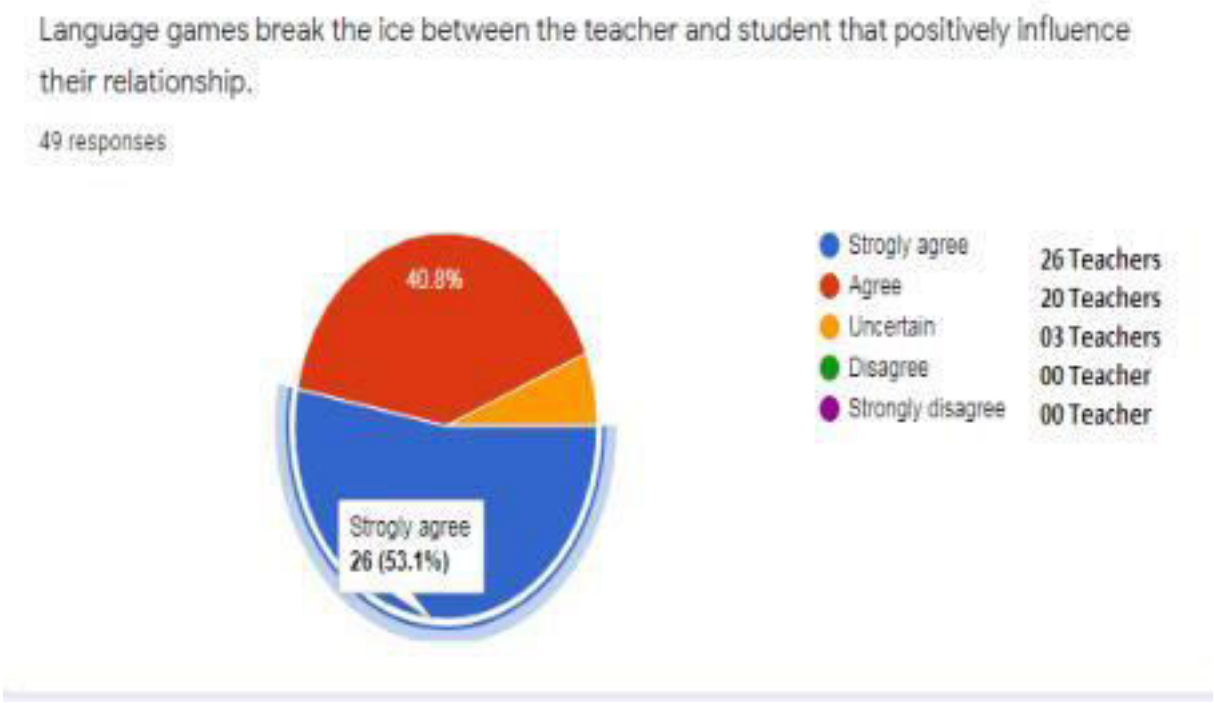


Figure 14 : Using Language Games as an Ice Breaker.

Results of this question are shown in the pie chart above. More than the half of teachers strongly agreed on that language games break the ice between the teacher and the student. In addition to 20 teachers agreed on the statement. Only 03teachers were not certain about this statement.

This result shows that breaking the ice in classroom between the teacher and his students becomes a tradition that can be easily achieved by using language games.

2.9.2.11 Language games help students to become a part of a team as well as taking responsibility for their own learning:

