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**The Role of Games in Developing Learners' Speaking Skill: The case of Assalas and Ithri Private Primary Schools in Tizi –Ouzou.**

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# Dedication

To my beloved family:

To my mother Nacera and father Larbi.

To my sister Selma.

Special thanks to my fiancé Akli for his continuous support and encouragement.

Special thanks to my cousin Karima and her husband Samir.

To all my friends.



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## **Abstract**

*The study is mainly concerned with the role of games in developing learners' speaking skill in private primary schools. It investigates whether games are used and it attempts to determine the extent to which games increase learners' learning motivation. It also attempts to investigate the way games encourage learners' interaction and communication. The experiment is conducted in two private primary schools in Tizi Ouzou (Assales school and Ithri school). The study relies on two different frameworks; game-based learning approach and social constructivism theory of learning. It adopts the mixed-methods approach. Thus, an interview was conducted with two teachers and a questionnaire has been distributed to sixty seven pupils. The data analysis is based on statistical tools to clear up numerical data along with qualitative content analysis (QCA) for the interpretation and explanation of the results. According to the obtained results, it is concluded that games motivate learners to a high extent. The results also reveal that games provide learners with opportunities to interact and communicate, and develop their speaking skill as a result of learning through experience. The findings that are obtained through this investigation will pave the way to further researches in this area of study.*

**Key words:** games, learners' motivation, learners' interaction and communication, learning through experience.

## **Liste of Abbreviations**

- EFL : English Foreign Language
- GBL: Game-Based Learning
- QCA: Qualitative Content Analysis
- ZPD : Zone of Proximal Development

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## **Statement of the Problem**

Globalization and the enormous spread of technology and commerce have caused several changes in almost all areas of life, amongst which the area of education. The English language has become an international language that serves as a medium of communication between people of different speech communities. It has become the language taught as a foreign language in many countries. Therefore, the traditional English teaching methods and techniques, in their turn, have been changed to improve the English teaching quality and enable English learners to become proficient speakers so as to meet the demands of the globalization era. Contemporary methods of teaching implement new techniques and strategies, such as the use of classroom games that foster the development of the speaking skill.

Indeed, many of second-language or foreign language learners prioritize the mastery of the speaking skill. Therefore, the success in the English language learning and the effectiveness of the English programs are usually evaluated by learners according to the extent to which they think their speaking proficiency has been enhanced (Richards, 2008). Cameron (2001) claims that a speaker is required to find relevant and grammatically correct words to transmit meaning precisely. He adds that most of EFL learners consider developing their English speaking skill a challenge because they use their mother tongue in their everyday life communication. He also suggests that strategies such as games should be used by teachers so as to develop their learners' speaking skill.

Abt (1987) considers games as effective teaching and training tools because they are greatly motivating, and convey knowledge very efficiently in various subjects. As far as language learning is concerned, classroom games make students relaxed and enjoy using the language (Zhu, 2012). Moreover, including games in any language syllabus provides the

learners with a context in which they practice language intensively and use it meaningfully (Hadfield, 1984). Joanne (2004) suggests that creating an illusion that children are just playing games is the best way of teaching English. (cited in Valipour and Aidinlou, 2014).

A brief glance at the literature reveals that the issue of using games in English language teaching has been the interest of many recent researches from different perspectives. In this respect, English language proficiency, learning English grammar, and vocabulary retention were the focus of these researches (Taheri *et al.*, 2014). These works point at games as an activity type which plays an important role in increasing learning motivation, drawing learners' attention, vocabulary retention, and enhancing the ability to communicate. Moreover, the findings demonstrate that learners have positive attitudes towards learning English through games and they make better achievements when using games.

As far as the use of games in developing learners' speaking skill is concerned, there are many works that have dealt with this issue from different perspectives at the international level. It is acknowledged by these studies that games have a positive role in developing learners' speaking skill. Games motivate learners and make learning very enjoyable. They also involve learners in real situations in which they are given opportunities to work in cooperation, interact, and speak. Besides, teachers are enabled to diagnose the speaking outcomes of their learners when games are implemented (Nirmawati *et al.*, 2015).

These findings that are of great value stress the need for other empirical researches concerning the issue of using games in English language teaching and learning. Concerning the Algerian context, it has already been dealt with this issue; however, there is only one work conducted by Merdes Souheir at Mohammed Khaidher university of Biskra (2013) dealing with the role of communication games in developing students' speaking skill. This study reveals that the students and teachers are aware of the effectiveness of communication games in developing the speaking skill. Despite this fact, conducting a research about the same issue

from another perspective is not of less importance. The present study, therefore, has been conducted in a different geographical area (Tizi Ouzou), with different population (young learners), and in a different setting (private primary schools). Furthermore, it has different aims as it tries to investigate learners' motivation, interaction and communication through the implementation of games.

## **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

Considering the use of games as a strategy that helps in developing learners' speaking skill, the present study asks the following questions:

- Do teachers at "ASSALAS" and "Ithri" private primary schools use games to teach the speaking skill?
- To what extent do games motivate learners?
- How do games encourage learners to interact and communicate?

In an attempt to predict the results of the research, the following hypotheses are developed:

**H1:** Teachers use games to teach the speaking skill.

**H2:** Games motivate private school learners as they provide a funny and relaxed learning environment.

**H3:** Games provide learners with social and real situations through which they learn through experience. Therefore, experiential learning gives learners opportunities to interact and communicate.

## **Aims and Significance of the Study**

The present study aims at exploring the extent to which games enhance learning motivation and the way they encourage learners to interact and speak. One of the challenges

learners face when learning English as a foreign language is the difficulty to learn to speak spontaneously and fluently. Developing the speaking skill is viewed by many learners as a hard task since it requires a lot of efforts and practice. Since in Algeria English is a foreign language, learners don't have opportunities to use English outside the classroom. Because of that, games may be a useful technique that provides the learners with social and real situations to interact and use the target language. Moreover, such situations are considered to be an enjoyable environment which enhances learners' motivation to learn. Therefore, language educators and teachers may resort to games for developing their learners' speaking skills.

These views are acknowledged by many theoreticians in game-based learning approach and social constructivism approach to learning. Accordingly, this study adopts game-based learning approach and social constructivism theory of learning.

### **Research Techniques and Methodology**

The present study adopts the mixed methods approach which consists in using both qualitative and quantitative methods for data collection and analysis, given that it aims at measuring the extent to which games motivate learners as well as investigating the way games encourage learners' interaction and communication. The investigation has taken place at two private primary schools in Tizi Ouzou: "ASSALAS" and "ITHRI". The data are collected from both the learners and teachers of the aforementioned schools. A sample of the concerned population is randomly selected. A questionnaire is distributed to the learners and an interview is conducted with the teachers. The former is meant to investigate the pupils' motivation and adopted behaviors in the classroom when playing classroom games; while, the latter looks for the role of games in developing learners' speaking skill, the types of games that are used, the way they are used, etc. As far as data analysis is concerned, the quantitative data are analyzed under statistical tools. Concerning the qualitative data, they are analyzed on

the basis of Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA), which consists in applying the theoretical framework of the study to analyze the data.

### **Structure of the Dissertation**

This dissertation is organized following the traditional simple type of dissertation format. It consists of a general introduction, review of the literature, research design, results and discussion, and a general conclusion. In fact, the *General Introduction* states the problem and importance of the work, its aims and significance, the methodology and the structure of the dissertation. The first chapter is the *Review of the Literature* which contextualizes the study through defining the relevant key concept, and explaining the background theory appropriate to the study. The second chapter is *Research Design*. It introduces the research methodology that includes the procedures of data collection and data analysis. The third and the fourth chapters are *Presentation of the Findings and Discussion of the Findings*. The former presents the research findings and the latter involves the explanation and interpretation of the findings. Finally, the *General Conclusion* provides a summary of the most important points dealt with throughout the study and invite other researchers to conduct further research so as to enlarge the scope of the study.

## **Introduction**

This chapter consists in the review of the literature. It is meant to review the background theory relevant to our research. It seeks to discuss the role of games in developing learners' speaking skill. It is divided into two major parts. The first part deals with speaking. It provides a definition of speaking. Then, it explains that speaking is best learnt and developed at an early age. The second part is devoted to game-based learning. It first presents a definition of games-based learning approach. Then, it offers an overview of games in EFL learning. After that, it explores the different types of communication games. It also tackles the advantages of games in language learning. Moreover, it explains the correlation between games-based learning approach and social constructivism theory of learning. Lastly, it presents the different pedagogies that are based on social constructivism theory and integrated in game-based learning approach. Relying on these theories, the research will attempt to investigate the extent to which games help young learners in developing their speaking skill.

### **1. Speaking**

#### **1. 1. Defining the Speaking Skill**

The speaking skill should be given attention as much as the literary skills in both native and foreign languages (Bygate, 1987). In terms of its definition, Cameron (2001:40) explains that *'speaking is the active use of language to express meanings so that other people can make sense of them. It is recognized as an interactive, social and contextualized communicative event'*. In other terms, speaking is using language socially and interactively in a specific context so as to share meaning. In the same view, Brown (2004) defines speaking as an interactive and productive skill by which meaning is constructed and information are produced (Brown, 2004). Johnson and Morrow (1981:70) point out that speaking is known with the term *"oral communication"*. It is an activity in which two or more hearers and



speakers have to quickly react to what they hear (Nirmawati, 2015). In clear, speaking involves speakers and hearers who should understand and rapidly respond to each other. This definition as well as the previous ones come to a common point that speaking is a social activity in which people interact and communicate to collectively construct meaning and produce information. Widdowson (1978) goes further in his definition to make a distinction between speaking in terms of usage and speaking in terms of use. Speaking with regard to usage consists in producing grammatically correct words and sentences by means of the vocal organs. However, in terms of its use, speaking is considered as communicative activity which takes place in real communication and appears in different types of oral communication. Drawing on the definition of speaking in terms of its use, it is concluded that speaking is not limited to producing words because it includes several aspects of language like word choice, stress, intonation, the use of gestures and body language, the rate of speech, the context, etc (Cunningham and Edmonds, 1999). In short, speaking is a social activity which serves as a means of interaction and communication among people. It happens in a specific context in which two or more individuals should understand what they hear and respond immediately. Thanks to speaking, meaning is constructed and information is produced and shared.

## **1. 2. Children Learning the Speaking Skill**

Maynard (2012) claims that learning languages is difficult and time-consuming; thus, the earlier it commences the better. He also mentions that children learn languages more quickly (*ibid*).

Many pupils consider that the most important goal of learning a foreign language is to be able to speak it (Grauberg, 1997). Young learners feel motivated to learn a foreign language since they consider it as a means to engage with the world (Moate and Ruohotie- Lyhty, 2017).

It's better to start learning languages at an early age as '*young learners appear to possess a superior sound system which enables them to imitate sounds more accurately and increasing age shows a decline in the quality of native-like pronunciation*' (Driscoll and Frost,1999: 10). Difficulties in acquiring a good accent are faced by pupils at the age of puberty (Maynard, 2012). This means that children are more likely to master accent and pronunciation than older language learners.

Hawkins (1987, cited in cited in Driscoll and Frost,1999: 10) mentions that '*there is a strong empirical evidence to support younger pupils' superiority in oral and aural performance*'. As supported by Broughton et al. (1980), primary school children learn English easily and naturally since they like imitation and mime, they don't feel inhibited when performing roles, and they find repetition enjoyable as it gives them a feeling of security and achievement. In other words, young learners develop their oral skill easily and spontaneously since they enjoy using the language and they feel at ease when doing so.

To summarize, Children are fast at learning languages. They can acquire native-like pronunciation and accents. Speaking is considered by young language learners a means through which they interact with the world. In fact, children develop their speaking skill easily and rapidly. However, '*Teaching speaking is not an easy task because conditions in the classroom are very different from those in real life*' (Grauberg, 1997:201). Therefore, communicative games can be used as a strategy to get over learners' difficulties in learning how to speak English, which, in fact, help them enhance their speaking skill (Harmer, 2001).

