The Effects of Cooperative versus Competitive Word Games on EFL Learners` Vocabulary Gain, Motivation, and Class Atmosphere

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Abstract

English vocabulary is considered difficult to learn and use in real life situations by most Iranian learners. In addition, many of them feel bored in vocabulary classes since they do not have the opportunity to take part in learning process, therefore, they lack necessary motivation to be pushed forward. Besides, they have not changed their learning habits, such as writing words on paper, trying to learn by heart or learning passively through teachers` explanations. The reason must be that the main techniques used to practice in memorization while the features like fun, motivation and effort are ignored in almost all English classes. To help learners find language classes, especially vocabulary lessons more interesting, and to achieve more, the researcher used word games, which are generally engaged as a source of entertainment to serve an educational purpose, as instructional tools in practicing newly taught words. Moreover, the researcher compared the effects of two types of word games (cooperative versus competitive) on learners` motivation, attitudes toward their teacher, class atmosphere, and vocabulary achievement, in order to investigate which game type was more successful in this field. In order to achieve this goal, this study has been done on 60 male English learners with the age range of 17-19 years old. Among these learners, 40 were considered as the experimental (in 2 different experimental groups), and the other 20 learners as the control. To gather data, these instruments have been used: a motivation questionnaire, a questionnaire about word games, a classroom atmosphere questionnaire, vocabulary tests, and teacher`s interview. Besides, 2 different categories of word games (cooperative versus competitive games) were used in this study to compare their effects on EFL vocabulary learning. The results show that both types of word games affect learners` vocabulary learning, increase their motivation, change their attitudes toward their teacher, and also create a positive atmosphere in their classroom. Moreover, through comparing effects of these games, the researcher found out that for some learners, cooperative word games could affect their vocabulary learning by increasing their motivation and providing a positive atmosphere in their classroom, while for some others, competitive word games were more effective. Consequently, it cannot be stated exactly which type of these games were more successful in this study. Curriculum designers, English textbook authors, and those who train EFL teachers can use these findings and improve English education and learning in words in English classes in Iran. It other words, it is suggested to use word games in English classes to increase learners` motivation, vocabulary learning, and also to provide a more positive atmosphere in the classroom.

Keywords: *word games, cooperative games, competitive games, motivation, and class atmosphere.*

1. Introduction

1.1. Background and Rationale

Foreign language learning is a hard task and a lot of effort is required every moment and over a long period of time to manipulate, understand, and produce the target language. For years, it has been supposed that differences which exist among people have an effect on the way they learn a language (Ojeda, 2004). For instance, different people have different learning styles and understanding these differences may bring variety into the classroom. There is no doubt about it, but the most important challenge for language teacher is to make EFL classroom more interesting (Yu, 2005). In learning a foreign language, vocabulary plays an important role. It is one element that links the four skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing all together. However, most vocabulary lessons, conversation practice and even grammar

learning do not always attract learners` attention. Therefore, learners do not learn in accordance with the teachers' expectations and this may hinder their progress. One solution for this problem is to use more than one way to teach language and add more fun and enjoyment to language activities. One of the most useful techniques to achieve this is to use games since games are effective and cost-saving method in language education.

Moreover, Vocabulary is considered not only as one of the language elements many learners find problematic to learn, but also as a boring part of language learning (Ojeda, 2004). In Iran, the situation is getting worse since in most English classes, traditional methods which bring little or no interaction between learners and their teacher and even among learners themselves, are being used in teaching vocabulary items. For this reason, English vocabulary learning in classes is often teacher-centered and learners have no active role in this process. Hence, many researchers who study learning process, mostly look for learner-centered approaches since in these approaches (i.e., task-based instruction (TBI)), learners have the opportunity to actively participate in the process of learning (Carris et al., 2002).

Yu (2005) mentions that the most important point that must be considered in vocabulary learning process is that in language classrooms, learners must have the opportunity to use what they have learnt in a communicative context (Ellis, 1997; Li, 2003; Sysoyev, 1991; Yen, 2002). Using some types of word games in the second language (SL) classroom may effectively implement this strategy. By implementing certain types of words games in the SL classroom, the language instructor can provide implicit word instruction veiled in the format of recurrent attempts at play. This is particularly true when specific target words are required in obligatory environments. In turn, this process may lead to automatization of specific words (Ojeda, 2004; Yu, 2005). The redundancy inherent in the taking of turns is instrumental in comprehension, particularly in the case of semantic repetition (Doughty 1991). Practice, while repeating tasks in the classroom, has been shown to increase language accuracy, fluency, and complexity (Bygate 1996; Robinson 2001). In word games, teachers have the option of structuring lessons competitively, individualistically, or cooperatively. The decisions teachers make in structuring lessons can influence students' interactions with others, knowledge, and attitudes (Carson, 1990; Johnson & Johnson, 1987). In a competitively structured classroom, students engage in a win-lose struggle in an effort to determine who is best (Johnson & Johnson, 1991). In competitive classrooms students perceive that they can obtain their goals only if other students in the class fail to obtain their own goals (Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 1986). Students in independently structured classrooms work by themselves to accomplish goals unrelated to those of the other students (Johnson & Johnson 1991). In a cooperative learning classroom, students work together to attain group goals that cannot be obtained by working alone or competitively. In this classroom structure, students discuss subject matter, help each other learn, and provide encouragement for members of the group (Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 1986).

1.2. Definitions of the Related Terms

Some terms and phrases have been used throughout the study. To help the reader to understand them, brief definition of each is given below.