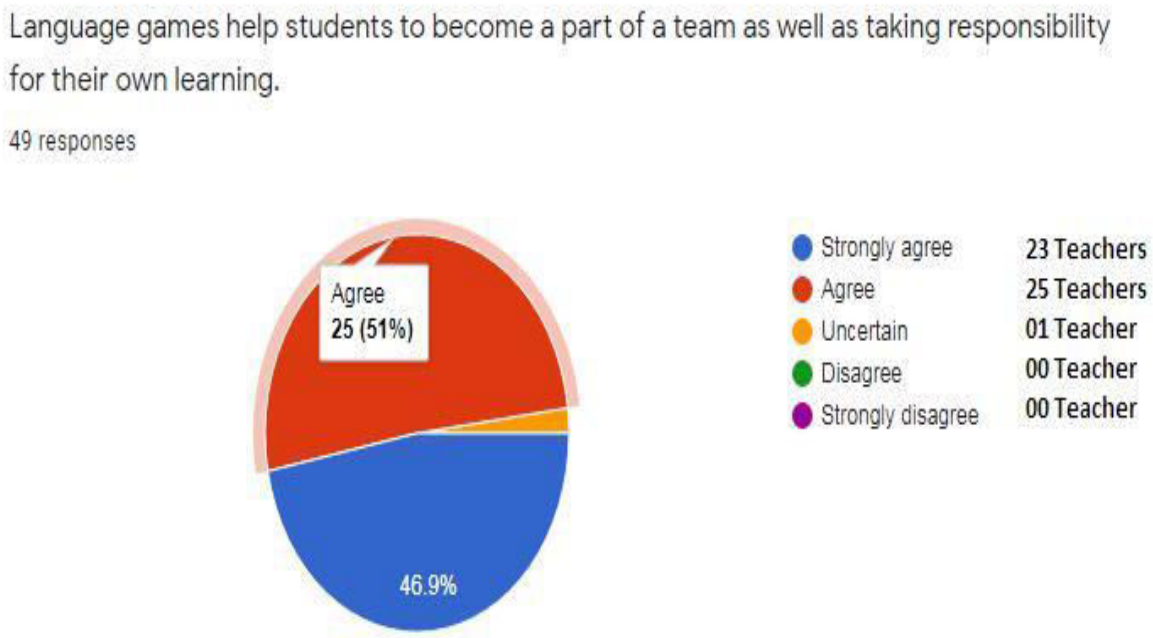


Figure 15: Language Games and students' responsibility for Learning.

The pie chart given above shows that the majority of the participants (51% agreed + 46,9% strongly agreed) agreed on that language games help students to become a part of a team as well as taking responsibility for their own learning. Only one teacher was uncertain about his answer.

By frequently using language games in their classes, participants of this study voted for the reality that language games help students in their studies and even in their real life by being part of a team, and learning how to take responsibility for their own learning.

2.9.2.12 Language games are better means than traditional methods to contextualize the vocabulary to be taught:

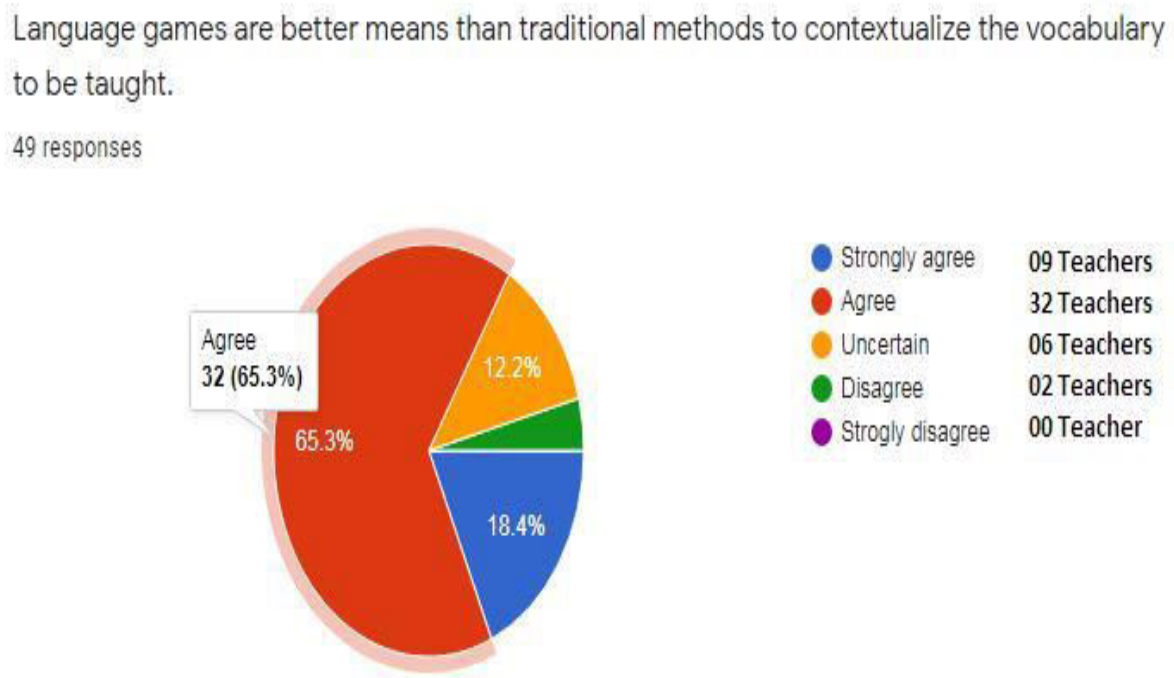


Figure 16: Language Games and Contextualization of Vocabulary.