## **2. Games-Based Learning Approach**

### **2. 1. Defining Game-Based Learning Approach**

Games are not only used for entertainment but also for the sake of learning as some games can be educational. Game-based learning generally refers to the innovative learning approach which comes from the use of educational computer games. However, the term

“game-based learning” can also refer to the use of non-digital games (Baker, Navarro, and Hoek, 2005 cited in Tang *et al.*, 2009). Smith and Mann (2002 cited in Dourda, 2012) allude to game-based as the application of games in learning. In the same view Macleod and Koubek (2014) define game-based learning as an educational method used in a learning process. Game-based learning is also described as a kind of game-play with specific learning outcomes (Shaffer *et al.*, 2005 cited in Plass *et al.*, 2015). In short, game-based learning is the use of games for educational purposes so as to reach specific learning outcomes.

As stated by Pivec *et al.* (2014), there are certain educational fields where game-based learning (GBL) concepts and approaches are valuable. These subjects give importance to skills like critical thinking, group communication, and decision making in order to enable learners to apply them in real world contexts. In other words, game-based learning is used in specific educational domains which require from learners to apply what they have already learnt in other situations outside the classroom.

To sum up, game-based learning approach is described as the use of games in education. Although it generally refers to the use of digital games, it also refers to the use of non-digital games. Game-based learning approach is used in fields that need to be applied in real world contexts.

Game-based learning has been used in different areas like languages (Dourda, 2012). Researchers have always encouraged foreign language educators to look for alternatives for the textbook and vocabulary lists. Therefore, game-based learning (GBL) approaches come to make language education entertaining and provide learners with learning environments and experiences that contextualize knowledge (Meyer, 2009 cited in cited in Dourda, 2012). ‘*The role of game-based learning in foreign language learning has been moving away from an association with drills, grammatical explanations and translation tests, into more communicative contexts*’ (Dourda, 2012:244).

## **2. 2. An Overview of Games in EFL Learning**

In the field of language teaching, “game” is defined by Richards and Schmidt (2002) in *Langman Dictionay of Language Teaching & Applied Linguistics* as “an organized activity” that has generally the subsequent characteristics: specific task or objective, rules, competition, and communication. In the same perspective, Dalton says ‘a game is a type of language activity involving a competitive element and\lor scoring (either of individuals or of teams)’. She adds that ‘games provide a relaxed atmosphere and contextualization of the language element being learned’. Similarly, Valipour and Aidinlou (2014) define games as a kind of play governed by rules. They are funny and enjoyable. However, they are not meant to break routine activities, but to get the learner use the language during the game-play.

As a summary, in the field of foreign language learning games can be defined as a kind of activity in which players communicate and compete with each other. Games are rule-governed and contain an element of fun.

Wang, *et al.* (2011) highlights that there are many types of games that can be used in EFL learning, like computer games or online games, and classroom games. This research tends to shed light on classroom games that are designed to enhance learners’ communicative ability, i.e., communicative games.

## **2. 3. Types of Communication Games**

Hadfield (1984) affirms that there are several types of games that are designed to develop the speaking skill. Communicative games are a kind of activities that encourage learners’ interaction and participation in the classroom and help them to speak in order to express their opinions and give information (Harmer, 2001).

### **2. 3. 1. Guessing Games**

Guessing games are games in which ‘the player with the information deliberately withholds it, while others guess what it might be’ (Hadfield, 1984:4); that is, one participant knows information that another participant ignores and should find out (Zhu: 2012). Hadfield (*op.cit.*) points out that guessing games are a variant of information gap activities. They are beneficial to the learners as they provide practice for thinking critically and asking questions (Zhu:2012).

### **2. 3. 2. Search Games**

Search games are a variant of information gap activities. These games involve a whole class, and each member has a piece of information. The members work cooperatively to collect as much information as possible to fill in a questionnaire or solve a common problem (Hadfield: 1984). In clear, search games consist in interacting and communicating with each other so as to find out missing information.

### **2. 3. 3. Matching Games**

According to Hadfield (1984), matching games consist in matching pictures or cards, and they may be played by the whole class. They are based on the transfer of information among the players who circulate in the classroom so as to find the needed card or picture. That is, in matching games players communicate with one another in order to match pictures and cards.

### **2. 3. 4. Jigsaw Games**

Zhu (2012) maintains that jigsaw games are games in which each player holds a part of a story, a factual text or a picture. The players work in cooperation to put together the pieces to find out the solution. In this type of games, the players practice their speaking skill while

attempting to resolve the problem. More simply, jigsaw games aim at getting players work cooperatively and communicate in order to reconstruct a picture or a text that has been cut into small pieces.

### **2. 3. 5. Role-plays**

As stated by Zhu (2012), role-plays are “*short scenes*” that may be fictive or realistic, in which ‘players are given the name and some characteristics of a fictive character’ (Hadfield, 1984:5). For example, the learners learn a text, and then they perform it. This can help them speak spontaneously and enhance their oral performance (*op. cit.*). Meaning to say, role plays are games which provide players with specific contexts to make them act out roles. This type of games helps learners develop their speaking skill naturally.

### **2. 3. 6. Debates**

In this type of communication games, two teams debate about a specific topic. The proponents and opponents of the idea give arguments to support their claims. Debates are used to help learners become eloquent speakers as well as develop their conversation ability (Zhu, 2012). That is, players compete with one another to win an argument. Debates help learners develop their communication ability and become fluent speakers.

## **2. 4. Advantages of Games in Language Learning**

### **2. 4. 1. Games Encourage Learners to Interact and Communicate**

According to Kim (1995), games help learners to interact and communicate. They provide learners with practice in all kinds of communication. Games provide learners with opportunities for real communication (Valipour and Aidinlou, 2014). In the same standpoint, Ersoz (2000) assumes that games help learners to practice communication skills (Ersoz, 2000). Hadfield (1990:7) further explains the idea and reveal that games give opportunities

for real communication as they form a “*bridge between the real world and the classroom*”. Therefore, children can learn the language unconsciously and in the same way they learnt their native language (Hadfield, 1990: 7). This means that games bring the real world into the classroom. Thus, they provide learners with opportunities for meaningful communication, which helps them learn the target language without being aware of the learning process.

Games have psychological and cultural effects on learners as they increase their self-esteem, confidence, motivation and spontaneity. As a result, they help them communicate and enhance their intonation (Wright et al., 2005 cited in Huang, 1996). In the same perspective, Avedon (1991) argues that games are relaxing and funny. He adds that when learners are not stressed and worried, they are more likely to enhance their fluency and spontaneity in speaking. In clear, games make learners confident and increase their motivation. When learners are motivated they communicate spontaneously and without worrying about making mistakes.

Games are motivating and encourage learners to communicate. As Ebata (2008) claims, ‘*motivation helps students to be excellent communicators as a result of self-confidence*’. Learners speak and express themselves better when playing games as they make them feel confident and motivated (Laurian- Fitzgerald, 2015).

In short, games provide learners with context in which they can communicate meaningfully and effectively. They affect learners’ confidence and motivation; as a matter of a fact, learners communicate fluently and spontaneously when playing games.

Elliot (2004) explains that the best way of teaching children is creating the illusion that they are simply playing games and promoting class interaction as much as possible. Games ‘*create a challenging and constructively competitive atmosphere that facilitates interaction among students in a friendly and fun environment*’ (Mubaslat, 2012: 8). Avedon (1971:12) supports the same view and claims that ‘*games create a rich environment full with*

*interaction*'. In other words, games provide an enjoyable environment which facilitates interaction among learners and helps them learn more easily and efficiently. Another idea to be considered is that children interact spontaneously with their mates when using games as they feel more secure when they interact with each other than with their teacher (Prabhu, 1987 cited in Laurian-Fitzgerald, 2015). Furthermore, Rinvolucris and Davis (1995 cited in Stojkovic and Jerotijevic, 2011) highlight the idea that successful interaction is reached when learners work in group. In fact, 'games encourage and increase cooperation' (Avedon, 1971). They include everyone; thus, each learner can participate as a player to attain successful social interaction and communication (Stojkovic and Jerotijevic, 2011). To summarize, learning best occurs when learners interact with one another and work cooperatively. Games encourage learners' interaction and involvement; this is why they are considered an effective way of teaching and learning.

#### **2. 4. 2. Games Provide an Opportunity to Learn Language through Experience**

Language is better learnt in meaningful contexts in which learners find themselves obliged to respond to the language they hear and read in a specific way. When the meaning of the language is experienced, it would be better remembered (Wright, *et al.*: 2006). According to Wright *et al.* (1994:4), '*games help the teacher to create context in which the language is useful and meaningful*'. In the same view, Avedon (1971:4) assumes that '*games employ meaningful and useful language in real contexts*'. Games enable learners to experience language rather than only studying it. Children acquire language better when they are exposed to it. For instance, the vocabulary related to shopping is easily learnt through a shopping game (Wright *et al.*, 2006). In other terms, learners can better learn a language when they experience it in meaningful contexts. In fact, games provide them with contexts in which they find themselves exposed to language, which helps them acquire it.



Furthermore, Dalton confirms the previous views and refers to games as activities which provide learners with concrete practice since they are often based on real-life activities and offer opportunities to meaningfully use language to communicate. As far as children are concerned, when playing the suitable game, they learn the language spontaneously, which makes them become confident to use it outside the classroom (Wright *et al.*, 2006). In brief, games provide learners with opportunities to learn language through experience, which helps them use it meaningfully to communicate in the classroom and in real-life situations.

### **2. 4. 3. Games are Motivating and Enjoyable**

Games are acknowledged to be very motivating and enjoyable. Hadfield (1984:5) claims that ‘*one of the most important reasons for using games is simply that they are immensely enjoyable for both teachers and students*’. Adding to this, games are also motivating and challenging (Kim, 1995; Ersoz, 2000). As Ebata (2008: 1) asserts, ‘motivation in language learning is very important and essential’ because learning a language is a hard task which continuously requires an effort to understand, repeat, manipulate the new language as well as use it in conversation or written composition (Wright *et al.* 2006). Similarly, Kim (1995) supports the same view and says that language learning demands a great amount of efforts. Therefore, for games can be used to maintain learners’ efforts as well as their interest and work (Wright *et al.*, 2006). Besides, learners don’t feel bored when using games because they break the routine of the language class (Kim, 1995). Adding to this, games are effective in drawing learners’ attention and encouraging them to participate in group works. They transform the class into a happy environment and increase learners’ learning motivation. Moreover, games are considered an enjoyable way of learning by language learners as they lower their stress and anxiety during their language learning (Valipour and Aidinlou, 2014). Because games are highly motivating and enjoyable, they help learners acquire the language easily (Ishtawi, 2011) and using it easily (Lewis, 1999 cited in Mei and Yu-jing 2000). The

competitive aspect of games highly motivates learners as it encourages them to try harder (Avedon, 1971). To summarize, language learning is very difficult as it requires a lot of efforts and hard work. Games are motivating and enjoyable. Therefore, they maintain learners' interest, efforts, and work. Games also transform the classroom into a happy and enjoyable environment, which lowers learners' stress and motivates them to learn.

#### **2. 4. 4. Games are Involving**

The least expressive and the least dominant learners get involved when playing games owing to the fact that everyone has a role in the game. Thanks to games learners get easily involved in classroom discussions (Bond: 1986). In the same view, Dalton argues that *'games are also a way to be sure all students are included in the learning effort, not only a few highly motivated or extroverted students.'* In clear, games are an effective way to get learners involved as each of them is given a role when playing games. Games involve not only extroverted students but also the introverted ones who have difficulties in interacting with others.

#### **2. 5. Game-Based Learning Approach and Social Constructivism**

Social constructivism is an approach in education that claims that knowledge is better understood when it is constructed (Ozer, 2004). According to this approach, learning is a social practice and involves, language, real world situations, and interaction and collaboration among learners(Ozer , 2004).

Lev vygotsky who is one of the prominent pioneers of social constructivism considers that social interaction is a fundamental aspect of successful learning (Woollard and Pritchard, 2010). Vygotsky introduces another crucial element in his theory which is the zone of proximal development. *'The ZPD is a notional area of understanding or cognitive development that is close to but just beyond a learner's level of understanding'* (ibid: 14).

