



Effectiveness of Games in English Language Learning at Elementary Level in Government Schools in Sargodha, Pakistan

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Abstract

Learning second language is a challenging task if the learning is concerned with the vocabulary, grammar, and other skills of L2. Pakistan is country where L2 learning is difficult for both teachers and students. The results of this study show the same problem and the main reason are the traditional methodologies which are used for teaching. The researcher has selected educational games through the teachers of intermediate level of Sargodha, Pakistan in which they teach English as a subject. The hypotheses show that teaching through games can be more effective. Through quantitative procedure data has been collected from teachers who are teaching English at the elementary level. The research shows the process of using language games and the help which pupils may receive from games. The results of the research show that using games for language teaching are effective for learning vocabulary. However, games should be integrated with proper guideline because difficulties are shown in the research findings such as noise and disturbance in the classroom. It has resulted that language games are effective for learning L2 and teachers should need to integrate language games with other activities in the classroom because students are motivated and learn the language effectively.

Keywords: English Language Learning, Elementary Education, Sports in Schools

1. Introduction

Human beings interact with each other through language to pass their messages from one person to other while in counter they receive responses in form of messages. Although, language is a complex phenomenon through that we communicate with each other but instead of this complexity people from different regions speak their mother and native languages which do not require any planning. Further, mother and native language is called first language, and its' acquisition is instinct and does not require any instruction while acquiring second language the process becomes complex and hard and it is said that language learning is complex and hard phenomenon to describe; it needs constant effort at every moment to implement. To understand this phenomenon, constant efforts are conducted. The teachers try hard to help and guide the learners to improve the learning process. Globally the same problem exists about the

L2. Different approaches are being adopted to understand and understand language learning process. Game is also one of the important methods which is used in classroom activities to help and encourage the learners to overcome language learning process.

Game is a physical activity, which has rules to achieve the aims. Games in the language learning process are used to make understand the learner's language learning process. Games are used a part of fun in the classroom, and they are specified the primary part of curriculum; this fun is not only implemented as an amusing activity but also to understand and understand the language learning process. Games have multiple purposes in the language learning process, for a time it helps the teacher to put up contexts in which the language is valuable and significant. To make understand the learner, teacher involve the students in different games, such as buzzer games, vocabulary games, who am I? grammar games and hangman etc. At the other part, the learners also want to take part to do so, and understand what others say and write. They express their views among themselves and write to create an environment which helps them to understand the language learning process. Another purpose of the games is to understand the meaning of the context; a valuable understanding of 'meaningfulness' is that the learners react to the substance in a specific way. If the learners are amused, annoyed, intrigued, or amazed, it shows that the content is clearly meaningful to them.

Thus, the meaning of the language is made clear what they listen, read, speak, and write, they will be more experienced through the games and, therefore, healthier in understanding of memorization is being enabled. Thus, games are initiative-taking part of the classroom for language learning process, which make the environment of learning more amused and interesting. We can never underestimate their importance. In this regard my research is concerned with "the effectiveness of games in an English Language at elementary level in Government elementary schools of Sargodha, Pakistan." Elementary level is the core of education. Non-natives students are unable to write, read, speak, and listen with packed concentration. Teacher needs hard work to make them understand. The students create major fracas for a teacher. They need individual attention, at the same time, so it is difficult for the teacher to give individual attention to each student. Though, to overcome this problem, games can play a vital role to solve this problem, at the same time they can be engaged in different activities through different games.

The researcher has seen that teaching English as a subject to elementary level is not satisfactory. Neither student's motivation nor the classroom level of participation seems to have improved and the vocabulary level which is too weak. This led the researcher to reflect on how to teach the vocabulary and studied more effectively. Therefore, the researcher wishes to confirm through research the pedagogical usefulness of game strategy. The prime aim of the research was to find out the usefulness of games in English language learning at elementary level. Another aim of the study was to analyse the effectiveness of games to improve the vocabulary of L2 learners. The focus of the study on the role which the games play in the language learning process at elementary level. Its target was to know how to enhance the language learning process through different games at classrooms. And most important was to assess that how do games play a vital role in the effectiveness of English language. The intended study tries to explore the effectiveness of games in an English Language at elementary level in government elementary schools of Sargodha, Pakistan. This study will not only help the language teachers but also students at elementary level.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Contextualizing Games in Research Paradigms