- ❖ Task: an activity designed to help achieve a particular learning goal (Richard, Platt, & Platt, 1992).
- ❖ Language games: games which focus on using elements of language in order to arrive at a particular solution, or to win a competition (Ojeda, 2004).
- ❖ Word games: these games are computer or non-computer games used as an instructional tol in learning new words, and generally engaged as a source of entertainment, but have been found to serve an educational purpose (in learning words) as well (Allery, 2004).
- ❖ Traditional methods of language instruction: teaching methods which follow behaviorist approach to foreign and second language teaching and learning. In these methods, learners do not have the opportunity to take part in learning process (Ojeda, 2004).
- ❖ Motivation: the factors that determine a person`s desire to do something (Richard, Platt, & Platt, 1995).
- ❖ Class atmosphere: it is feelings of learners toward their teacher, subject matter, and the classroom itself which have positive or negative effect on learners` learning process (Yu, 2005).
- ❖ Cooperative game: a game where groups of players may enforce cooperative behavior, hence the game is a competition between groups of players not among individuals (Hadfield, 1994).
- ❖ Competitive game: a game in which different individual players participate, not different groups (Hadfield, 1996).

1.3. Word Games

In order to compare the effect of both types of word games on Iranian EFL learners` vocabulary learning, motivation,

attitudes toward their teacher, and classroom atmosphere, four word games (two cooperative games and two competitive games) were used in this study. In order to achieve this goal, in the first week of the study, the researcher used two cooperative games in the first experimental groups while the second experimental group played two competitive games. However, during the second week, learners in the first experimental group played competitive games whereas the second experimental group used two cooperative word games as instructional tools in practicing the newly taught words. The aim of each word game was to reinforce the words the learners had learnt. All these four games were selected based on the characteristics of good instructional games which are

1. Level of the game compatible with learners` level of language proficiency: all of the word games used in this study was in accordance with learners` level of language proficiency. In order to check this, one OPT test consisting of 60 grammatical items were given to the learners before the study.

1.3.1. Cooperative Word Games

As mentioned earlier, after teaching the new words, the researcher asked learners in both experimental groups to practice these words through the use of two cooperative word games, in which the learners needed to cooperate with each other rather than compete. These games were as the followings.

1. *Contact Game:* In this game the teacher put the learners (of each experimental group) into 4 groups (consisting of 5 individuals). Then, the teacher or one of the other groups-called the "word master" or the "target person" should think of one of the words they`ve just learnt-called the "target word", and the other learners in other groups should guess that target word, one letter at a time, by giving clues hard enough to stump the word-master but easy enough to enable other players "make contact" with the clue. Some amount of cooperation is needed among the players within groups since a guess must be scored by the other players by stating "Contact!" in order to be challenged by the word master. These clues can be the word`s synonym or antonym or just a brief explanation about it.
2. *Jotto (Gitto):* This game is a logic-oriented word game in which the teacher picks one secret word from among the newly taught words, with the purpose for the learners to guess the word. The score for this game is the number of letters containing in the guessed word. And the game continues till one group can guess the correct secret word. For example, if the secret word is "purchase", and the first group guess "penmanship", the score is 5 for the letters p, e, a, s, and h.

1.3.2. Competitive Word Games

After teaching the new words, the researcher asked learners in both experimental groups to practice these words through the use of two competitive word games, in which the learners needed to compete with each other rather than cooperate. These games were as the followings

1. *Crossword:* In this game, learners were given one identical crossword, and the teacher asked them to fill the cells of the crosswords through the use of the words they had newly learnt in the class.
2. *Matching:* In this word game, again, learners were given a sheet of paper containing 2 columns; synonyms and antonyms of the words they have just learnt, and the teacher asked them to match the correct words.

1.4. Significance of the Study

Nowadays, in Iran as well as in many other educational settings, there exists an emphasis on communicative language teaching; however, few practical attempts have been made to actualize the requirements and conditions suggested by this type of teaching and to see the reacts of those involved in educational settings to find out if common language teaching really promoted language learning.

Besides, the most important factors which can boost learners` ability in learning a foreign language are motivation, and learners` attitudes toward teaching methods as well as their teacher (Ellis, 2006; Macedonia, 2005; Ojeda, 2004; Yu, 2005). However, in Iran, little study has been done about the influence of word games on these four important factors. Consequently, this study aimed at investigating the impact of word games on EFL learners` motivation, attitudes toward their teacher, and class atmosphere.

1.5. Objectives of the Study

Although vocabulary is considered as an important part of foreign language learning, learning vocabulary has a bad

reputation Yu (2005). According to him, the word "vocabulary" often freezes the heart of language learners. Moreover, many second and foreign language learners complain that vocabulary learning is a negative experience for them (Ojeda, 2004). In this way, word games are considered as particular tasks and activities which can promote the learning process as well as learners` motivation. Besides, they make classrooms more learner-centered and, as a result, they can not only improve learner-teacher relationships but also create a positive classroom environment in which learners are not anxious and are eager to participate in classroom learning activities.

However, few studies have been done on the effect of vocabulary games in English classrooms, so the aim of this study is to find out cognitive as well as socio-affective advantages of using word games and to compare two types of word games (competitive versus cooperative games) and see whether playing word games is an effective tool in learning new words, motivating learners, and providing a positive atmosphere in the classroom or not; if yes, which one can promote learners` vocabulary achievement and motivation more. Also the aim is to investigate which game type can change learners` attitudes toward their teacher and provide more positive atmosphere in the class more.

1.6. Research Questions

In order for the researcher to achieve these goals, the following questions are investigated:
1. Is there any difference in learners` vocabulary gains practiced through the use of word games versus those practiced textbook exercises?
2. Is there any difference in the learning of new words practiced through the use of cooperative games versus competitive games?
3. Is there any difference in learners` motivation practiced the newly learnt words through the use of cooperative games versus competitive games?
4. Is there any difference in providing a positive atmosphere in classes where learners made use of cooperative games as instructional tools in practicing newly learnt words versus competitive games?

1.7. Research Hypothesis:

Based on the research questions, the following null hypotheses were formed:
HO1. There is no difference in the achievement of new words which are practiced through playing word games versus those practiced textbook exercises.
HO2. There is no difference in the achievement of new words which are practiced through playing cooperative games versus those practiced by competitive games.
HO3. There is no difference in learners` motivation who used cooperative games versus those used competitive games for the purpose of practicing newly taught words.
HO4. There is no difference in providing a positive atmosphere in classes where learners are taught by cooperative games versus those taught by competitive games. The effect and also the result is the same.