Moving to this zone depends on social interaction; that is, learners interact with their teacher and collaborate with more capable peers who give them support and help to progress. As far as children are concerned, what a child knows and can do independently represents the functions that have already matured, and the functions that have not yet matured represent the zone of proximal development (*ibid*). Collaborative play provides individuals with opportunities to participate in the social practices by constructively using their skills and repertoires (Scott and Cambouri, 2006 cited in Silva, 2012). Collaborative learning environments help students to transfer their learning from the classroom into real world environment and from one subject into another (Plass et al., 2015).

Play is an effective learning method which enables learners to develop new skills and participate in new social roles (Vygotsky, 1978). It may be an imaginary situation with rules of behavior. The effect of play on a child's development is great. It enables a child to attain greatest achievements. The imaginary situation in play resembles the real one; thus, a child can transfer a situation from play into real life Moreover, play creates the zone of proximal development of a child. In play a child's actions are always beyond their average age and above their daily actions (*ibid*).

In summary, learning is a social practice. Learners learn when they interact with each other. This is what vygotsky explains in his ZPD. The ZPD is what lies beyond learners' developmental level and knowledge and what can be achieved only through interaction with more capable peers.

'Cognition plays a central role in learning. Learning is not a question of a stimulus response' (Pivec, 2012: 43). Constructivist teaching provides problem solving contexts that help learners create more knowledge and reflect on. This means that learners make use of their cognitive ability to solve problems and reflect upon what they learn. The constructivist

classroom represents an environment in which learners are given opportunities to communicate (Pivec, 2014).

## **2. 5. 1. Pedagogies in Game-based Learning and Social Constructivism**

### **Approach**

Active learning, experiential learning, and situated learning are effective approaches that are integrated in game-based learning approach (Tang: 2009). ‘Collaborative play makes possible the convergence of active, experiential and situated forms of learning’. (Andrade e Silva, 2012 :33).

### **2. 5. 1. 1. Experiential Learning**

Experiential learning puts emphasis on the importance of experience in the learning process (Tang *et al.*, 2009). ‘Learning takes place when learners are allowed to construct a personal understanding based on experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences’ (Woollard and Pritchard, 2019: 48). Experiential learning is based on active and reflective learning, building on previous learning experiences, and requiring the personal involvement of the learner (Knutson, 2003). Involvement is important in learning and says ‘tell me, and I will forget. Show me, and I will remember. Involve me, and I will understand.’ (Kajalova, 2005:28). In short, learners better learn when they are actively involved in the learning process and reflect upon their learning experiences.

Game-based learning is considered as ‘a special case of experiential learning’ (Bould and Miller, 1996 cited in Macleod and Koubek, 2014:18). In the same standpoint, Brown claims that ‘experiential learning techniques consist in interactive practices like games’ (cited in Safriani, 2016: 381). These techniques actively engage the learners and allow them to learn by themselves and from each other experiences (Molaei and Rahnama ,2012). Games involve direct experience; thus, they are valid examples of experiential learning (Molaei and Rahnama

,2012). In clear, games are among the experiential techniques that involve learners and let them learn from their experiences and the experiences of others. In the same perspective, Caine (1994 cited in Macleod and Koubek, 2014:18) explains that drawing on a constructivist standpoint, the learner plays an active role in organizing their own understanding, and the role of the teacher is to organize experiences that engage the learner and provide them with opportunity to think about their actions in the world. In brief, constructivists shed light on the importance of experience in learning.

Students' experiences are beneficial for their language learning. Experiential learning provides learners with opportunities to use real communication in a prepared scene, allows them to reflect upon their language learning experience, and enables them to transfer their experience in the classroom to the real world (Safriani, 2016).

Moreover, experiential learning strengthens learners' autonomy in learning, motivation, and cultural understanding (Safriani, 2016). In clear, experiential leaning is beneficial to language learners as it gives them opportunities to use language meaningfully and communicate and enables them to use the language learnt in the classroom in real world situations.

## **Conclusion**

The review of the literature in this chapter allowed to define speaking and to explain how children learn to speak a foreign language. In fact, speaking consists in using language socially and interactively to express meaning in a specific context. Developing the speaking skill is a hard task which requires time and efforts. Children easily enhance their speaking skill because of their natural ability to do so. They like engaging with the world and they don't worry about making mistakes. Furthermore, the review also clarified the theoretical background of learning through games. Game-based learning approach is the application of games in the learning process to provide learners with real life contexts and opportunities to

use language to communicate. This chapter also explored the different kinds of communicative games. In addition, the glance at the literature review revealed that using games in learning has many advantages. It finally investigated the correlation between game-based learning approach and social constructivism theory of learning. Despite these findings, empirical studies are still needed for a better understanding of the role of game-based learning approach in facilitating learning and in developing the speaking skill.

## **Introduction**

This chapter consists in the research design of the study that is meant to answer the fundamental research questions asked in the general introduction of this work. It comprises four parts. First, it deals with the context of the investigation. Then, it represents the sample population. After that, it describes the procedures of data collection which consist of a questionnaire and an interview. The investigation takes place in two private primary schools of Tizi Ouzou: Assalas and Ithri schools. The questionnaire is administered to the pupils and the interview is conducted with their teachers. Finally, it explains the data analysis methods; the rule of three is used to analyse the closed- ended questions. As for the analysis of the open-ended questions, Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) is used to interpret the data.

### **1. Research Methods**

In this research paper, the mixed-methods approach is adopted. It combines the qualitative and the quantitative research tools for data collection and data analysis. The mixed method research is defined by Tavakoli (2012:362) as *‘a research approach for collecting, analyzing , and mixing qualitative and quantitative data at some stage of the research process within a single research study in order to understand a research problem more completely’*. The mixed method approach is not randomly chosen. It is the most suitable method for this research which contains quantitative and qualitative data.

### **2. Context of the Study**

The investigation is carried out in a realistic setting, that is, in two private primary schools in Tizi Ouzou which are Assalas and Ithri. The pupils of the aforementioned schools study the English language from the primary to the high school level. The two schools start offering English language lessons from the third level in the primary school. Nevertheless, this study has been conducted in the three levels in the primary school which are the third, the fourth,

and the fifth. The questionnaire and the interview are administered in Assalas school on the 19<sup>th</sup> September, 2018.

### **3. The Participants**

The total number of the participants have taken part in this study is sixty seven (67) pupils who were randomly selected and two English language teachers working at the two aforementioned schools. The pupils study in three different primary levels. In fact, 21 % of them study in the third level, 25% study in the fourth level, and 54 % pupils study in the fifth level. We have selected most of the participants from the 5<sup>th</sup> grade for the sake of obtaining enough information and clarification about the issue of the role of classroom games in developing learners' speaking skill. The sixty seven pupils were required to complete a written questionnaire related to the use of games in the classroom and the extent to which games motivate learners and encourage them to interact and communicate. In order to collect further data, a structured interview has been conducted with two teachers in the two aforementioned schools.

Our research is a case study. As Bell (2005:10) states, '*the case study approach ... provides an opportunity for one aspect of the problem to be studied in some depth*'. The results of the study, therefore, are generalized to represent the whole pupils of the private primary schools in Tizi Ouzou.

### **4. Procedures of Data Collection**

In order to answer the questions that are asked in the general introduction, a survey is conducted to explore the use of games and their roles in enhancing learners' speaking skill. In order to achieve this objective, two data collection tools are carried namely: the questionnaire and the interview.



## **4. 1. The Questionnaire**

The questionnaire *‘is a research instrument that presents respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting them among existing answers’* (Tavakoli, 2012: 512). It is an efficient data gathering instrument, and this is due to various reasons. First, it is fast and less time-consuming and less expensive compared with other instruments. Second, it requires less effort from the researcher. Finally, it allows gathering quantitative data and it can be conducted with an unlimited number of participants (Dörnyei, 2003).

In order to collect enough data, a questionnaire is designed and administered to the pupils of Assalas and Ithri schools. The questionnaire is headed by a short introduction which explains to the pupils that it is part of our study and it aims at investigating the role of games in enhancing learners’ speaking skill. It also clarifies that they can answer sincerely as their answers will be anonymous and confidential. It is made up of fourteen (14) closed-ended and open-ended items which are organized into three sections: “learners’ profile” which shows the level of the learners; “learners’ motivation” which aims at getting data from the pupils concerning their motivation when playing games; and “learners’ interaction and communication” which is intended to check whether the pupils are given opportunities to interact and communicate during the game play.

### **4.1.1. Piloting the questionnaire**

A pilot study is conducted because questionnaires are not a face to face communication; that is to say, participants cannot ask for reformulations and clarifications when answering to the questions of the questionnaire. The questionnaire is first distributed to four (04) respondents so as to test it and check whether it presents ambiguities. As stated by Bell (2005), *‘the purpose of a pilot exercise is to get the bugs out of the instrument so that respondents in your main study will experience no difficulties in completing it’*. In short, the

pilot study is a guide which enables researchers to check whether the questions are clear in order to collect enough and reliable data from questionnaires.

Adding to this, the questionnaire is translated into French so as to ensure a better understanding of its questions. This is due to the fact that the participants study French as a second language and English as a foreign language; so it seems to be clear that distributing the French version of the questionnaire is more likely to reach more trustful data.

## **4. 2. The Interview**

It is worth saying that questionnaires are very utile research tools that have many advantages like obtaining data from many participants. However, it is necessary to use another data collection tool along with the questionnaire. An interview is conducted so as to obtain a second outlook about the study's issues. Cohen *et al.* (2007, cited in Alshenqeeti, 2014: 39) define interviews as '*a valuable method for exploring the construction and negotiation of meaning in a natural setting*'. In the same stand point, Berg (2007, cited in Alshenqeeti, 2014: 39) argues that interviews enable interviewees '*to speak in their own voice and express their own thoughts and feelings*'. When conducting an interview, in-depth information can be obtained by the interviewer (Mc Namara; 1999). This means that the data that we collect by means of an interview is qualitative. Therefore, the interview, in our study, is meant to collect further data in order to get a deeper understanding of the data obtained from the questionnaire.

The interview is conducted with two teachers from the aforementioned schools. It is a structured interview which contains eleven (11) questions. Obviously, it is made up of three sections. The first section, thus, deals with the use of games in the two schools. The second part aims at investigating the extent to which the pupils are motivated when playing games and how motivation affects language learning; particularly, how it encourages the pupils to

interact and communicate. The last section aims at exploring whether the used games encourage learners' interaction and communication.

## **5. Procedure of Data Analysis**

As it is already mentioned the mixed-method approach is used to interpret the gathered data. The quantitative data is analyzed through the descriptive statistical method; while, the qualitative data is interpreted through the Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA).

### **5. 1. Descriptive Statistical Method**

The rule of three is used to analyze the quantitative data collected from closed-ended questions. As far as our study is concerned, it is used to analyze and present the outcomes of the closed-ended questions of the questionnaire. In fact, different diagrams like graphs, charts, and tables are used to present the obtained results.

### **5. 2. Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA)**

The qualitative content analysis (QCA) is adopted for the interpretation and the analysis of the data gained from the interview and the open-ended questions of the questionnaire. The QCA is defined by Philip Mayring as '*a mixed method approach: assignment of categories to text as qualitative step, working through many text passages and analysis of frequencies of categories as a qualitative step*' (2014:10). This means that the QCA is intended to analyze and interpret texts so as to determine and clarify their meanings. Therefore, it is used in this piece of work to explain and interpret the qualitative data.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter deals with the research design of the study which presents the different procedures of data collection and data analysis. It first describes the context and the population of the study. Then, it presents the procedures of data collection. Moreover, it supplies the data analysis instruments. The rule of three is used to analyze quantitative data and the Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) to analyze and interpret the qualitative data. All

of these methodological procedures are followed for the sake of answering the research questions.