Learning of second language is a complex phenomenon which requires constant effort. To make the process effective different studies and researches have been set out. The results of the studies and researches have described and prescribed certain suggestions and applications are set out for different methods and methodologies helping in learning second language. Acquisition of second language through Games is one of the effective methods. Researches have been conducted about the role of games in language learning process. Games play a key role to strengthen the base of children at primary level and secondary level. Important works have been acknowledged in this regard; Cyndy Turtledove *Action Games* (1996), W.R. Lee *Language Teaching Games and Contest* (1979) and Jill Hadfield *Intermediate Communication Games* (1990).

2.2. Importance of Games in Language Learning

As discussed by the linguists that learners of L2 are more motivated through those activities which are done through games. So, the games are more important in learning L2, particularly at primary and elementary levels. However, the level varies in different countries because L2 learners have innate competence to learn the language effectively. Fontier and Le Cunff (1976), Long and Robinson (1998). Jones (2005), Hong (2002), Robert (2010), Deshpande (2008) and Deesri (2002) have shown the importance of games in teaching.

Yu (2005) has suggested the importance of games in the classroom activities. According to him games help in distinguishing learning opportunities to fulfil the needs and requirements of learners while practicing language activities. His opinion can be summarized as; 'I hear and forget' refers to those L2 teaching methods which only cope learners to listen but the learners are unable to memorize what teacher has taught and suggested in the classroom. Further, he says 'I see, and I remember' refers to those games activities which are instructed by the teacher and the learners trying to memorize and they are capable of memorizing because the learners are proactive and motivated because of fun in the games. So, they memorize easily what they are taught. Furthermore, he says 'I do, and I understand' refers that instructor keeps involved learners in classroom activities. These activities are practice based activities done through games. Therefore, students take part in games activities and they cannot take part until they are not capable of doing these activities. The teacher makes understand and the students do. Therefore, the three Yu's three points shows the importance and significance of games in teaching L2 (p. 40).

Further, Harb (2007) holds the same opinion about the importance of games in L2 learning. He asserts that "through games, students learn much information, facts and concepts about people and things" (p. 37). To him, the main goal of game activities is enjoyment. Games enhance the social and affective aspects of the students' character. Moreover, games are a tool of expression. Students can express their thoughts, ideas, feelings, emotions, and aptitudes through games.

2.3. Characteristics of Language Games

Games have distinct characteristics but in language class or English as a subject class they hold

distinctive features and characteristics. Games have the following features and characteristics for learning L2 given by Yu (2005):

- A game involves a challenge against either a task or an opponent.
- Games have a definite set of rules.
- A game is freely engaged in.
- Psychologically, a game is an arbitrary situation clearly separate from real-life.
- Socially, the events of a game situation are considered, in and of themselves, to be of minimal importance.
- A game has a definite number of workable solutions; that is, only a finite number of things can happen during play.
- A game must always end, although the end may come simply because time has run out (p. 34).

Therefore, games have a unique place not only in L2 learning but they also play their roles in society. The characteristics shows that games hold fun which enhance the interests of learners which are governed by rules and the goals and aims are defined. Therefore, learners take part in games with active competition, and learn the language effectively.

3. Methods and Materials

The research is case study in nature which aimed at finding the effects of game strategy on the learning of vocabulary for elementary students. Both qualitative and quantitative in nature, the research method specifies the description of questionnaire through that he collects data from teachers. Questionnaire has been designed through descriptive method for teachers who are teaching English language vocabulary. According to Wilson and Mclean (1994) questionnaire is a useful tool and instrument for collection of data, information, helping in structure often numerical data, being able to be administered without the presence of the researcher, and often being comparatively straightforward to analyse widely. Through questionnaire teachers have given their opinion about the problem with students face in L2.

The aim of this work is to examine the effectiveness of games in English Language at elementary level. The researcher has selected thirty teachers (15 males and 15 females) from different schools of Sargodha. Questionnaire has been designed for teachers and questions in this paper, link to the theoretical part of the research, each question has direct or indirect link with theoretical part. These questions are related to various aspects of L2 acquisition which are taught through games at elementary level. Further, these questions support researcher s' hypothesis and statement.