2. Review of Literature

There is controversy over using games in language classes. Some teachers believe that learning must be serious in nature and having fun in the classroom does not lead to real learning. Some other think that using games in language classes is a waste of time, so they do not make use of them since, based on their belief, games have only one element, which is fun (Ojeda, 2004). In spite of all of these beliefs and misconceptions, games have become popular over the past decade (Fletcher and Tobias, 2006). Language games not only encourage learners, but also help teachers provide a context in which language is used meaningfully. Furthermore, games are amusing, challenging and encourage and increase cooperation among learners.

Dalton E. (2005), in her study "Language Learning Games" tries to invent or discover instructional strategies that reduce the intense stress learners experience in formal language learning situations, e.g., EFL classes. She states that games can help with motivation, particularly cooperative games, and are also a way to be sure that all learners are included in the learning effort. She also mentions that not all language learning games are equivalent. Some are helpful in practicing individual vocabulary words such as Matching, while others involve the learners in complex discourse like Simulation.

So, in the process of developing in-class activities, the author has found that games and language activities are both highly useful not only for learning isolated vocabulary, but also for expanding into the realms of sentences and discourse, depending on the design of the game in question. Simple vocabulary games like Bingo and Concentration help

learners with isolated vocabulary, but do not increase overall communicative competence in themselves. More sophisticated "memory chain" games in which each learner adds to the sentence of the learner previous can help build sentence competence, but the more subtle elements of discourse are not addressed. Finally, in elaborate role plays and "jigsaw" games, in which the learners either compete or work cooperatively to solve a language task such as constructing dialogue for an everyday situation or resolving a more structured mystery with clues, true discourse elements such as greetings, politeness phrases and idioms can be incorporated. Our goal needs to be to find games and learning activities which address all three levels of learning.

Hajdu, J. (2000) has committed a study in which he provides an evaluation Checklist for computer games used for EFL vocabulary learning practice, called "Vocaword ". In this paper, Uzun follows three purposes: to draw attention to the use of games in EFL teaching and learning, to present a vocabulary learning game which can be used as supplementary material in CALL and/or traditional language classes in any language, and to compare it with two other widely used games in FLT. A criteria checklist for CALL systems and more specifically for vocabulary learning software is offered and applied to the evaluation of one game, namely VocaWord. He concludes that the checklist's application to the game, used in this study, shows that the weakness of the game is half as much, and the strengths might be twice as much compared to Scrabble and Taboo, which are commercially oriented games widely used by teachers and foreign language learners. According to him, these results suggest that VocaWord is a promising game that has the potential to be quite effective.

Carolyn Hildebrandt (2002) who is interested in "cooperative and competitive games in constructivist classrooms" reports the results of three analyses of first graders' social behavior in constructivist classrooms during cooperative and competitive games. The first analysis involved time sampling of aggressive and cooperative behaviors; the second focused on enacted interpersonal understanding (negotiation strategies and shared experiences); and the third on turn taking and rule following.

This study, also, captured the attention of one of Carolyn's graduate learners, Taunjah Bell, and together they designed a study to replicate it in two constructivist classrooms. They hypothesized that in constructivist classrooms, where mutual respect is practiced between teachers and children and between children themselves, there would be no difference between the way children play cooperative and competitive games.

At the end of their research, they mention that results of these three analyses suggest both cooperative and competitive games have value in constructivist classrooms. They argue that in classrooms characterized by high levels of cooperation, children's interactions are cooperative, regardless of the type of game. Based on this research, the significant differences in children's reciprocal negotiation strategies and shared experience suggest that developmentally appropriate early childhood teachers should take a closer look at cooperative games and consider adding them to their collection of group games, but they should not discard their competitive games.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Participants

This study was conducted with 60 male learners with the age range of 17 - 19, who were studying at three different EFL (intermediate) Reading classes. The main reason for selecting them was that they had the same proficiency level (based on an OPT Test they have received), the same teacher (to teach the course and play the word games in the class), the same environment (English Reading private classes) and instructional materials (Select Reading II). So, three groups of learners - each consisting of 20 learners- have been involved, one served as the control group and the other two as the experimental groups.

3.2. Materials

In the current study, one proficiency test, two vocabulary tests, three questionnaires, and one interview were used at the end of each week to gather both qualitative and quantitative data and give information about the effect of cooperative as well as competitive word games on learners` vocabulary gains, motivation, attitudes toward their teacher, and class atmosphere.

3.3. Procedures

As mentioned before, the aim of this study was to investigate and compare the effects of two types of word games (cooperative versus competitive) on EFL learners` vocabulary learning, motivation, attitudes toward their teacher, and

classroom atmosphere. To achieve this goal, the researcher selected 60 learners and put them randomly in three group; each group consisting of 20 learners, and asked them to take part in this study. From among these three groups, two served as the experimental and one as the control. These 60 learners were given the same materials having the same teacher, and in the experimental groups, playing the same types of word games, while no game was used in the control group. Besides, in order for the researcher to make sure that all learners in both experimental and control groups were comparable, before the experiment, a test of OPT was given to them. This test consisted of 60 multiple choice grammatical items and learners were supposed to answer them in 60 minutes (the standard time for answering multiple choice items is one question per one minute). Moreover, in order to do a comparative study, the researcher divided the procedure into two identical phases:

3.3.1. The First Phase

Week one: During this week, learners were taught 10 new English words accompanied by their families such as noun, verb, adjective, adverb, and etc., and their individual meanings. This strategy, which is called "family group", is used in all three groups.

Week two: During this week, the teacher asked learners to practice these newly taught words; learners in the control group were required to practice these words by doing some textbook drills. Since the aim of this study was to compare the effects of two types of word games on EFL learners, no questionnaire was given to this group. However, learners in the first experimental group played two cooperative word games (Contact and Jotto) in order to practice the new words they had been taught in the previous week. After practicing, in order for the researcher to gather quantitative data for the study, the teacher gave them three questionnaires; a motivation questionnaire to see whether these games could increase their motivation, a word game questionnaire to investigate their attitudes toward the games they had played as well as their attitudes toward their teacher, a classroom atmosphere questionnaire to discover whether playing these games could provide a more positive atmosphere in the class. Finally, in order for the researcher to gather qualitative data for the study, two learners were selected randomly by the teacher to take part in the interview and express their feelings and opinions about using cooperative games as instructional tools for practicing the new words in the class. The same procedure was followed in the second experimental group, but the games they used for practicing the newly taught words were different; they were asked to play two competitive word games (matching and crossword).