## **Introduction**

This chapter is empirical. It consists in the presentation of the findings gathered through the two research tools relied on in our research; that is to say, the questionnaire and the interview. The first section consists of the results of the interview conducted with two teachers of the two private primary schools: Assalas and Ithri. The second section is devoted to the presentation of the results gathered through the questionnaires administered to sixty seven (67) pupils from three different levels in the two schools: 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> levels. The findings collected from the two data collection instruments show how classroom games motivate learners and encourage them to speak, interact and communicate in English.

### **1. Results of the Interview**

This section consists in the presentation of the data gathered through interviews conducted with two teachers of the two private primary schools of Tizi Ouzou: Assalas and Ithri. In fact, the interviews are recorded in the form of an audiotape and notes. The audiotape was transcribed into a text. The notes and the transcript are analyzed using *Qualitative Content Analysis* so as to identify the role of classroom games in motivating the learners and encouraging them to interact and communicate.

#### **1-Do you use games in the classroom?**

To answer this question, the interviewees explain that they use games in the classroom. One of them mentions that the textbook they use in the classroom suggests some games.

#### **2-What are the games you usually use?**

Concerning the games used in the classroom, one of the respondents says that she uses the games that are suggested by the textbook and explains that each lesson is supported by a game. She adds that they use role plays, the “listen, repeat and point” game, chants, matching games, guessing games etc. On the other hand, the other participant says that she uses crosswords, matching games and word search games.

**3-Do you use games that are designed to develop learners' speaking skill? If yes, how often do you use them?**

When it comes to the point of using games that are designed to develop learners' speaking skill and the frequency of using them, one of the interviewees claims that the games she uses aim at developing the speaking skill as her pupils are given opportunities to speak when they play. She adds that she usually uses communicative games. In contrast, the other interviewee explains that the games she uses aim at developing learners' vocabulary and pronunciation. She adds that she sometimes uses role plays.

**4-Do classroom games motivate and increase your learners' energy? Explain.**

As regards learners' motivation, the interviewees agree upon one point: games motivate the pupils and make them happy, and excited. When the pupils play classroom games, they seem full of energy.

**5-In your opinion, how does motivation affect your pupils' language learning when playing games?**

As for the impact of motivation on language learning, the two participants share the view that motivation facilitates language learning and the pupils learn easily and fast when they are motivated.

**6- How does motivation help your pupils communicate and develop their speaking skill?**

The interviewees share the same view that the pupils do not hesitate to speak when they are motivated. They also clarify that anxiety and stress hinder communication and when the pupils are motivated they can't be stressed and anxious. Therefore, when the pupils are relaxed they speak and communicate easily and naturally.

**7- Are your learners given opportunities to interact and speak in English during the game play?**

To answer this question, one of the participants insists that the pupils have to speak in English. She adds that they are given opportunities to interact and communicate when playing games because they use the games that are suggested by the textbook and they are communicative. Nevertheless, the other participant explains that the learners do not interact and communicate when playing games as the games they play do not require doing so.

**8- How do games encourage learners' interaction and communication?**

When questioned about the way games encourage learners to interact and communicate, one of the participants argues that games provide learners with authentic situations in which learners find themselves obliged to speak and interact with their mates to play the game. In contrast, the other participant explains that learners do not interact and communicate when playing games as the games they use are not meant to develop speaking and communication. She adds that learners interact in their mother tongue to help each other when they play vocabulary games.

**9- Classroom games are believed to be a strategy that brings the real world into the classroom. Do you think that the games you use provide situations similar to social and real world situations?**

On the one hand, one of the respondents shows that the situations provided by classroom games are social and resemble the situations in the real world. On the other hand, the other respondent explains that the situations of the games she uses are not like real world situations because the games she uses are vocabulary games. She also points out that the role plays that are suggested by the textbook are similar to social and real world situations.

**10- How do these real world-like situations help your pupils to interact and communicate?**

When it comes to the way the real world situations in games help pupils to interact and communicate, the interviewees agree on the view that the reason is that real world-like situations help them to communicate as they are real; thus, the pupils speak exactly like they do in real life. Adding to this, the learners are motivated to communicate and express themselves because they are familiar with these social and real world situations.

**11- Games are believed to be relaxing, funny, and enjoyable. Does this facilitate learners' interaction and communication? How?**

For the sake of answering this question, the interviewees share the view that the fact that games are relaxing, funny, and enjoyable facilitates learners' interaction and communication. When the pupils feel at ease and happy they interact and communicate because they do not worry about making mistakes.

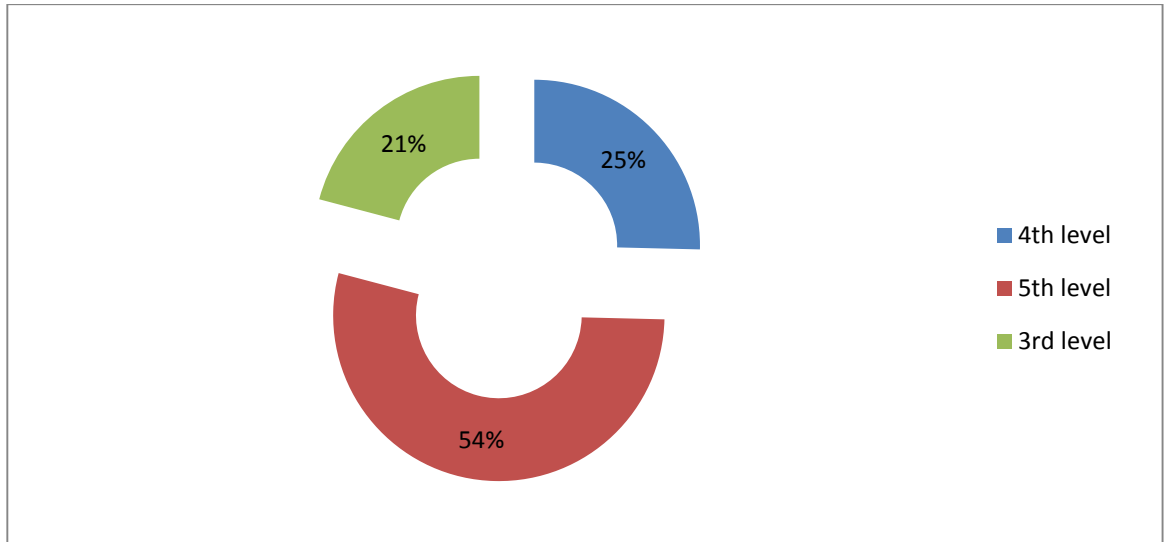
**2. Presentation of the Results of the Questionnaire**

**2. 1. Results of the Section One**

**2. 1. 1. Learners' Profile**

**Q1: Learners' level**





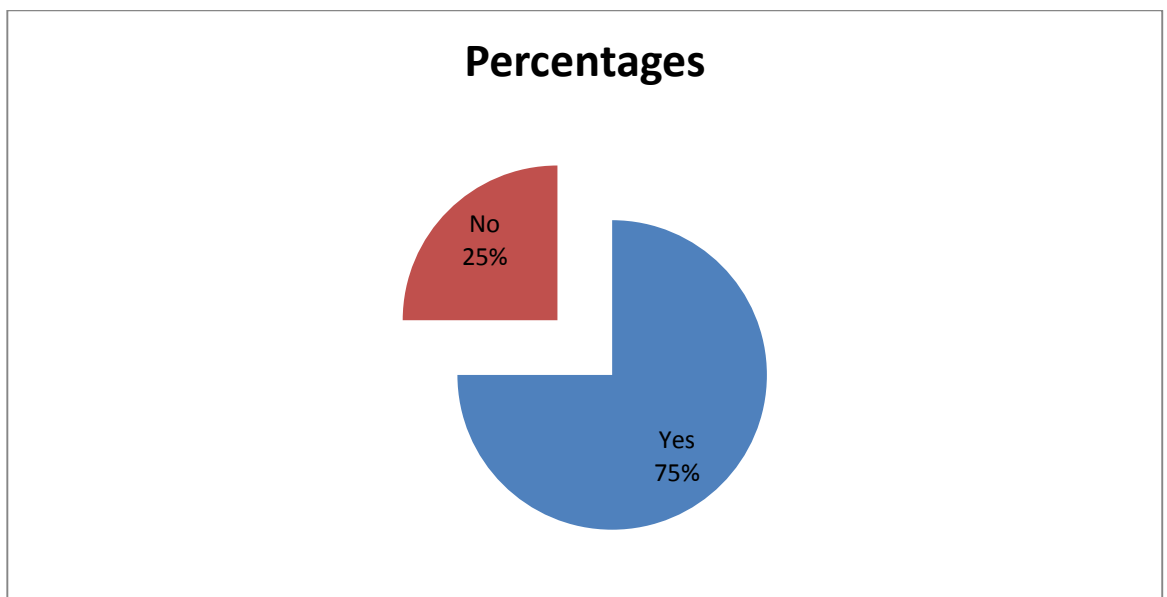
**Diagram 01: Learners' Level**

As underscored in diagram1, the majority of the participants (54%) who represent 36 pupils are from the fifth level. The third level pupils (21%) stand for 14 pupils. However, the fourth level pupils (25%) represent 17 pupils.

## 2. 2. Results of the Section Two

### 2. 2. 1. Learners' Motivation

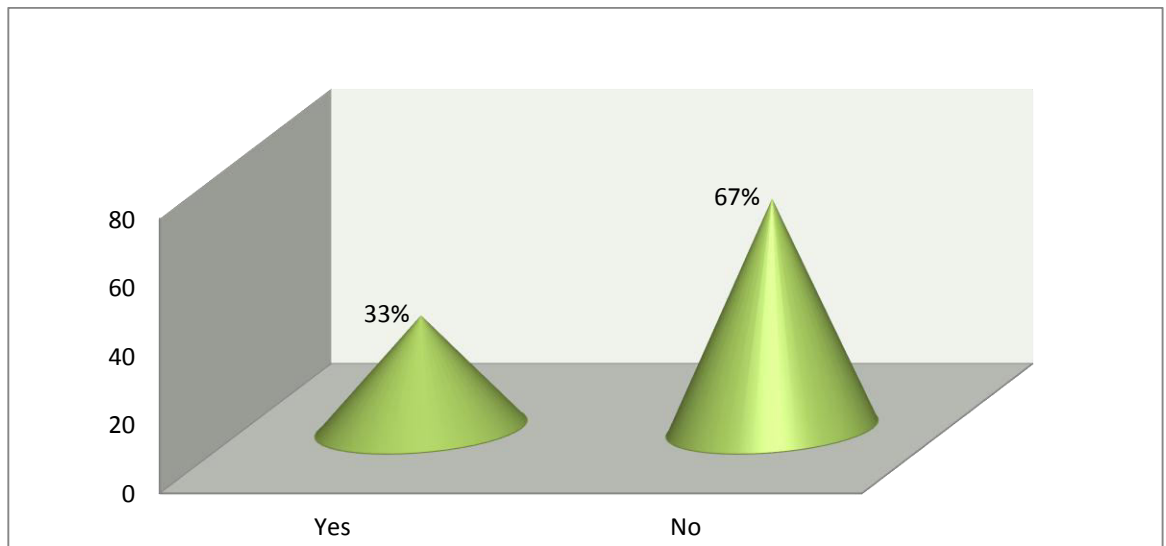
**Q2: Do you like learning English?**



**Diagram 02: Learners' Attitudes towards the English Language.**

As indicated in the pie chart, the majority of the participants like learning English; that is, 75% of the participants like studying English. An insignificant number of the participants, which stands for 25%, show no interest to learning English.