This pie chart indicates that a great amount of the participants agreed (32 teachers agree, 09 teachers strongly agree) on the effective role that language games play to contextualize the vocabulary to be taught in comparison with traditional methods. Only 02 teachers disagree about this proposition.

In this result, it is plain that Algerian Middle School teachers are for the proposition that language games are better means than traditional methods when it comes to contextualize the vocabulary to be taught to EFL students.

2.9.2.13 Language games make students focus on the use of language, rather than on the language forms, so that they unconsciously apply grammar and vocabulary:

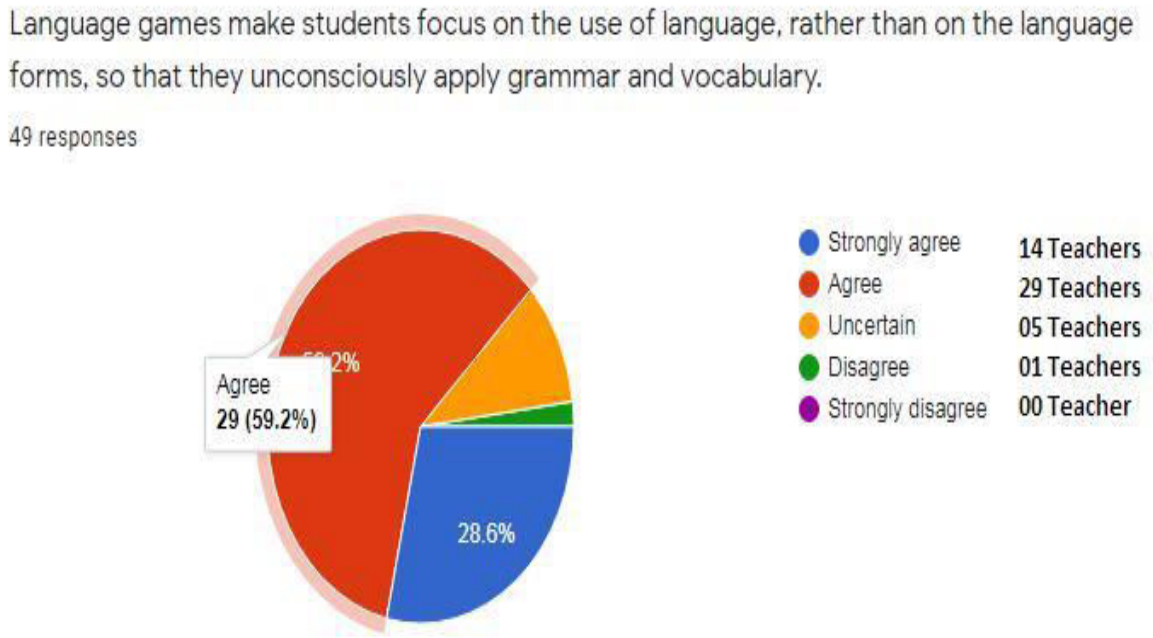


Figure 17: Language Games and the Focus of Using the Language.

The pie chart shows that 29 teachers agreed in addition to 14 teachers strongly agreed on that language games make students unconsciously applied grammar and vocabulary by focusing on the use of language rather than the language forms. Only one teacher disagrees with this statement.

Participants answered that the best way for EFL students to improve their speaking is by unconsciously applying grammar and vocabulary. Thus, language games are the means to achieve this ultimate goal.