Week three: This week is considered as the testing one, in which learners in all three groups were given a vocabulary test consisting of 30 items (10 multiple choice, 10 fill-in the-blank, and 10 cloze tests).

3.3.2. The Second Phase of the Study

Week one: At first week, learners were taught 10 new English words through "family group" strategy; in other words, the same materials were given to them (10 identical new English words) through the same teaching strategy (family group) having the same teacher.

Week two: During this week, the teacher asked learners to practice these newly taught words; again, learners in the control group were required to practice these words by doing some textbook drills, and no questionnaire was given to this group. However, learners in the first experimental group played two competitive word games (matching and crossword) in order to practice the new words they had been taught in the previous week. After practicing, the teacher gave them three questionnaires; a motivation questionnaire to see whether these games could increase their motivation, a word game questionnaire to investigate their attitudes toward the games they had played as well as their attitudes toward their teacher, a classroom atmosphere questionnaire to discover whether playing these games could provide a more positive atmosphere in the class. Finally, two learners were selected randomly by the teacher to take part in the interview and express their feelings and opinions about using competitive games as instructional tools for practicing the new words in the class. While, learners in the second experimental group were asked to practice the new words through playing two cooperative word games (Contact and Jotto). After practicing, again, the teacher gave them three questionnaires; a motivation questionnaire to see whether these games could increase their motivation, a word game questionnaire to investigate their attitudes toward the games they had played as well as their attitudes toward their teacher, a classroom atmosphere questionnaire to discover whether playing these games could change the class atmosphere into a more positive one. Finally, two learners were selected randomly by the teacher to take part in the interview and express their feelings and opinions about using cooperative games as instructional tools for practicing the new words in the class.

Week three: This week is called the testing week, in which learners in all three groups were given a vocabulary test consisting of 30 items (10 multiple choice, 10 fill-in the-blank, and 10 cloze tests).

4. Results

According to what discussed earlier, the data obtained through vocabulary tests, three questionnaires, and one interview shows the effect of both types of word games (cooperative and competitive) on vocabulary learning, motivation, and classroom atmosphere. These findings are in accordance with what other researchers such as Deesri (2002), Gaudart (1991), Hong (2002), and Shie (2003), who argued for positive effects of games on language learning.

4.1. Quantitative Analysis

In this study, quantitative data was gathered through three questionnaires and two vocabulary tests. The information gathered through analysis of these questionnaires has been provided in the following sections.

4.1.1. The Results of OPT Scores

As mentioned earlier, in order to measure learners` level of proficiency, a test of OPT was administrated by the researcher. This test consisted of 60 multiple choice grammatical items, and learners in all three groups were required to answer them within 60 minutes (one minute for each item).

Table: 4.1 *Descriptive Statistics of Learners` OPT Scores*

Group Name	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Control	20	44.80	2.441	0.546	43.66	45.94
Experimental 1	20	44.80	2.441	0.546	43.66	45.94
Experimental 2	20	46.15	2.519	0.563	44.97	47.33
Total	60	45.25	2.508	0.324	44.60	45.90

Table 4.1 shows the descriptive statistics of these results, and also reveals mean and standard deviation scores of all groups (both control and experimental groups). As it can be observed, the highest mean (46.15) belongs to the second experimental group, while both control and the first experimental group had the lowest one (44.80). This means that learners in the second experimental group performed better on OPT rather than the other two groups. According to the results shown in this Table, there exists a very slight difference between mean and standard deviation scores of all groups (both control and experimental groups), therefore, they have almost the same proficiency level. Hence, the researcher ensured about homogeneity of learners who took part in this study before the treatment; in other words, groups participated in this experiment were homogeneous.

Table 4.2 *Results of One-way ANOVA on Learners` OPT Scores*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	24.300	2	12.150	1.996	0.145
Within Groups	346.950	57	6.087		
Total	371.250	59			

In order for the researcher to ensure about the equality of groups before the experiment, a one-way ANOVA was run (Table 4.2). According to the results, groups were homogeneous before the experiment and since p = 0.145, which is greater than 0.05, there was no significant difference between learners` scores on OPT;

$F_{(2, 57)} = 1.996$

4.1.2. The Results of Vocabulary Test Scores

As mentioned earlier, the researcher administrated vocabulary tests to all three groups of learners, not only to investigate whether using word games could affect their performance on vocabulary test, but also to compare the effects of two types of word games (cooperative as well as competitive) on their amount of vocabulary learning.

Table 4.3 *Results of the Test of Homogeneity of Variances on Vocabulary Tests*

Variable	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Vocabulary Test after Cooperative Games	4.071	2	57	0.022
Vocabulary Test after Competitive Games	5.519	2	57	0.006

As it can be observed in (Table 4.3), the data obtained through vocabulary test after cooperative word games shows p = 0.022 (which is less than 0.05) while the data obtained through the vocabulary test after competitive word games shows p = 0.006 (which is, again, less than 0.05). Therefore, test of homogeneity reveals inequality of variances were. Hence, one-way ANOVA could not be used, and the researcher used Kruscal Wallis Test.

Table 4.4 *Descriptive Statistics of Vocabulary Tests. Kruskal-Wallis Test Ranks*

Variable	Group Name	N	Mean
Vocabulary Test after *Cooperative* Games	Control	20	10.50
	Experimental 1	20	38.67
	Experimental 2	20	42.33
	Total	60	
Vocabulary Test after *Competitive* Games	Control	20	10.50
	Experimental 1	20	43.20
	Experimental 2	20	37.80
	Total	60	

Table 4.4 shows mean scores of learners` vocabulary tests. As it can be observed, the mean scores of learners` vocabulary tests in both experimental groups were higher than the mean score of learners in the control group (which is 10.50). This means that learners in the experimental groups, who practiced the newly taught words through playing word games, performed much better than learners in the control group, who were required to practice the words by doing the textbook exercises. Moreover, the data obtained through the vocabulary tests in both experimental groups reveals that competitive word games affected learners` vocabulary gains more positively in comparison to cooperative games since their mean scores were much higher after playing these games.