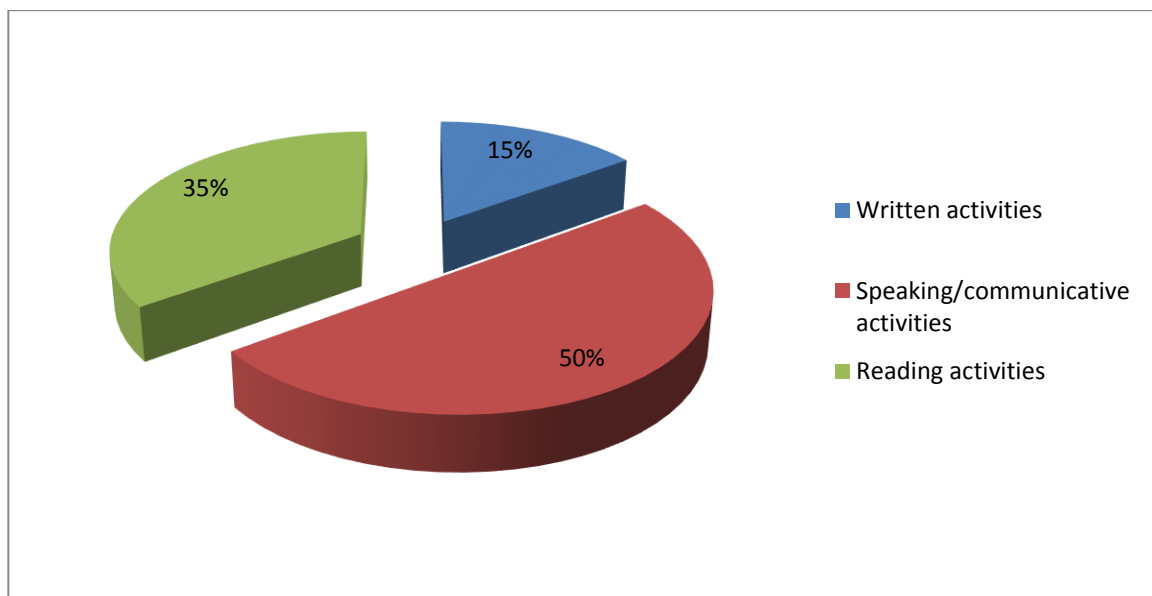
**Q3: Do you use English outside the classroom?**



**Diagram 03: The Use of English Outside the Classroom**

As it is shown in diagram3, 67% of the participants have answered “no” when they are asked whether they use English outside the classroom or not. However, only 33% of them have answered “yes”. This means that the majority of the respondents do not use English outside the classroom.

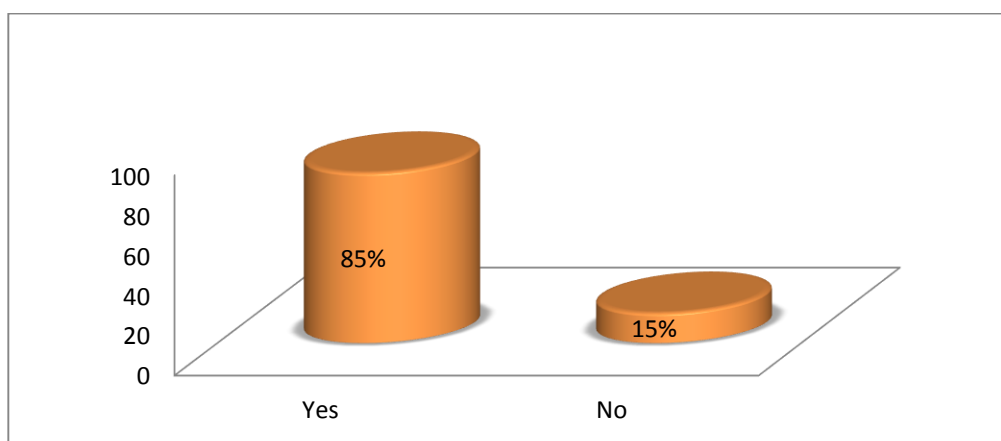
**Q4: Which activities do you prefer?**



**Diagram 04: Learners' attitudes towards different types of activities.**

As presented in the above pie chart, the majority of the participants (50%) prefer speaking\ communicative activities and 35% of them like reading activities. In contrast, only 15% of them prefer written activities. The majority of the participants who prefer speaking and communicative activities explain that their preference is due to the fact that they learn new vocabulary, they all participate and they are given opportunities to speak and communicate in English.

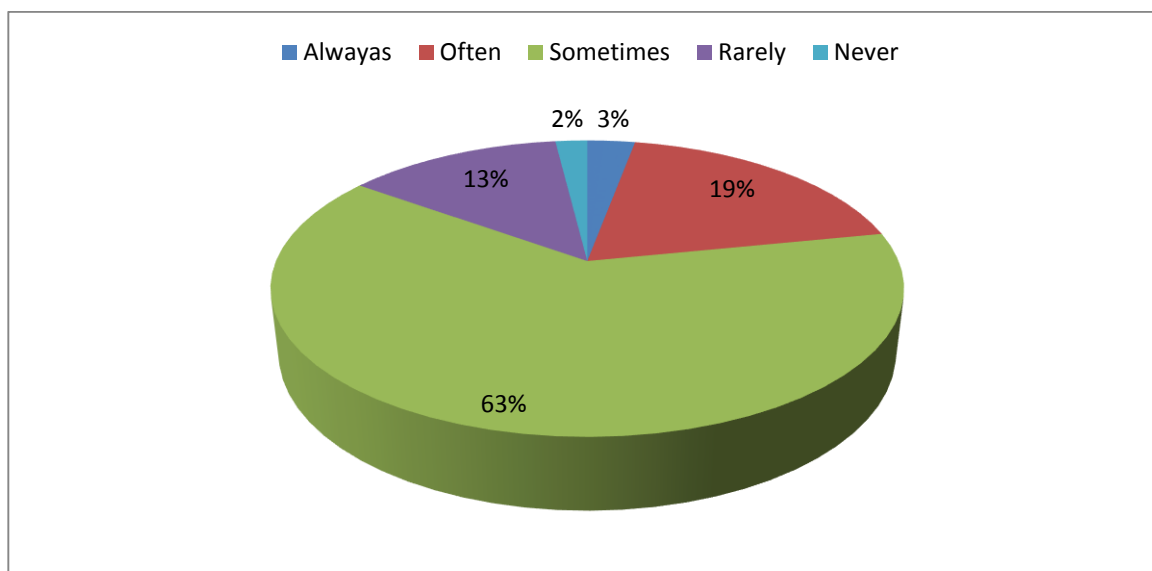
**Q5: Do you like classroom games?**



**Diagram 05: Learners' Attitudes towards Classroom Games**

Diagram 5 denotes that the majority of the respondents (85%) like games. Whereas, only 15% of them do not like games. The participants explain that they like games because they are amusing and funny and they facilitate their English language learning.

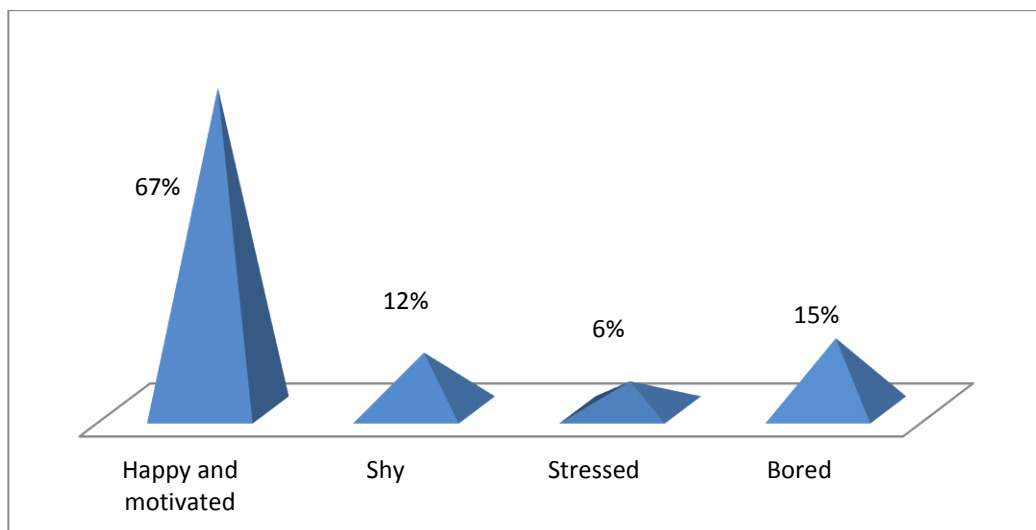
**Q6: How often does your teacher use games?**



**Diagram 06: The Teachers' Frequency of Using Games**

The above pie chart shows how frequently the teachers use games in the classroom. Thus, the majority of them (63%) use games “sometimes”, 19% “often” while 13% use them “rarely”. However, only 2% say that their teacher “never” use games and 3% “always”.

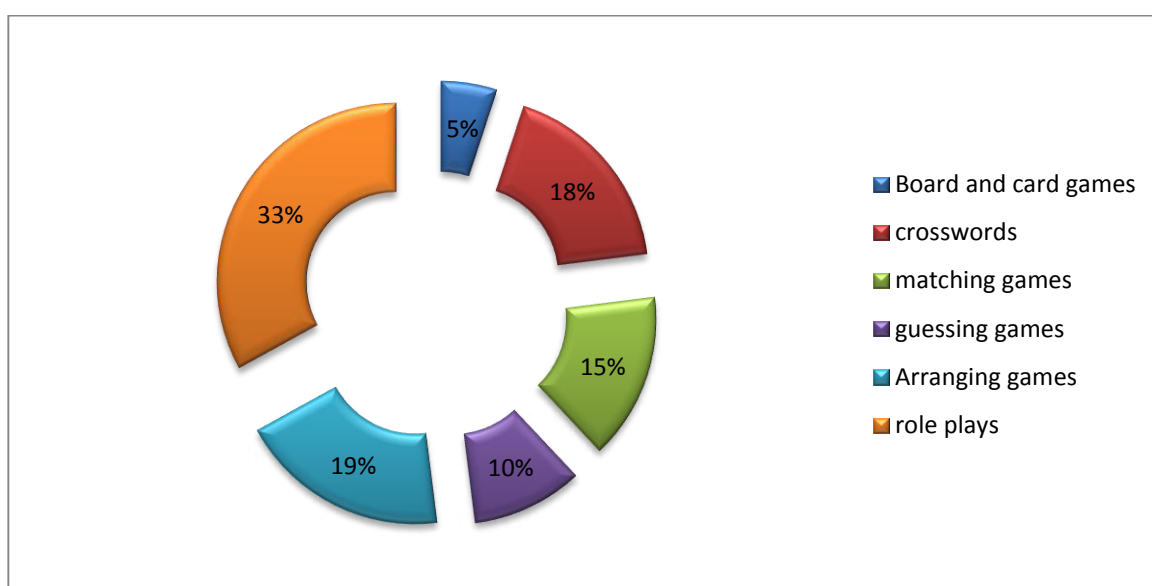
**Q7: How do you feel when you play language games?**



**Diagram 07: How the Pupils Feel when Playing Language Games**

As seen in diagram 7, the findings related to how the participants feel when they play games in the classroom indicate that the majority of them (67%) feel happy and motivated. Nevertheless, 15% of the respondents feel bored during the game play. While, 12% of them feel shy and only 6% feel stressed.

**Q8: Which language games do you prefer?**



**Diagram 08: Preferences of Language Games**

As indicated in the above diagram, the majority of the participants (33%) prefer role plays, 19% prefer arranging games, 18% prefer crosswords, and 15% of them prefer matching games. Nonetheless, 10% of the respondents prefer guessing games; whereas, only 5% of them prefer board and card games.

**Q9: Why do you like games?**



**Diagram 09: The Reasons why the Pupils Like Games**

As demonstrated in the above diagram, the findings related to the reasons why the participants like games indicate that the majority of them (53%) like games because they find them funny and enjoyable, 20% find them motivating, and 20% consider that learning is better through games. Nevertheless, 13% of the respondents like games as they find them easy; while, 10% like them since they provide them with opportunities to speak.