The questionnaire was distributed among thirty teachers of Sargodha government schools who are teaching English as a subject in which vocabulary is prominent. Questions were developed both in open and closed ended forms. In close-ended questions, the teachers have been given choice to tick a right choice while in open-ended questions teachers have been left for justification and explanation of the answers. Teachers' justification and explanations supply more deep insights into the subject.

Questions were divided in three sections. Section one describe teachers age, gender, teaching experience and level of teaching, section two consists of vocabulary acquisition through

different techniques, section three consists of games as teaching method, their role in teaching, vocabulary enhancement and effectiveness, the effectiveness of games for learning L2 and motivation of learners in class room through games. Each section of questionnaire has organized either direct relation to theoretical part of the research. All the copies of questionnaire were returned by the teachers as they filled up.

4. Results and Analysis

The questionnaire has been the primary source for the collected data. The researcher does not speak through own voice in the findings, results, and recommendations but they are made with references to analysis and theoretical part of the research. The effort was made for effectiveness of L2 learning at elementary level in government schools in Sargodha district through teachers' questionnaire and students' interview.

The table-1 shows the age of the teachers. Both male and female genders were equally given questionnaires who are teaching English as a subject at elementary level. Same quantity from both genders helps that

Gender	Participants	Percentage	Age
Male	15	50%	25 to 30 Years and 30 to 35 years
Female	15	50 %	25 to 30 Years and 30 to 35 years

how both male and female students are taught. The responses to questions may vary in terms of genders that help the researchers because English is a secondary course at middle level and the basic knowledge is needed for comprehension of their language. Further, their ages have been mentioned in the results.

Table-2 shows the levels of experience of the teachers. Equal percentage 33% of teachers have less than three years, five years, and more than five years of experience. The results show that 33% teachers are beginners at their career level while the remaining teachers are

Response/Teaching Experience	Sixth	Seventh	Eighth
5 Teachers 1/ Less than 3 years	√	√	√
5 Teachers 2/ Less than 3 years		√	√
5 Teachers 3/ 5 years	√		√
5 Teachers 4/ 5 years	√	√	
5 Teachers 5/ more than 5 years		√	√
5 Teachers 6/ more than 5 years	√		√

experienced and skilful. The table further shows the level of teachers and the classrooms in which they teach to the students.

The table-3 shows that mostly teachers (60%) introduce new words in each lesson which is significant from their perspectives. Learning new words in each lesson enhance the vocabulary of the learners. However, the students cannot store all new words in their memory but if they need the meaning of words, they may refer

Response	Participants	Percentage
Yes	20	60%
No	0	0
If necessary	10	40%
Total	30	100%

to their copies where they have written the meaning against each word. 40% teachers have

shown their interest for introducing new words when necessary because they do not consider it more significant to have meaning of new words in each lesson. They will introduce new words when they feel it necessary. None of teachers has responded in no.

The table-4 shows that all teachers teach the students in grammar translation method which shows that students do not directly understand the meaning of new words and sentences. The students are given translation of the new words in their mother tongue so that they could understand its real concept and true meaning.

Response	Participants	Percentage
Direct method	0	0%
GTM	30	100%
Bilingual Method	0	0%
Any other	0	0%
Total	30	100%

The table-5 shows that new words are being presented by the teachers through different methods shown in the table. Teachers present new words to students i.e., defining, visual images and translating. 67% teachers use definition for new words and 67% use translation. However, translation is always not appreciated in L2 learning. 33% teachers use all the above. 33% teachers use images because they suggest that the use of gestures and images in the classroom also help learners. The beginners are not able to understand the English language sentence; therefore, teachers help them to understand through images. The advantage is that learners remember the images accurately and they can recall any time. 33% teachers ticked the 'other' in which they give the choice of synonym and antonyms because it is significant for them to use synonym because it builds up relation between familiar and unfamiliar i.e., the word flower is used for rose. The technique is significant, the learners add new word as well understand the importance of the word.