Table 4.5 *Statistics of Kruskal Wallis Test*

	Vocabulary Test after Cooperative Games	Vocabulary Test after Competitive Games
Chi-Square	40.192	40.588
df	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	0	0

As it is shown in Table 4.5, after playing both types of word games, p = 0 which is less than 0 .05; that is there exists a significant difference between the groups. However, in order to see which group performed differently on the test, the post hoc Tamhane test was run.

Table 4.6 *Results of Tamhane Test on Mean Differences of Vocabulary Tests.* Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable	Group (I)	Group (J)	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Upper Bound	Lower Bound
Vocabulary Test after Cooperative Games	Control	Experimental 1	-6.350(*)	0.48	0	-7.55	-5.15
		Experimental 2	-7.150(*)	0.609	0	-8.69	-5.61
	Experimental 1	Control	6.350(*)	0.48	0	5.15	7.55
		Experimental 2	-0.8	0.634	0.517	-2.39	0.79
	Experimental 2	Control	7.150(*)	0.609	0	5.61	8.69
		Experimental 1	0.8	0.634	0.517	-0.79	2.39
Vocabulary Test after Competitive Games	Control	Experimental 1	-8.300(*)	0.659	0	-9.97	-6.63
		Experimental 2	-7.100(*)	0.672	0	-8.8	-5.4
	Experimental 1	Control	8.300(*)	0.659	0	6.63	9.97
		Experimental 2	1.2	0.829	0.399	-0.87	3.27
	Experimental 2	Control	7.100(*)	0.672	0	5.4	8.8
		Experimental 1	-1.2	0.829	0.399	-3.27	0.87

Table 4.6 shows that learners` performance on vocabulary tests in the control group is significantly different from that of learners in the experimental groups. In other words, learners in both experimental groups performed better on vocabulary tests than the control group. However, there is no significant difference between the experimental groups. That is, no matter which game type was used in the experimental classrooms; cooperative or competitive, learners` performance on the vocabulary tests was almost the same.
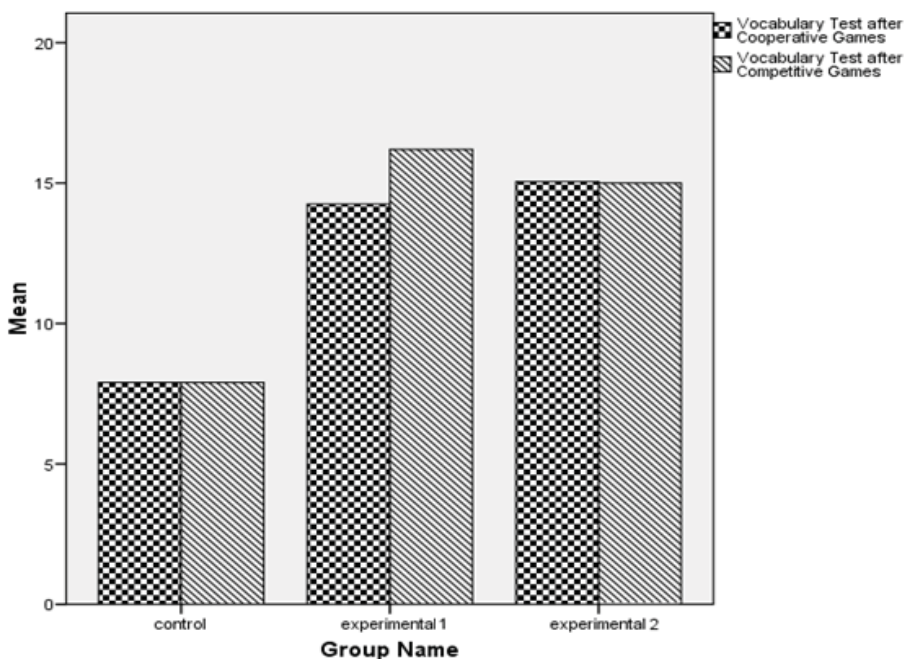

Figure 1 *Data Obtained through the Vocabulary Tests*

This Figure is provided to give the graphical representation of learners` performances on both vocabulary tests administrated to them after playing both types of word games (cooperative and competitive games). As the results in this graph shows, learners in both experimental groups performed better on these vocabulary tests in comparison to the control group. Moreover, both experimental groups performed better on these tests after playing competitive word games in comparison to when they used cooperative games in the classroom.

4.1.3. Motivation Questionnaire

The first questionnaire, which was used to gather quantitative data in this study, was motivation questionnaire. In order for the researcher to compare the effects of two types of word games (cooperative as well as competitive) on learners` motivation level in both experimental groups, a series of t-tests were run, and the results are discussed in the following sections.

4.1.3.1. The Results of Motivation Questionnaire in the First Group

In this section, the results of t-tests, which were run on learners` scores of motivation questionnaire after both playing cooperative word games and competitive games in the first experimental group, were gathered and analyzed in details.

Table 4.7 *Paired Samples Statistics*

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std.Error Mean
Motivation Questionnaire after *Cooperative* Games	20	72.40	27.736	6.202
Motivation Questionnaire after *Competitive* Games	20	90.00	20.744	4.639

Table 4.7 shows the results of paired sample statistics, which was used to compare the effects of cooperative and competitive word games on learners` amount of motivation in the first experimental group. According to these results, the mean score of motivation questionnaire used after competitive word games (M = 90) is higher than that of motivation questionnaire used after cooperative games (M = 72.40). That is, in this group, learners` scores on motivation questionnaire given to them after playing competitive word games is better than their scores on motivation questionnaire used after cooperative games; in other words, learners in this group enjoyed competitive word games more since their amount of motivation increased after playing these games.