**2. 3. Results of the Section Three: Learners’ Interaction and Communication**

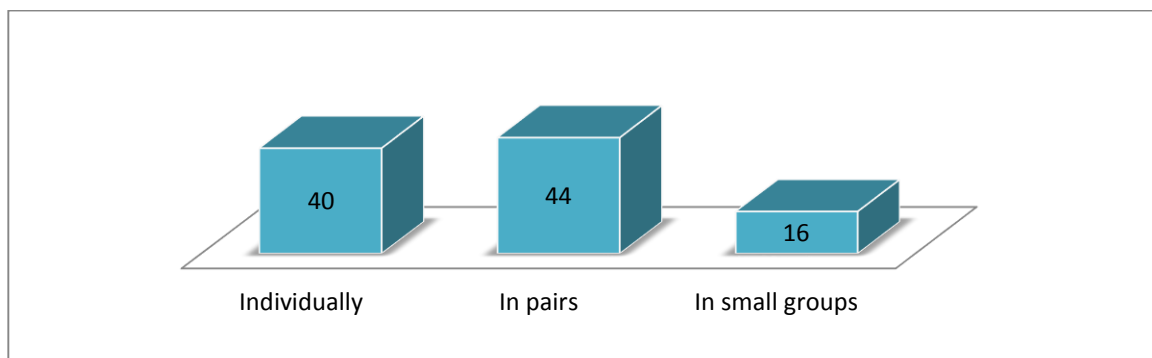
**Q10: How do classroom games help you speak and communicate?**

Categories	Answers	Percentages
Opportunities are given to speak and communicate.	17	25%
The participants use the new words and expressions they learnt when playing classroom games.	3	5%
The participants learn new vocabulary when playing games.	11	16%
Classroom games are amusing.	5	8%
The respondents participate when playing games.	9	13%
Other.	22	33%
Total.	67	100%

**Table1: The ways classroom games help to speak and communicate according to the learners.**

From the results, participants explain that classroom games help them speak and communicate in different ways. Most of them acknowledge that they are given opportunities to speak and communicate during the game-play. Others state that they listen to a new vocabulary and use it to speak when playing games. Besides, respondents claim that they are given roles and participate during the game-play; thus, they all speak and communicate.

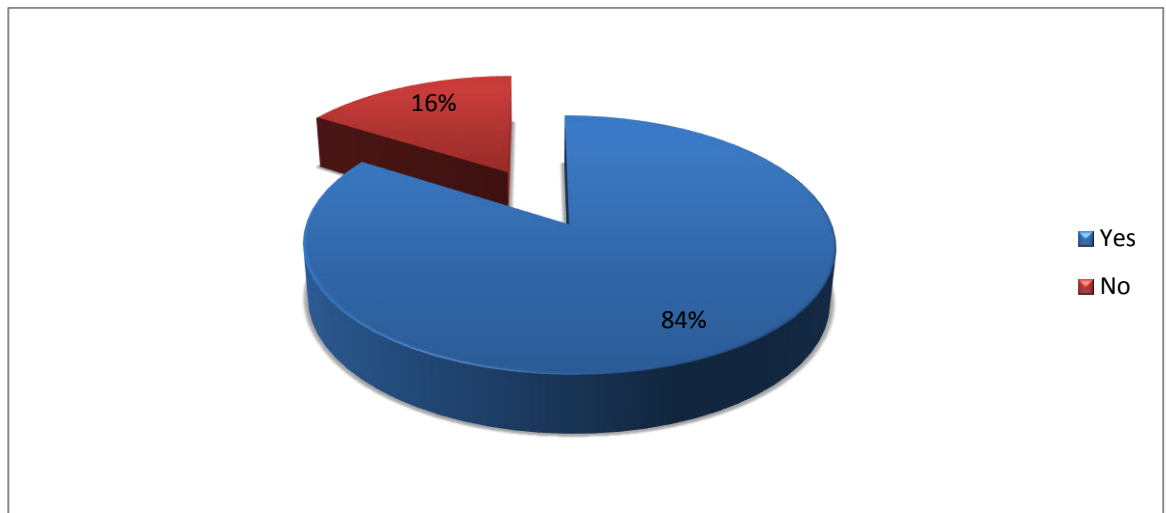
**Q11: You play games ...**



**Diagram 10: Types of Games.**

As demonstrated in the bar graph above, the majority of the respondents (44%) say that they play games in pairs. However, 40% of them state that they play individually. In contrast, only 16% of the participants say that they play games in small groups.

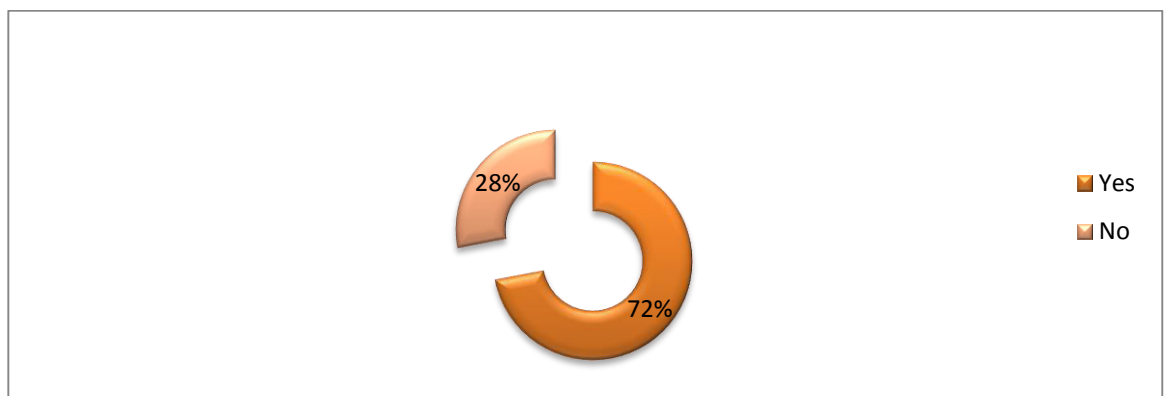
**Q12: Do you participate when your teacher uses games?**



**Diagram 11: Learners' Participation when Using Games**

The results show that the majority of the respondents (84%) say that they participate when their teacher uses games in the classroom. In contrast, only 16% of them state that they do not participate when playing games.

**Q13: Do you use the English language when playing classroom games?**

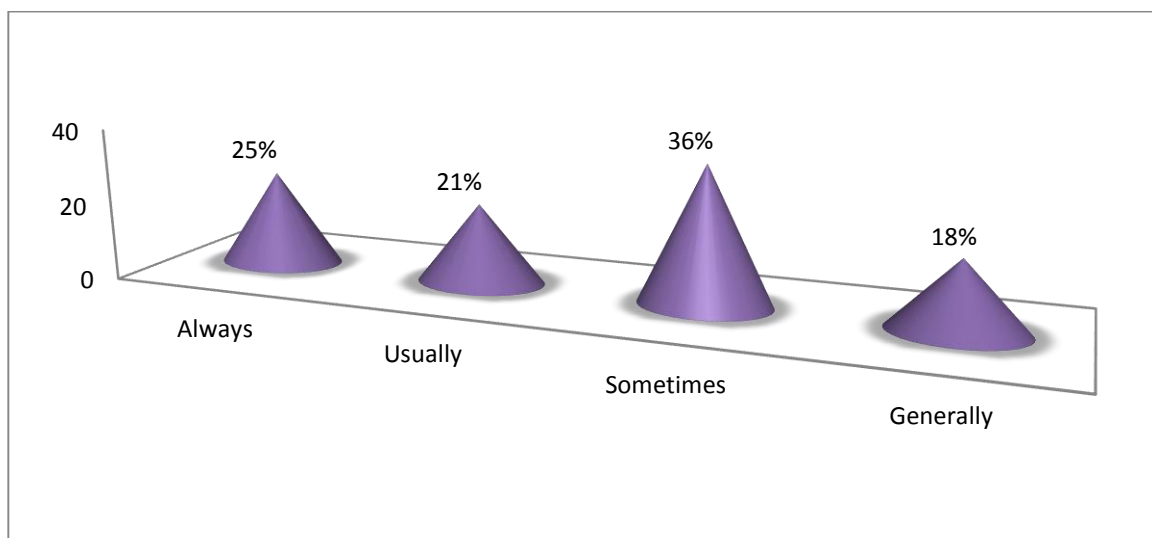


**Diagram 12: The Use of the English Language when Playing Classroom Games**



As for diagram12, results show that the majority of the respondents (72%) have answered “yes” when asked whether they use the English language when playing classroom games or not. However, 28% of the participants have answered “no” to show that they do not use English when playing games in the classroom.

**Q14: Do you interact with your mates during the game-play?**



**Diagram 13: The Learners’ Frequency of Interacting with Mates during the Game-play**

The above diagram represents how frequently the respondents interact with their mates when playing games. The majority of them (36%) interact with their mates “sometimes”, 25% “always” while 21% interact “usually”. In addition, 18% of the participants say that they interact with their mates “generally”.

**Conclusion**

The chapter provides results of the classroom observation, the interview, and the questionnaire indicating the role of classroom games in developing learners’ speaking skill. The findings obtained from the participants indicate that classroom games provide enjoyable and funny environments which motivate the pupils and encourage them to participate. In this

regard, motivation plays an important role in helping pupils interact and communicate during the game play. Adding to this, games provide the pupils with situations which are similar or resemble the social and real-world situations, which help the learners experience the language and speak like they do outside the classroom. However, a significant number of participants state that the games they use in the classroom are not communicative and they are meant to develop vocabulary. Moreover, the majority of the classroom games are played individually or in pairs and they do not require the learners to help each other so as to solve problems or find answers. In light of presenting details and clarifications, the following chapter is devoted to the interpretation and discussion of the results described in this section.

## **Introduction**

The present chapter discusses and interprets the results of the questionnaire and the interview in relation to the review of the literature. The chapter aims at highlighting the results of the study. Besides, it also aims at answering the questions that are advanced in the general introduction as well as confirming or refuting the hypotheses. The chapter consists of two major sections: the first section discusses and analyzes the results of the learners' questionnaire, and the second section parleys the results of the teachers' interview.

### **1. Discussing the Findings of the Learners' Questionnaire**

#### **1. 1. Learners' Level**

The results show that 67 of the participants that represent 100% in both private primary schools: Assalas school and Ithri school are enrolled in three different levels. These two schools start offering English lessons from the primary 3<sup>rd</sup> grade to the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. The majority of the respondents (54%) (see diagram1, p.31) are from the 5<sup>th</sup> grade; whereas, 25% are from the 4<sup>th</sup>, and only 21% are from the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Selecting primary school learners as a sample population to investigate the role of games in increasing learning motivation and encouraging learners' communication is due to the fact that young learners learn languages easily and rapidly and games are an effective strategy to teach them. This confirms Driscoll and Frost's (1999) view that young children have an innate ability which allows them to acquire languages more efficiently than older ones.

#### **1. 2. Learners' Motivation and the Use of Classroom Games**

According to the results demonstrated in the previous chapter, the vast majority of the participants (75%) claim that they like learning English and only 25% of them show no interest to English learning (see diagram2). This fact shows that young learners are motivated

to learn languages as they consider language as a medium that relates between them and the world; that is, by means of language they interact and communicate to learn about their environment. This confirms the view of Moate and Ruotie-Lyhty (2017) that young learners feel motivated to learn a foreign language since they consider it as a means to engage with the world. As for the activities that the learners prefer, we have seen that many of the respondents (50%) (see diagram4) prefer the speaking and communicative activities as they consider that this type of activities helps them participate and express themselves in English. This may be interpreted by the fact that children learn languages naturally, which makes them focus more on speaking as language is primarily spoken. This interpretation confirms Grauberg's (1997:201) idea that 'for many pupils the prime goal of learning a foreign language is to be able to speak it'. Indeed, this supports the previous view that children learn languages to speak and communicate in order to understand others and to be understood. On the other side, the results demonstrate that a great number of the participants (67%) state that they do not use English outside the classroom. This may be resulted from the fact that in Algeria English is a foreign language; thus, the pupils needn't use it outside the classroom. In fact, learners' motivation to learn English is not due only to the need to use it for the purpose of communication in their everyday life but also to other factors.