2.9.2.14 Language games encourage shy students to participate:

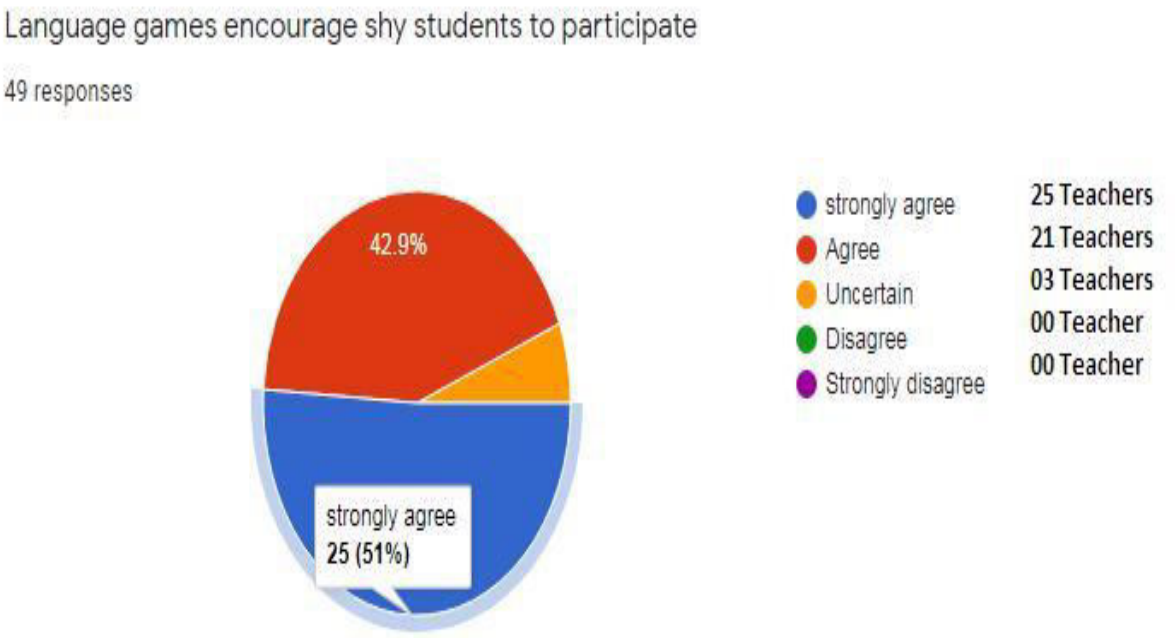


Figure 18: Language Games and Shy students.

It is noticeable in this pie chart that no teacher was against the statement saying that language games encourage shy students to participate, and 46 teachers from 49 gave their agreement about it.

Through their observation, EFL middle school teachers found that language games are an effective means to encourage shy students to participate. Hence, all students will have the same opportunity to learn and benefit from the class.

2.10 Results' Discussion:

In this section, researches will discuss the results obtained from the Algerian Middle School teachers' online questionnaire, and will try to interpreter what the participants intended by choosing some answers regardless of others.

The current study tries to find out whether language games are useful techniques in vocabulary learning and teaching in Algerian Middle Schools EFL students. Hence, through the online questionnaire's outcomes, we had extracted the gear importance of using language games in learning of vocabulary.

The majority of participants of this research are young teachers who claim of the frequent use of language games in their classes to teach vocabulary. This can be seen as a sign that the new generations of Algerian teachers are following a new path in their teaching methods, and they are going far away from using traditional methods. This may be resulted from depending on the use of internet to prepare some EFL classes where language games are proving to be a fundamental tool used by many teachers around the world.

Results of this study have proved that using games in teaching vocabulary is more effective and important than using traditional methods for many reasons (Figure 06) . One essential reason is that games create a social interaction between students in classroom. Therefore, they learn how to work collaboratively and how to exchange ideas together. This has a psychological and social impact on them which will eventually help students, especially the timid ones, to participate in the classroom. As a result, language games promote a better communicative competence that constructs a cooperative environment.

The current study shows that it is undeniable that language games play a vital role in improving the four skills of learning a language (reading, writing, listening, and speaking). This can be done by practicing these skills while playing language games and at the same time learning vocabulary. According to teachers' responses, the most enhanced skill of learning by language games is speaking (Figure 09). Further, speaking while playing language games is also practiced without the fear of making

spelling or grammatical mistakes which eventually makes this skill more developed. Nevertheless, other language skills (reading, listening, and writing) are not neglected and they also are affected positively by language games.

In addition, it is plain that the majority of Algerian Middle School EFL teachers who participated in this study agreed on the ability of language games to break the ice between them and their students. Thus, language games are a very beneficial tool for both teachers and students to melt the old barriers between them. Further, using language games will shorten the distance and strengthen the relation between teacher and student which will make learning a smoother procedure with the maximum benefits.