Table 4.8 *Paired Samples Correlations*

Variable	N	Correlation	Sig.
Motivation Questionnaire after Cooperative Games & Motivation Questionnaire after Competitive Games	20	-0.539	0.014

Table 4.8 reveals the correlation as well as significance of the data obtained through motivation questionnaire given to the learners in the first experimental group, once after playing cooperative word games and another time after competitive games. As it can be observed, Sig. = 0.014, which is less than 0.05; That is, there exists a significant difference between learners` amount of motivation after playing cooperative word games and their amount of motivation after competitive games. Moreover, Correlation = -0.539, which means there is a negative correlation between learners` scores on motivation questionnaire in this group. In other words, learners, whose level of motivation enhanced through the use of cooperative word games, did not enjoy competitive games; That is, learners, who were motivated through playing competitive word games, did not enjoy playing cooperative games at all.

Table 4.9 *Paired Samples Test*

Dependent Variable	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Upper	Lower			
Motivation Questionnaire after Cooperative Games & Motivation Questionnaire after Competitive Games	-17.600	42.655	9.538	-37.563	2.363	-1.845	19	0.081

In order to see whether the differences between the mean scores were statistically significant or not, paired samples t-tests were used (Table 4.9). According to the results, t (19) = -1.845, p = 0. 081 which is greater than 0.05; that is, there isn`t such a noticeable difference between learners` amount of motivation after playing cooperative word games and their amount of motivation after competitive games.

4.1.3.2. The Results of Motivation Questionnaire in the Second Group

In this section, however, the results of the t-tests, which were run on learners` scores of motivation questionnaire in the second experimental group, were gathered and analyzed in details.

Table 4.10 *Paired Samples Statistics*

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Motivation Questionnaire after Cooperative Games	20	82.55	24.395	5.455
Motivation Questionnaire after Competitive Games	20	83.30	25.654	5.736

As the results in Table 4.10 shows, the mean scores of motivation questionnaires obtained from learners in the second experimental group after playing competitive word games (Mean = 83.30) is higher than the mean score after cooperative games (Mean =82.55). This means that learners` amount of motivation in this group have been increased more when they used competitive word games for the purpose of practicing the newly taught words, in comparison to when they used cooperative games. In other words, learners` amount of motivation in this group enhanced more through the use of competitive word games, which led these games to be more enjoyable for them.

Table 4.11 *Paired Samples Correlations*

Variable	N	Correlation	Sig.
Motivation Questionnaire after Cooperative Games & Motivation Questionnaire after Competitive Games	20	-0.413	0.07

Table 4.11 reveals the correlation as well as significance of the data obtained through motivation questionnaire given to the learners in the second experimental group, once after playing cooperative word games and another time after competitive games. As it can be observed, Sig. = 0.07, which is less than 0.05; That is, there exists a significant difference between learners` amount of motivation after playing cooperative word games and their amount of motivation after competitive games. Moreover, Correlation = -0.413, which means there is a negative correlation between learners` scores on motivation questionnaire in this group. In other words, learners, whose level of motivation enhanced through the use of cooperative word games, did not enjoy competitive games; That is, learners, who were motivated through playing competitive word games, did not enjoy playing cooperative games at all.

Table 4.12 *Paired Samples Test*

Variable	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Upper	Lower			
Motivation Questionnaire after Cooperative Games & Motivation Questionnaire after Competitive Games	-0.750	42.071	9.407	-20.440	18.940	-0.080	19	0.937

In order to see whether the differences between the mean scores were statistically significant or not, paired samples t-tests were used (Table 4.12). According to the results, t (19) = -0.080, p = 0.937 which is greater than 0.05; that is, there isn`t such a noticeable difference between learners` amount of motivation after playing cooperative word games and their amount of motivation after competitive games.

4.1.4. Word Game Questionnaire

The second questionnaire, which was used to gather quantitative data in this study, was word game questionnaire. In order to compare the effects playing two types of word games (cooperative as well as competitive) for the purpose of practicing the newly taught words, the researcher administrated this questionnaire once after playing cooperative word games (called cooperative word game questionnaire) and another time after playing competitive games (called competitive word game questionnaire was used in this group, this questionnaire was only given to learners in both experimental groups. Again, in order to achieve the goal of using this questionnaire, a series of t-tests were run (once for learners in the first experimental group, and another time, for learners in the first experimental group), which will be discussed in the following sections.

4.1.4.1. The Results of Word Game Questionnaires in the First Group

In this section, the results of the t-tests, which were run on learners` scores of word game questionnaires in the first experimental group, were gathered and analyzed in details.

Table 4.13 *Paired Samples Statistics*

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Competitive Game Questionnaire	20	82.35	4.295	0.960
Cooperative Game Questionnaire	20	50.20	6.940	1.552

As the results in Table 4.13 shows, the mean score of competitive word game questionnaire given to the learners in the first experimental group (Mean = 82.35) is higher than that of cooperative game questionnaire (Mean = 50.20). This means that learners in this group enjoyed playing competitive games more in comparison to when they used cooperative games for practicing the newly learnt words. In other words, learners in this group preferred competitive word games more than cooperative games.

Table 4.14 *Paired Samples Correlations*

Variable	N	Correlation	Sig.
Competitive Game Questionnaire & Cooperative Game Questionnaire	20	-0.101	0.671

Table 4.14 reveals the correlation as well as significance of the data obtained through word game questionnaire given to the learners in the first experimental group, once after playing cooperative word games and another time after competitive games. As it can be observed, Sig. = 0.671, which is greater than 0.05; that is, there isn`t such a significant difference between learners` attitudes toward playing cooperative word games and their attitudes toward competitive games. Moreover, Correlation = -0.10, which means there is a negative correlation between learners` scores on word game questionnaire in this group. In other words, learners, who enjoyed more through the use of cooperative word games, did not enjoy competitive games. Also, those, who preferred competitive word games more, did not prefer cooperative games at all.