Besides, as concerns learners' attitudes towards classroom games, it has been noted that the vast majority of the participants (85%) claim that they like classroom games (see diagram5); while, only 15% of them say that they do not like games. This may be interpreted by the fact that games play an important role in the child's life before school; thus, this may impact on young pupils' motivation to learn through games. Accordingly, Vygotsky (1978) claims that play has a great effect on a child's development. This result is in accordance with wang's, *el.* (2011:130) assertion that young learners prefer to be involved in a game-based teaching environment as it increases their motivation and interest in English language

learning. Concerning the frequency of using games, it has been remarked that most of the respondents (63%) say that their teacher uses games “sometimes” and 19% of them say “often”; however, only 3% state that games are used “always” by their teachers. In contrast, only 13% of the participants say that games are used “rarely” and 2% “never” (see diagram6). These outcomes are likely to be interpreted through the fact that classroom games are considered by language teachers as an effective way of learning. This goes hand in hand with what has been claimed by Vygotsky (1978), that play is an effective learning method. This is in conformity with the view held by Wang, *et al.* (2011) that using games is an effective method in teaching English to young learners.

As for learners’ games preferences, the findings show that most of the games that the respondents prefer are communicative. 33% of the participants prefer role plays, 19% like arranging games, 18% guessing games, and 15% of them prefer matching games. In contrast, 10% of the respondents prefer crosswords, and only 5% like board and card games (see diagram8). This can be seen from the view that the pupils prefer games in which they are given opportunities to speak and communicate.

As regards the impact of games on learners, a large number of the participants (67%) claim that they feel happy and motivated when playing classroom games; whereas, only a minority of them say that they feel shy (12%), stressed (6%), and bored (15%) (see diagram7). Adding to this, many respondents (53%) state that they like games as they find them funny and enjoyable. 20% of them like games because they consider learning is better through games (see diagram9). These outcomes lead us to think that games have a positive impact on learners. Classroom games are funny and enjoyable and this motivates the learners and facilitates their learning. Besides, games reduce learners’ stress and shyness which may hinder their learning process. Indeed, this is linked to what Valipour and Aidinlou (2014) claim that games lower learners’ stress and anxiety and they are motivating and enjoyable;

thus, learners learn better and easier. These findings are in agreement with the findings of Ishtawi (2000) who claims that learners feel motivated, relaxed and comfortable when playing educational games and this leads to easier learning and language acquisition.

### **1-3- Games and Learners' Interaction and Communication**

As to the way games help learners speak, interact, and communicate, the respondents clarify communication occurs through several ways. A great number of the respondents (72%) say that they use the English language when they play classrooms games (see diagram12). Many respondents (28%) explain that this is due to the fact that they are given opportunities to speak and communicate during the game play. 5% of the participants claim that they use the already-studied language when playing games, and 8% of them advocate that games are funny and amusing, which encourages them to speak and communicate in English (see table1). Adding to this, the vast majority of the respondents (84%) (see diagram11) say that they participate when playing games and 13% of them support the fact that they are all given roles and participate helps and encourages them to speak and communicate. These outcomes are likely to be interpreted by the fact that games provide learners with situations in which they find themselves obliged to speak and communicate so as to convey meaning. This also helps them practice their language meaningfully. In addition, the element of fun in games makes the learners relaxed, which helps them to speak and communicate without worrying about making mistakes. Besides, owing to the fact that games provide each learner with a specific role, all of the learners participate and get involved in the game-play; therefore, they are encouraged to speak and communicate. These findings corroborate with some authors' claims. Avedon (1991) argues that games are relaxing and amusing; as a result, learners communicate effectively and don't worry about making mistakes. Fitzgerald (2015) affirms that games provide learners with confidence to enunciate new words in front of their

classmates. As far as learners' participation is concerned, Bond (1986) defends the view that learners get involved when playing games owing to the fact that everyone has a role in the game. These results are in accordance with Laurian-Fitzgerald and Suciú's (2015) assumptions that games help less motivated learners to actively participate in the English class. Learners feel more confident to speak and express themselves in a friendly game-like atmosphere. Games lower learners' anxiety level and increase their confidence to pronounce words, speak and express themselves without being afraid of making mistakes. Adding to this, games help them remember new language easily.

In addition, the results obtained demonstrate that many learners (36%) say that they interact with their mates when playing games "sometimes", 25% "always", 21% "usually", and 18% "never" (see diagram13). These findings may be interpreted by the fact that most of the used games provide contexts that require learners' interaction as well as secure environments that encourage learners to interact. As it is viewed by Avedon (1991), games provide enjoyable environments which encourage interaction among learners. Accordingly, Ishtawi (2011:114) states: "games as teaching-learning strategies are fun and create a non-threatening learning environment which encourages interaction between students."

Moreover, our research unveils that the majority of the respondents (44%) state that they play games in pairs, and only 16% of them say that they play in small groups (see diagram10). However, a significant number of participants state that they play games individually (40%). This can be understood by the fact that there are different games that aim at developing different language aspects. Contrary to the games that are played in pairs and in small groups, the games that are played individually do not require from the learners to cooperate and provide support to each other so as to play the game. Adding to this, when learners play games individually, they are unlikely to interact and communicate with each other. Learners interact and communicate when they play games in pairs or in small groups so

as to solve problems, discuss, make decisions, play roles, etc. Similarly, Rinvoluceri and Davis (1995 cited in Stojkovic and Jerotijevic, 2011) assert that successful interaction and communication is reached when learners work in groups. Indeed, games encourage and increase cooperation (Avedon, 1971). This result is in accordance with Ishtawi's (2016) assertion that games are played in pairs or in groups and develop cooperative learning among learners.

## **2- Discussing the Findings of the Teachers' Interview**

### **2-1- The Use of Classroom Games**

As shown in the previous chapter, all the teachers answer that they use games in the classroom. As for the games they use, one teacher explains that she usually uses the games suggested by the text book like role plays, "listen, repeat, and point" games, chants, guessing games, etc. She clarifies that these games are designed to develop the speaking skill. However, the other interviewee says that she generally uses games that are meant to develop vocabulary such as crosswords, word matching games, and word search games.

One teacher for instance, explains: "*in the textbook there is a rubric called 'Let's play the game' ... the pupils are sometimes asked to listen to a song, then sing and point images according to the song, to play roles ...or they listen to the CD player, then they use the language of the audio recording to engage in a short conversation in pairs ... for example, after listening to an audio recording about professions, the pupils work in pairs and describe and ask questions about different job pictures in their textbook (one describes a picture and says: "He works in a farm and grows food". The other asks a question: "Is he a farmer?")"*". The other one says: "*I use crosswords, matching games, and ... word search games in which the pupils look at pictures, then select letters and combine them to form words"*". So, these teachers' answers may be interpreted by the fact that there exist many types of games which



aim at developing different skills and aspects of language. Indeed, there are games which are designed to develop the speaking skill; that is, they encourage learners' interaction and communication. This confirms Harmer's (2001) point of view that communicative games are a kind of activities that encourage learners' interaction and participation in the classroom and help them to speak in order to express their opinions and give information. These results go also hand in hand with Merdas's (2013) view that communication games help learners improve their speaking skill.

## **2-2- Games and learners' Motivation**

Moreover, the results of the previous chapter show that all of the teachers agree upon the view that games are motivating as the learners seem full of energy and excited to work. For instance, one teacher asserts: *"the games that we use in the classroom are motivating ... games are the activities that my pupils like the most"*. These results may be interpreted by the fact that games are a learning strategy that motivates the learners to learn. They support Valipour and Aidinlou's (2014) view that games transform the class into a happy environment and increase learners' learning motivation. They also confirms the view hold by Wang et al. (2011) that students' motivation and confidence can be raised in English learning by playing games.

Next to this, the outcomes of the previous chapter reveal that all the teachers agree on the fact that motivation has a positive impact on language learning as the learners learn better and faster when they are motivated. For instance, one teacher claims: *"the pupils understand easily and rapidly when they are motivated"*. The other teacher says: *"motivation is necessary in language learning, the learners cannot learn any language if they are not motivated"*. Consequently, this may be interpreted by the fact that learning languages is a hard task which requires a lot of efforts and hard work from learners; this is why motivation is indispensable in

language learning. These results are in conformity with Lee's (1995) view that language learning demands a great amount of efforts; for this games can be used to maintain learners' efforts as well as their interest and work.

When asked the participants about the way motivation helps their pupils to communicate and develop their speaking skill, they responded by arguing that motivation reduces pupils' stress, which helps them speak without hesitation. For example, one teacher claims: "when my pupils are motivated, they don't hesitate to speak". The other teacher says: "stress prevents the pupils from speaking and communicating". This may be perceived that stress represents an obstacle that prevents speaking and communication. Thus, when learners are motivated, they speak without hesitation because they feel relaxed and they don't worry about making mistakes. Accordingly, Ebata (2018) supports the view that motivation helps students to be excellent communicators as a result of self-confidence. This result is in accordance with Avedon's (1991) conclusion that when learners are not stressed and worried, they are more likely to enhance their fluency and spontaneity in speaking.

### **2-3- Games and Learners' Interaction and Communication**

As shown in the previous chapter, one interviewee insists that her pupils interact and communicate when playing games as the games suggested by the textbook are communicative. For instance, she says: "*the textbook 'Let's Go' is based on communicative activities and games and the learners have to communicate*". On the other hand, the other interviewee explains that her pupils do not interact and communicate when playing games because the games she uses do not require learners' interaction and communication. For example, she states: "*I generally implement crosswords, matching word games, and word search games*". This may be interpreted by the fact that learners interact and communicate only when communicative games are used. This is in conformity with Harmer's (2001) view

that communicative games are activities that are designed to help learners interact and communicate.

When questioned about the way games encourage learners' interaction and communication, one interviewee claims that games provide learners with contexts in which learners' communication and interaction is necessary. For instance, she asserts: "*all of the games that we use in the classroom are about situations like 'telling the time', 'showing the way' ... the pupils work in pairs to either play roles or act out a dialogue using the words and the words and expressions that we have already seen in the beginning of the lesson ... so the pupils find themselves obliged to interact with their mates and communicate*". This goes hand in hand with the view held by Hadfield (1990) that games can create a meaningful context in which language can be used as a tool to achieve a specific objective. As for interaction, the child uses language as a means of communication to interact with others in his environment (Woolard and Prichard, 2010). These results are in accordance with the findings of Salazar Posada and Villamil Francis (2012) that getting learners using language in meaningful contexts allows them to speak and interact.

According to the outcomes of the previous chapter, one of the respondents mentions that the games they use in the classroom provide situations that resemble social and real world situations. For example, she says: "*yes, the situations of the games resemble to the situations of the world outside*". However, the other respondent explains that the vocabulary games that they use do not provide such situations. For instance, she states: "*No, we do this but not in games... in games we work with words*". This may be viewed that not all classroom games provide social and real world-like situations but only the games that are designed to develop learners' communication.

As indicated in the data collected from the interview, the social and real world situations provided by classroom games help learners to interact and communicate. One interviewee claims that the learners are familiar with these situations because they resemble the everyday situations in the outside world, which helps them interact and communicate. For instance, she asserts: *“I think these situations encourage them to communicate because simply ...they are real; so people speak as if they are in real life”*. This may be perceived by the fact that learners experience the language through social and real world situations because they resemble or they are similar to the world outside the classroom. Therefore, learners interact and communicate meaningfully and spontaneously and develop their speaking skill in the same way they learnt to speak in their mother tongue. This confirms Hadfield’s (1990:7) assertion that games give opportunities for real communication as they form a “bridge between the real world and the classroom”; therefore, children can learn the language unconsciously and in the same way they learnt their native language. This can also be interpreted by the fact that learners can develop their speaking skill through communicative games because they can transform what they learn from their language experiences in the classroom games into other similar situations outside the classroom. Consequently, learners will be able to speak outside the classroom. This confirms the view hold by Bould and Miller (1996 cited in Macleod and Koubek, 2014: 18) that game-based learning is considered as ‘a special case of experiential learning’. Experiential learning provides opportunities to use real communication and allows learners to reflect upon their language learning experience and to transfer their experiences in the classroom into the real world (Safiriani: 2016). This outcome is in accordance with Laurian-Fitzgeraldand Suciu’s (2015) claim that games help the process of learning to become spontaneous so that learners can use language in other contexts.