Response	Frequently		Sometimes		If necessary		Rarely		Never		Total
	Par	%	Par	%	Par	%	Par	%	Par	%	
Defining	10	67%	10	67%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	20
Visual images	5	33%	0	0%	0	0%	5	33%	0	0%	10
Translating	10	67%	0	0%	10	67%	0	0%	0	0%	20
All of them	5	33%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	5
Any other	0	0%	5	33%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	5

The table-6 shows that every student face difficulty when he/she copes with vocabulary. The teachers confirmed that learners face difficulties when students get vocabulary because students are unfamiliar to L2 learning. However, reasons which teachers have given, had no exposure to L2 learning, background is unknown, English is not the native or mother language, no practice of English language is done, students have no interest in English language, because of the influence of Urdu language and more importance is given to the reading of language not to the speaking.

Response	Participants	Percentage
Yes	30	100%
No	0	0%
Total	30	100%

The table-7 shows the training of students to get the meanings from words and increase their vocabulary. Traditionally, it has been seen that Urdu speaking students of English language, who study at government schools ask teacher for the meaning of a word. However, the teachers' questionnaire shows that 67% students ask teachers for meaning of a word while context is always used by the teacher when the context is translated in Urdu language. Context is also used by 67% the teachers as the questionnaire shows. Further, 67% teacher also use dictionary for the meaning of a word. The use of dictionary is rejected by the teachers at elementary level. They respond to direct question for asking the meanings of words from students as it is often seen in the classroom activities. Although, instead of such opposition majority of teachers favour dictionary to be used for meanings of words. Furthermore, teachers provide guideline to students that how to use dictionary when they come across meet new words. Overall, the use of dictionary is the waste of time and create disturbance in the classroom.

Response	Frequently		Sometimes		If necessary		Rarely		Never		Total
	Par	%	Par	%	Par	%	Par	%	Par	%	
Asking teacher	20	67%	10	33%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	30
Dictionary	10	33%	0	0%	0	0%	20	67%	0	0%	30
Contextual	20	67%	10	33%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	30
All of them	10	33%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	10
Any other	10	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	10

The table-8 shows that teachers give importance to vocabulary in L2 class. 100% teachers give importance to vocabulary, but 50% answers of the teacher show that they give importance to vocabulary often in the classroom while 50% give importance rarely. Mostly, Urdu language speaker of L2 believe that learning English language is complete when they learn the vocabulary. At elementary level students do not concentrate on grammar or any other aspect of English language but they get delighted when they learn the meaning of words. In mostly school students share meaning of different words with each other. The result shows that learners are motivated in learning vocabulary but still students are not interested in vocabulary.

Response	Participants	Percentage
Frequently	15	50%
Sometimes	0	0%
Rarely	15	50%
Never	0	0%
Total	30	100%

Table-9 shows that in any classroom while teaching any subject whether that is English or other subject teacher use and follow different techniques. The questionnaire shows that teachers use either explicit or implicit techniques, or sometimes both. Explicit means clear and direct attention to any activity while implicit refers to introduce new words to ease the activity. 33% each of the questionnaire of explicit, implicit and both explicit and implicit shows in the above table which the teachers use for vocabulary and grammar acquisition.

Technique	Participants	Percentage
Explicit	10	33%
Implicit	10	33%
Both	10	33%
Total	100	100%

The table-10 is about the teachers' awareness to games in classroom activities. The result shows that teachers who teach at elementary level are aware about language and activities of games which are used to teach to learners L2 in the classrooms.

Response	Participants	Percentage
Yes	30	100%
No	0	0%
Total	30	100%

The table-11 shows the results of teachers' questionnaire where 67% teachers use games rarely in the classroom while 33% teachers sometimes teach through games. Traditionally the teachers believe that students are addicted only to learn vocabulary and grammar and they ask directly to teachers. Therefore, teachers do not pay attention or go for other activities. Teachers have the traditional method for teaching grammar and vocabulary as the rules are already clear to them. As a result of their staunch belief in traditional approach they do not bother to follow games as they perceive that games will not help them to teach to learners. Usually, games cannot be integrated, but still they are integrated for communicative activities because through games activities it is easy to learn language. In this process learners communicate, doing mistakes and learn from the mistakes. These activities are conducted through task-based activities while game is the part of Task Based Instructions (TBI) that help to learn the language through games.