Table 4.15 *Paired Samples Test*

Variable	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Upper	Lower			
Competitive Game Questionnaire & Cooperative Game Questionnaire	32.150	8.524	1.906	28.161	36.139	16.867	19	0

In order to see whether the differences between the mean scores were statistically significant or not, paired samples t-tests were used (Table 4.15). According to the results, t (19) = 16.867, p = 0 which is less than 0.05; that is, there is such a noticeable difference between learners` attitudes toward playing cooperative word games and their attitudes toward competitive games.

4.1.4.2. The Results of Word Game Questionnaires in the Second Group

In this section, the results of the t-tests, which were run on learners` scores of word game questionnaires in the second experimental group, were gathered and analyzed in details.

Table 4.16 *Paired Samples Statistics*

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Competitive Game Questionnaire	20	80.45	3.220	0.720
Cooperative Game Questionnaire	20	52.95	8.721	1.950

As the results in Table 4.16 shows, the mean score of competitive word game questionnaire given to the learners in the second experimental group (Mean = 80.45) is higher than that of cooperative game questionnaire (Mean = 52.95). This means that learners in this group enjoyed playing competitive games more in comparison to when they used cooperative games for practicing the newly learnt words. In other words, learners in this group preferred competitive word games more than cooperative games.

Table 4.17 *Paired Samples Correlations*

Variable	N	Correlation	Sig.
Competitive Game Questionnaire & Cooperative Game Questionnaire	20	0.267	0.255

Table 4.17 reveals the correlation as well as significance of the data obtained through word game questionnaire given to the learners in the second experimental group, once after playing cooperative word games and another time after

competitive games. As it can be observed, Sig. = 0.255, which is greater than 0.05; that is, there isn`t such a significant difference between learners` attitudes toward playing cooperative word games and their attitudes toward competitive games. Moreover, Correlation = 0.267, which means there is a positive correlation between learners` scores on word game questionnaire in this group. In other words, learners, who enjoyed more through the use of cooperative word games, enjoyed competitive games. Also, those, who preferred competitive word games more, preferred cooperative games as well.

Table 4.18 *Paired Samples Test*

Variable	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Upper	Lower			
Competitive Game Questionnaire & Cooperative Game Questionnaire	27.500	8.451	1.890	23.545	31.455	14.552	19	0

In order to see whether the differences between the mean scores were statistically significant or not, paired samples t-tests were used (Table 4.18). According to the results, t (19) = 14.552, p = 0 which is less than 0.05; that is, there is such a noticeable difference between learners` attitudes toward playing cooperative word games and their attitudes toward competitive games.

4.1.5. Classroom Atmosphere Questionnaire

In order to compare the effects of two types of word games (cooperative and competitive) on classroom atmosphere, the researcher administrated the third questionnaire in both experimental groups, which was called classroom atmosphere questionnaire. To achieve this, a series of t-tests were run, and the results are discussed in the following sections.

4.1.5.1. The Results of Classroom Atmosphere Questionnaire in the First Group

In this section, the results of the t-tests, which were run on learners` scores of classroom atmosphere questionnaire in the first experimental group, were gathered and analyzed in details.

Table 4.19 *Paired Samples Statistics*

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std.Error Mean
Class Atmosphere Questionnaire after Cooperative Games	20	124.30	39.437	8.818
Class Atmosphere Questionnaire after Competitive Games	20	148.25	27.125	6.065

As the results in Table 4.19 shows, the mean score of classroom atmosphere questionnaire given to the learners in the first experimental group after playing competitive word games (Mean = 148.25) is higher than the mean score after cooperative games (Mean = 124.30). This means in this group, the classroom atmosphere provided through playing competitive word games was more positive in comparison to the classroom atmosphere, where learners used cooperative games for practicing the newly learnt words. In other words, learners in this group preferred competitive word games more than cooperative games since this type of games could provide a more relaxing and stress-free atmosphere in the classroom, where they could learn the new words more easily.

Table 4.20 *Paired Samples Correlations*

Variable	N	Correlation	Sig.
Class Atmosphere Questionnaire after Cooperative Games & Class Atmosphere Questionnaire after Competitive Games	20	-0.321	0.167

Table 4.20 reveals the correlation as well as significance of the data obtained through classroom atmosphere questionnaire given to the learners in the first experimental group, once after playing cooperative word games and another time after competitive games. As it can be observed, Sig. = 0.167, which is greater than 0.05; that is, there isn`t such a significant difference between learners` attitudes toward playing cooperative word games and their attitudes towards competitive games. Moreover, Correlation = -0.321, which means there is a negative correlation between learners` scores on classroom atmosphere questionnaire in this group. In other words, learners, who believed that using cooperative word games could change their classroom atmosphere from a boring into a relaxing one, where their vocabulary learning could enhanced, did not enjoy the classroom atmosphere provided through playing competitive games. Also, those, who preferred competitive word games more, did not preferred cooperative games at all.

Table 4.21 *Paired Samples Test*

Variable	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Upper	Lower			
Class Atmosphere Questionnaire after Cooperative Games & Class Atmosphere Questionnaire after Competitive Games	-23.950	54.574	12.203	-49.492	1.592	-1.963	19	0.065

In order to see whether the differences between the mean scores were statistically significant or not, paired samples t-tests were used (Table 4.21). According to the results, t (19) = -1.963, and p = 0.065 which is greater than 0.05; that is, there isn`t such a noticeable difference between learners` attitudes towards the classroom atmosphere where cooperative word games were played and their attitudes towards the atmosphere where competitive games were used.

4.1.5.2. The Results of Classroom Atmosphere Questionnaire in the Second Group

In this section, however, the results of the t-tests, which were run on learners` scores of classroom atmosphere questionnaire in the second experimental group, were gathered and analyzed in details.

Table 4.22 *Paired Samples Statistics*

Variable	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Class Atmosphere Questionnaire after Cooperative Games	132.45	20	43.599	9.749
Class Atmosphere Questionnaire after Competitive Games	141.70	20	21.082	4.714

As the results in Table 4.22 shows, the mean score of classroom atmosphere questionnaire after playing competitive word games given to the learners in the second experimental group (Mean = 141.70), is higher than that of classroom atmosphere questionnaire used after cooperative games (Mean = 132.45).This means that learners` perception of class atmosphere in this group have been increased more when they used competitive word games, in comparison to when they used cooperative games. Moreover, according to the results, competitive word games could provide a more positive and stress-free atmosphere in the classroom in this group in comparison to when they played cooperative games.