Having a more dynamic and active class is what most participants chose as their first reason behind using language games. It is crucial to avoid boredom in classroom while teaching; therefore, Algerian EFL teachers tend to use language games to have more dynamic and active classes. This will positively affect the process of learning.

2.11 Recommendations:

Taking into consideration the current research's results, the researchers recommend having a middle school syllabus which includes language games as an essential tool to teach not only vocabulary but also other materials.

Teachers should use language games with a reasonable frequency, i.e. not overusing language games nor rarely using them. Thus, both cases can negatively affect the class. So, it is preferable for teachers to design a specific rhythm for implementing language games in their classes.

2.12 Limitations and obstacles of the study:

As all students in Algeria, our research was affected by the pandemic of covid-19 that has hit the world and our country since the beginning of this year.

This research was planned to be done as an experiment at Hentabli Middle School in Medea. This experiment consisted of having two groups of students where the first group was going to be taught a list of vocabulary by using traditional methods, and the second group was going to be taught the same list by using language games. At the end, a post-test was going to be distributed on both groups to see which one has enhanced better the list of vocabulary, and whether language games are an effective way to teach vocabulary or not.

Due to the pandemic, it was a must for the researchers to choose the online teachers' questionnaire to accomplish the practical part of the study rather than not doing this part at all which will make our research unreliable.

The strengths of the online questionnaire are as the following. First, online questionnaire can be, needless to say, conducted remotely. The fact that it can be conducted remotely helps reduce and prevent geographical dependence. In addition, online questionnaire helps the researcher make use of the internet ability which can provide access to any groups or individuals who are not possible to reach directly face-to face. Time-saving is also considered as strength of online questionnaire. Once it is created and the invitation to participate in the questionnaire is sent, the researcher is able to receive responses from great numbers of people in a short amount of time. Furthermore, the online questionnaire also saves time for the researcher in terms of allowing them to work on other task or project while collecting data for the research simultaneously. Nevertheless, the limitations of the online questionnaire cannot be overlooked. For starters, it is difficult for the researcher to control and reach the targeted numbers of participant. The decision to complete the questionnaire is solely based on the willingness of the participants. If they are not willing to participate, they will reject the invitation and the researcher might not be able to acquire the adequate responses for the analysis. Another drawback is related to the fact that the respondents might not feel encouraged to provide honest and accurate answers for they do not want to risk presenting themselves in an unfavorable manner. As a consequence, this fact will make the researcher incapable of reporting valid results.

The pandemic also made it impossible for the researchers to meet and to schedule meeting with the supervisor. So the only means to meet was online meetings.

2.14 Conclusion

This chapter's findings come to validate what was mentioned before in the General Introduction Chapter. Language games are important and have a positive effect on learners‟ vocabulary learning. In addition, they play a major role in building a connection between the teacher and the learner as well as creating confidence. Last, language games are the best way to create the best atmosphere to learn besides giving enthusiasm and motivation for the students to become better learners.

General conclusion

General Conclusion

EFL teachers consider teaching vocabulary as a fundamental element in learning English, and this is the case with Algerian EFL Middle School teachers. For this purpose, two main methods are used by them to accomplish this aim. The first one is the traditional method where EFL students have to memorize new words which are most of the time cut from their context, in addition to relay on teachers to understand the new words by the use of translation to their mother tongue. The second method is the use of language games to teach new vocabularies. In this case, new words are introduced within their context by the means of using language games which include visual and vocal instruments such as pictures, audio tracks and footages, in addition to some interactive activities done among the students. Studies have shown the importance of including language games as an essential ingredient in EFL classes for beginners. They also agreed that using language games as a teaching technique have a remarkable effect on the learners' vocabulary improvement (knowledge, memorization and use) as well as on his psychological side (motivation, self-confidence, and the relation between teacher/learners).

This study aims at investigating the importance and the effectiveness of using language games for teaching vocabulary in the Algerian context. That means measuring how effective is using language games to teach vocabulary for Algerian EFL Middle School students. Two hypotheses were posed in this research; the first one is that language games are an effective technique to teach vocabulary. The second one hypothesizes is that in language games, learners are involved, motivated, and thus interact more while learning.