Response	Participants	Percentage
Always	0	0%
Sometimes	10	33%
Rarely	20	67%
Never	0	0%
Total	30	100%

The table-12 shows that games are not given importance while teaching in the classrooms because of limited time with the teachers for classroom activities. 100% response to limited time of the teachers shows that teachers want to give time to games in the classroom activities but due to insufficient time obstacles for a teacher are created to not use the games.

Response	Participants	Percentage
Insufficient time	30	100%
Students are not motivated	0	0%
Games are not useful	0	0%
Total	30	100%

The table-13 shows that teachers believe in the effectiveness of games for classroom activities. 100% response in yes confirms that teachers are strongly agreed that learning can be improved and more effective through games activities. The example is crosswords puzzle games where students come across different words and the meaning is conveyed to them that certainly help them to increase their vocabulary. Furthermore, the teachers often teach grammar through these games to the students. Terms like noun, pronoun and verb are introduced to the learners.

Response	Participants	Percentage
Yes	30	100%
No	0	0%
Sometimes	0	0%
Total	30	100%

The table-14 shows the motivation level of student in classroom games activities. The 100% answers obtained in response to questions about motivation is the evidence that students are motivated in the classroom when they are introduced with games and involved in the activities. 50% response to highly motivated and 50% response to motivated is showing the different measurement in the rate of motivation.

Motivation	Participants	Percentage
Highly motivated	15	50%
Motivated	15	50%
Fairly motivated	0	0%
Not motivated	0	0%
Total	30	100%

Any activity whether concerning with sports, teaching and other field, motivation is inevitable aspect for every field. If motivation is found, then anything can be achieved easily because motivation encourages the individuals. Similarly, motivation for students plays a vital role in their learning process, if they are not motivated, they will not be able even to learn a single word. So, it is motivation that leads the learners towards an effective learning of L2 learning. Similarly, games motivate students for learning which include visuals images and other visual representation related to vocabulary and grammar learning.

The table-15 shows that students are motivated in games activities and the environment of competition among students is build up. Teachers 100% response to question about competitive environment in classroom is the evidence that games creates a competitive environment in the classroom where each student tries to compete the others. In this way the learning process is more effective. In this way cooperative environment is also seen in the classroom which encourages the students and reduce the level of anxiety among the learners as well.

Response	Participants	Percentage
Agree	30	100%
Not agree	0	0%
Total	30	100%

The results of the table-16 confirm that learning level of learners become more effective and enhanced through the games. 100% assertion to the question is the evidence that games help the learners to enhance their vocabulary and learn grammar. The examples from crossword puzzle games students ask from teacher for the explanation about the meaning of a word or spelling. Through, this process the learning levels of students become more effective and their learning capacity is enhanced.

Response	Participants	Percentage
Yes	30	100%
No	0	0%
Total	30	100%

The table-17 shows the different views about games. 50% answers for an educating strategy and 50% for both an educating strategy and an entertaining strategy highlight the importance of games, as shown

Response	Participants	Percentage
An educating strategy	15	50%
An entertaining strategy	0	0%
Both	15	50%
A waste of time	0	0%
Total	30	100%

for educating and entertaining strategy. The strategy increases the learning level of the learners as well as providing enjoyable situation to learners. The teachers' responses to both strategies are leading games towards teaching techniques which provide the best opportunities to learners to learn the vocabulary and grammar. Furthermore, to combine these two characteristics of games, they can be defined as activities or tasks presenting learning to learners in enjoyable and relaxed situation. Therefore, games help in the learning process and opportunity for fun.

The table-18 shows that 60% teachers consider games are useful for teaching of all levels such as vocabulary, grammar, and language skills. 20% for vocabulary and 20% for grammar support that games play a vital role in vocabulary acquisition and grammar primarily. However,

games are integrated initially for meaning of words because mostly games play with words. So, in this way vocabulary of learner becomes enhanced. Further, teachers also teach the grammar through games. Grammar is somehow rules of a language and games are also based on proper rules. Therefore, grammar is taught through games. Language skills are reading, writing, speaking, and listening which are made effective through games because the teachers provide the background for improvement of language skills. Students read, listen, and speak in the classroom activities which are conducted through games. Crossword game is an example for improving of all these activities i.e., students are informed to fill the squares with the correct verb or to teach vocabulary when using opposites.