The results demonstrate that all the teachers share the same view that games facilitate interaction and communication because of being relaxing, enjoyable and funny. They explain

that games make them feel at ease and happy; so, they interact and communicate. For instance, one teacher states: *“when the pupils feel at ease ...feel happy, they communicate with each other because they don’t worry about making mistakes”*. This may be interpreted by the fact that stress and anxiety are barriers to interaction and communication and the fun element in games creates a secure environment which encourages learners to spontaneously interact and communicate without hesitation or worrying about making mistakes. This goes hand in hand with Wright’s et al., (2005) view that games have psychological and cultural effects on learners as they increase their self-esteem, confidence, motivation and spontaneity. As result, they help them communicate and enhance their intonation. This result is in conformity with Avedon’s (1991) findings that games are relaxing and funny, this is why learners communicate effectively when playing games. When learners are not stressed and worried, they are more likely to enhance their fluency and spontaneity in speaking.

## **Conclusion**

The results of the learners’ questionnaire and teachers’ interview has answered the research questions and confirmed the hypotheses developed in the general introduction. Games are motivating because they are funny and relaxing. Besides, learning through games is a case of learning through experience as they provide learners with social and real situations in which they are given opportunities to interact and communicate. This has been mentioned in both the learners’ answers to the questionnaire and the teachers’ responses to the questions of the interview.

## **General conclusion**

The study was set out to explore the role of games in developing learners' speaking skill in two private primary schools of Tizi Ouzou: Assaslas and Ithri. It investigated how games motivate language learners and the impact of motivation on learners' interaction and communication. It also intended to determine the way games help pupils to interact and communicate. The investigation in this area is important because the subject is new especially in the context of private primary schools of Tizi Ouzou and it was conducted for the first time on the basis of game-based learning approach grounded in socio-constructivism theory of learning. The results confirm the hypotheses developed in the general introduction as well as the previous findings in literature.

This dissertation assigned two major objectives. The first objective was meant to explore the extent to which games enhance learning motivation and the way motivation helps learners interact and communicate. The second objective was to discover how games encourage learners' interaction and communication.

To answer the advanced research questions and to test the hypotheses of the study, the mixed methods approach was adopted, combining both qualitative and quantitative methods for the sake of gathering and analyzing data. As for data analysis, statistical tools were used in order to evaluate the quantitative data. In addition to the statistical method, a Qualitative Content Analysis was adopted to interpret the data gathered from the interview.

Relying on the data analysis, the empirical findings provided answers to the research questions advanced in the study. As claimed by Valipour and Aidinlou (2014), games lower learners stress and anxiety and they are motivating and enjoyable; this is why they learn better and easier. The vast majority of the pupils (85%) like learning through games, and 67% of them argue that they feel happy and motivated when playing classroom games; whereas only

a minority of them say that they feel shy (12%), stressed (6%), and bored (15%). Besides all the teachers agree upon the view that games are motivating and claim that pupils seem happy and excited to work. This confirms the view hold by Wang *et al*, (2011) that learners' motivation and confidence can be raised in English learning by playing games. These findings from the pupils' questionnaire and teachers' interview reveal that classroom games have a positive impact on learners' motivation and interest to learning. Games provide pupils with enjoyable and funny environments which increase their learning motivation.

As for learners' interaction and communication, the outcomes of the study show that a great number (84%) of the pupils argue that they use the English language when they play classroom games, and a considerable number of them (25%) explain that this is due to the fact that they are given opportunities to speak and communicate when playing games. Many pupils (36%) say that they interact when using games "sometimes", 25% "always, 21% "usually", and 18% "never". Furthermore, one of the teachers say that the pupils interact and communicate with each other when playing classroom games as the games they play require doing so. These findings demonstrate that games encourage learners' interaction and communication. This confirms Harmers' (2001) point of view that communicative games are activities that encourage learners' interaction and participation in the classroom and help them to speak in order to express their opinions and give information. One of the teachers also claims that motivation increases pupils' confidence and make them feel relaxed. As Ebata (2008) asserts, motivation helps learners to be excellent communicators as a result of self-confidence.

Besides, one of the teachers claim that the situations provided by classroom games are social and real situations which help pupils to speak naturally and spontaneously as they do in real situations outside the classroom. This may be interpreted by the fact that games are effective in helping learners develop their speaking skill as they provide situations that are

similar or resemble to the situations in the real world. This goes hand in hand with the view hold by Hadfield (1990) that games give opportunities for real communication as they form a bridge between the real world and the classroom. He adds that this helps children learn the language in the same way they learnt their mother tongue. In fact, pupils can develop their speaking skill when learning through games.

The discussion of the results of the learners' questionnaire and the teachers' interview has answered the research questions advanced in this study. The results obtained from the questionnaire and the interview have proved the effectiveness of games in motivating learners to learn. The results demonstrated that motivation facilitates learning and helps learners to interact and communication. As it is asserted by Valipour and Aidinlou (2014), games transform the class into a happy environment and increase learners' learning motivation. From what has been shown in the findings of the investigation, it is concluded that games provide learners with social and real situations in which learners interact and communicate. Adding to this, learners experience the language through playing games and transfer their experiences in the classroom to the real world, which makes them develop their speaking skill.

It is a hope that the findings of this humble work will offer more chances and clues for further research in this field of study. This would, thus, improve foreign language learning and teaching, especially teaching the speaking skill which is considered by most of learners and teachers not only as the skill that should be given much importance when learning any foreign language but also as a skill that requires a lot of hard work and efforts to be developed. It is also a hope that this investigation paves the way to future researchers to conduct further research on the same issue focusing, for instance, on the same issue in in different settings and different levels. Further researches could also reflect upon the role of games in developing other skills or other aspects of language like vocabulary and pronunciation.



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## Appendix 1:

### The Learners' Questionnaire

This questionnaire is part of our study which is about the role of games in developing learners' speaking skill. You are kindly asked to answer the following questions so as to help us in collecting authentic and reliable data. Your answers will be anonymous and confidential. Thus, please feel comfortable to provide sincere responses to the questions in order to guarantee the success of our research. Thank you in advance for your contribution.

*Please use a cross (×) to indicate your chosen answer, and use your own statements where required.*

#### Section01: Learners' Profile

**Q1.** You are a pupil in the:  1<sup>st</sup> grade  2<sup>nd</sup> grade  3<sup>rd</sup> grade  4<sup>th</sup> grade  5<sup>th</sup> grade

#### Section02: Learners' Motivation

**Q2.** Do you like learning English?

Yes  No

**Q3.** Do you use English outside the classroom ?

Yes  No

**Q4.** Which activities do you prefer ?

- a- Written activities
- b- Speaking\ communicative activities
- c- Reading activities

Please justify your answer

.....  
.....  
.....

**Q5.** Do you like classroom games ?

Yes  No

Justify?

.....

.....  
.....  
**Q6.** How often does your teacher use games?

always     often     sometimes     rarely     never

**Q7.** How do you feel when you play language games?

Happy and motivated     shy     stressed     bored

**Q8.** Which language games do you prefer?

- a-    Guessing games
- b-    Search games
- c-    Matching games
- d-    Role plays
- e-    Arranging games
- f-    Board and card games

**Q9.** Why do you like games?

Because they are ...

- a-    Motivating
- b-    Funny and enjoyable
- c-    Easy
- d-    Provide you with opportunities to speak
- e-    You learn better through games

### **Section03: Lernalers' Interaction and Communication**

**Q10.** How do classroom games help you speak and communicate?

.....  
.....  
.....

**Q11.** You paly games ...

- a-    Individually
- b-    In pairs
- c-    In small groups

**Q12.** Do you participate when your teacher use games?

Yes

No

**Q13.** Do you use the English language when playing classroom games?

Yes

No

**Q14.** Do you interact with your mates during the game-play?

Always

usually

sometimes

generally

Please use this section for any additional comments you would like to add

.....  
.....  
.....

Thank you!

## Appendix 2:

### Questionnaire des élèves

Le présent questionnaire rentre dans le cadre de notre recherche portant sur le rôle des jeux dans le développement de l'oral chez les élèves. Vous êtes priés de bien vouloir répondre aux questions ci-dessous à fin de nous aider à collecter des données fiables et authentiques. Vos réponses seront anonymes et confidentielles. Vous êtes sollicités / (ées) à cet effet nous répondre sincèrement aux questions pour garantir une meilleure qualité de recherche . Merci d'avance pour votre contribution.

Veillez utiliser une croix (×) pour indiquer la réponse choisie et vous exprimer avec vos propres propos si nécessaire.

#### Section01 : Profil de l'apprenant

Q1- Vous êtes un élève au :  Niveau1  Niveau 2  Niveau3  Niveau4  Niveau5

#### Section02 : Motivation de l'apprenant

Q2- Aimez-vous apprendre la langue anglaise ?

Oui  Non

Q3-Utilisez vous l'anglais en dehors de la classe ?

Oui  Non

Q4-Quel genre d'activités préférez-vous ?

- a- Ecrite
- b- Orale / communicative
- c- Activités de lecture

Justifiez votre réponse :

.....  
.....  
.....

Q5-Aimez-vous les jeux de classe ?

Oui  Non

Justifiez votre réponse

.....  
.....  
.....

**Q6-**A quelle fréquence votre enseignant utilise-t-il les jeux ?

-Toujours  Souvent  Parfois  rarement  Jamais

**Q7-**Comment vous sentez vous quand vous jouez des jeux de langue ?

Heureux et excité  Timide  stressé  ennuyé

**Q8-**Quel genre de jeux préférez-vous ?

- a- Devinettes
- b- Jeux de recherches
- c- Jeux de paire
- d- Jeux des rôles
- e- Jeux d'organisation/ d'ordre
- f- jeux de plateau (jeux d'échecs) et jeux de cartes

**Q9. Pourquoi aimez-vous les jeux ?**

**Parce qu'ils sont..**

- a- motivants
- b- drôles et amusants
- c- faciles
- d- vous donnent l'opportunité de parler
- e- vous apprenez mieux à travers les jeux

**Section 03 : interaction et communication des apprenants**

**Q10-** Comment les jeux vous aident-ils à communiquer ?

.....  
.....  
.....

**Q11-Vous jouez**

- A- Individuellement
- B- A deux
- C- Dans des petits groupes

**Q12.** Participez-vous aux jeux proposés par votre enseignant?

Oui  Non

**Q13.** Es que vous utilisez l'anglais lorsque vous jouez des jeux en classe?

Oui

Non

**Q14.** Interagissez-vous (communiquez-vous) avec vos camarades en jouant?

toujours

souvent

parfois

généralement

Vous êtes prié/ées de rediger ci-dessous vos commentaires sur le sujet

.....  
.....  
.....

Merci!

## **Appendix 3 :**

### **Teachers' Interview**

#### **Section1 : The Use of Classroom Games**

**Q1.** Do you use games in the classroom?

**Q2.** What are the games you usually use?

**Q3.** Do you use games that are designed to develop learners' speaking skill? If yes, how often do you use them?

#### **Section2: Learners' Motivation**

**Q1.** Do classroom games motivate and increase your learners' energy? Explain.

**Q2.** In your opinion, how does motivation affect your pupils' language learning when playing games?

**Q3.** How does motivation help your pupils communicate and develop their speaking skill?

#### **Section3: Learners' Interaction and Communication**

**Q1:** Are your learners given opportunities to interact and communicate in English during the game-play?

**Q2.** How do games encourage your pupils' interaction and communication?

**Q3.** Classroom games are believed to be a strategy that brings the real world into the classroom. Do you think that the games you use provide situations similar to social and real world situations?

**Q4.** How do these real world-like situations encourage your pupils to interact and communicate?

**Q5.** Games are believed to be relaxing, funny, and enjoyable. Does this facilitate learners' interaction and communication? How?

*If you have something to add feel at ease.*

*Thank you.*