This research study is divided into two main chapters in which the first chapter deals with theoretical part of the study. It defines the important key concepts which include vocabulary and language games. In addition, it makes a comparison between traditional methods versus language games to teach vocabulary. It also shed light on some previous national and international studies done in this field.

The second chapter deals with the practical part of the study. This includes testing the above mentioned hypotheses in order to have some answers by introducing the methodology used. It also mentions the research instrument used in this research to gather the needed data. Further, this chapter includes interpreting this data and analyzing it to obtain the final results which they are eventually discussed.

The obtained data indicates that using language games as a teaching method for teaching vocabulary have a great importance and positive effect on Algerian EFL Middle School learners. After analyzing the data, it is plain that language games are so important to teach vocabulary for middle school students. Furthermore, language games make learners more motivated, encouraged, and self-confident to enhance better the vocabulary being taught.

Eventually, the two proposed hypotheses were confirmed, and the importance of using language games to teach vocabulary for middle school learners is proven to be a useful method.

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Apendices

Appendix A

Teachers' Questionnaire :

Dear teachers

The following questionnaire is designed for a research entitled 'The importance of Using Language Games on Vocabulary Teaching /Learning for EFL Beginners Learners'. Your cooperation in answering the following questions honestly and frankly would be greatly appreciated. Please insert (√) in the appropriate space given and do not put your name since the responses are anonymous.

Part one:

1/ Personal information

A)Age :

29-20 ( ) 39-30 ( ) 49-40 ( ) +50 ( )

B) Gender:

Male ( ) Female ( )

2/Academic qualification:

Bachelor degree holder ( ) Master degree holder ( ) PHD degree holder ( )

3/ Teaching Experience:

How long have you been teaching?

From 1 to 5 years ( ) from 6 to 12 ( ) more than 12 years ( )

Part two: Teachers' point of view on importance of using language games in teaching English vocabulary in middle school.

1- Do you use language games in your classes to teach vocabulary?

Yes ( ) No ( )

2- Traditional methods (translation, using dictionary, etc.) for teaching vocabulary are an effective way than using language games.

Strongly Agree ( ) Agree ( ) uncertain ( ) disagree ( ) Strongly disagree ( )

3. Do u think that language games are important in teaching vocabulary ?

Yes ( ) No ( )

4. Language games provide a practice with the various skills of learning (Speaking, writing, listening and reading).

Strongly Agree ( ) Agree ( ) uncertain ( ) disagree ( ) Strongly disagree ( )

5. According to your experience, which skill do language games enhance more?

Listening ( ) Speaking ( ) Writing ( ) Reading( )

6. As a language teacher, you use educational games when:

- You feel that the game is better mean to teach vocabulary ( )

- You want the learners to memorize vocabulary easily ( )

-You want the classroom to be more dynamic and interesting( )

- Just for fun ( )

7. Language games make students more involved and motivated while learning

Strongly Agree ( ) Agree ( ) uncertain ( ) disagree ( ) Strongly disagree ( )

8. Language games reduce the fear of making spelling and pronunciation mistakes

Strongly Agree ( ) Agree ( ) uncertain ( ) disagree ( ) strongly disagree ( )

9. Language games promotes better communication competence that construct a cooperative environment

Strongly Agree ( ) Agree ( ) uncertain ( ) disagree ( ) strongly disagree ( )

10. Language games break the ice between the teacher and student that positively influence their relationship.

Strongly Agree ( ) Agree ( ) uncertain ( ) disagree ( ) strongly disagree ( )

11. Language games help students to become a part of a team as well as taking responsibility for their own learning.

Strongly Agree ( ) Agree ( ) uncertain ( ) disagree ( ) strongly disagree ( )

12. Language games are better means than traditional methods to contextualize the vocabulary to be taught.

Strongly Agree ( ) Agree ( ) uncertain ( ) disagree ( ) strongly disagree ( )

13. Language games make students focus on the use of language, rather than on the language forms, so that they unconsciously apply grammar and vocabulary.

Strongly Agree ( ) Agree ( ) uncertain ( ) disagree ( ) strongly disagree ( )

14. Language games encourage shy students to participate.

Strongly Agree ( ) Agree ( ) uncertain ( ) disagree ( ) strongly disagree ( )