For teaching	Participants	Percentage
Vocabulary	5	20%
Grammar	5	20%
Language skills	0	0
All of them	20	60%
Total	30	100%

The table-19 shows that vocabulary knowledge becomes effective through games. 100% response of teachers confirms that vocabulary knowledge can be improved through games. The best example is crossword puzzles games in which vocabulary acquisition becomes effective.

Response	Participants	Percentage
Yes	30	100%
No	0	0
Total	30	100%

The table-21 shows that language skills can be improved through games. 100% response of teachers confirms that language skills can be improved through games. The best example is crossword puzzles games in which language skills become effective as shown above in the table.

Response	Participants	Percentage
Yes	30	100%
No	0	00%
Total	30	100%

Table-21 confirms that implying or implementing any classroom strategy, teachers certainly face problems. Similarly, at the end the teachers were asked whether they faced any problem or not when they were teaching through games. The aim of this question is also to investigate that

Response	Participants	Percentage
Yes	20	60%
No	10	40%
Total	30	100%

teachers might have faced problems. 60% teachers find problems while 40% do not face any problem. Teachers claimed that they have faced problems in classroom when they were teaching through games. There was consistent noise in the classroom which was the main obstacle for games activities. Further, the time was short for activities. All teachers' comments and suggestion show that games are important for learners to learn the language effectively. According to them all students are practically involved in games and they can easily improve their learning process.

The questionnaire of teachers shows the awareness of teachers about English language as a subject which has been taught by them at elementary level. The teachers are aware about different methods for teaching English as a subject and language skill. They are providing opportunities to help the learners in language vocabulary acquisition. However, students are unable to memorize each word; therefore, teachers introduce new words when they need for learners because limited stock of words can help the learners to increase their vocabulary. The learners at elementary level do not store a great number of words but introducing new words to students can help them to memorize the words and if they are introduced with new word, they will be able to recall for meaning. Further, the students do not take interest in memorizing new words. They do not pay attention, so they need motivation in the classroom. Moreover, English language is not the native language, therefore, teachers also facing problems and students do not take interest in English language. If students want to know about new words they ask from teachers or look for dictionary. Therefore, the learning process is affected, and students do not try to learn new words.

Games are suggested in the research for effective learning of L2 to teach to learners. The analysis shows that there are certain similarities as well as differences in theoretical part and the actual usages of using games in the classroom to make the learning process effective and to improve learners' vocabulary and grammar. However, a considerable number of theories are showing the importance of games in the learning of L2 which ease the learners to make their learning process effective.

Games are not used by majority of the teachers in classroom but still they play a vital role in students' learning process. Teachers believe in that teaching through games proved to set up cooperative environment. Game is an effective activity that increases learners' motivation levels, build up an environment to cooperate and compete. When students are motivated in the learning process, they can easily learn new words to enhance their vocabulary and learn grammar to know the rules of a language. Instead of the effectiveness of the games, teachers do not use games in the classroom often because games create problems in the classroom. The teachers face obstacles such as unending noise from students which affect the learning process because all students want to take part in the games, calling teacher to take a chance. Furthermore, the noises cannot be controlled in the classroom. Another reason that games activities consume extra time and other activities in the classroom were not given time.

Furthermore, the teachers support implicit technique which deals with the vocabulary meanings, give explanation of activities to learners. Every student demand to make him/her understand by the teacher to translate a single word. Therefore, students give importance to the vocabulary because teachers instruct them to note new words in their exercise copies and the meaning are noted in Urdu.

5. Conclusion

The stated statement about the effectiveness of L2 learning, is showing the effectiveness of language games which are used for teaching at elementary level. The findings confirm that language games influence students' vocabulary and grammar and help them to learn the language effectively. However, games are not set out only to construct the base of the student or the only source of the learning, but they can play their role in the learning process. Games have their own importance like other teaching methods but still mostly teacher do not use games in the classroom. Therefore, the research findings suggest that games are effective for language teaching of L2. Games play a vital role in the classroom activities. Students are motivated and attracted to games and their learning level through language games get improved and effective. Therefore, all teachers need to help the learners through games to make their learning process effective.

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