Table 4.23 *Paired Samples Correlations*

Variable	N	Correlation	Sig.
Class Atmosphere Questionnaire after Cooperative Games & Class Atmosphere Questionnaire after Competitive Games	20	-0.248	0.292

Table 4.23 reveals the correlation as well as significance of the data obtained through classroom atmosphere questionnaire given to the learners in the second experimental group, once after playing cooperative word games and another time after competitive games. As it can be observed, Sig. = 0.292, which is greater than 0.05; that is, there isn`t such a significant difference between learners` attitudes toward playing cooperative word games and their attitudes towards competitive games. Moreover, Correlation = -0.248, which means there is a negative correlation between learners` scores on classroom atmosphere questionnaire in this group. In other words, learners, who believed that using cooperative word games could change their classroom atmosphere from a boring into a relaxing one, where their vocabulary learning could enhanced, did not enjoy the classroom atmosphere provided through playing competitive games. Also, those, who preferred competitive word games more, did not preferred cooperative games at all.

Table 4.24 *Paired Samples Test*

Variable	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Upper	Lower			
Class Atmosphere Questionnaire after Cooperative Games & Class Atmosphere Questionnaire after Competitive Games	-9.250	52.926	11.835	-34.020	15.520	-0.782	19	0.444

In order to see whether the differences between the mean scores were statistically significant or not, paired samples t-tests were used (Table 4.24). According to the results, t (19) = -0.782, and p = 0.444which is greater than 0.05; that is, there isn`t such a noticeable difference between learners` attitudes towards the classroom atmosphere where cooperative word games were played and their attitudes towards the atmosphere where competitive games were used.

Figure 2 is provided to give the graphical representation of the results of all three questionnaires given to the learners in both experimental groups (motivation, word game, and classroom atmosphere questionnaires). In this graph, the data obtained through the use of these questionnaires after playing cooperative word games are compared with the data obtained after playing competitive games. According to what is shown in this graph, in both groups, playing competitive word games not only increased learners` amount of motivation more, but also the changed the classroom atmosphere into a more positive and stress-free one. Besides, learners` amount of vocabulary gain enhanced more through playing competitive word games rather than when they used cooperative games in the class.
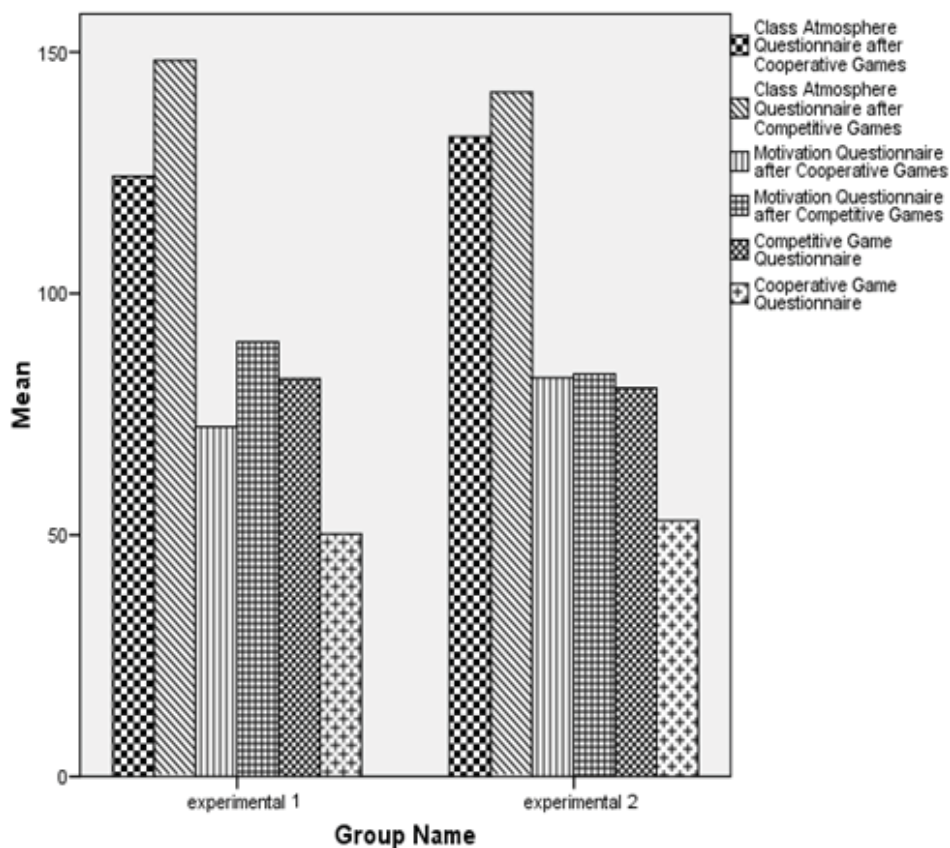
Figure 2 Data Obtained through the Questionnaires

4.2. Qualitative Analysis

In this study, the results of qualitative data was used in order to learn about learners` point of view about the use of two types of word games (cooperative as well as competitive) as instructional tools in practicing newly taught vocabularies. This data was gathered through the interviews which were conducted with eight learners immediately after playing each type of word games. As it was mentioned earlier, the learners were randomly selected by the researcher to take part in an interview. However, the researcher was not allowed to record learners` voices and was to write their responses to the questions.

As mentioned earlier, according to what learners in both experimental groups expressed in motivation questionnaire and interview, their level of motivation enhanced more through the use of competitive words games; in other words, according to the motivation questionnaire given to the learners in both experimental groups as well as what they have expressed in the interview, playing competitive word games was more effective in improving their motivation.

Another finding of this study was that playing competitive word games could affect learners` role in the learning process of the classroom more than playing cooperative games. According to what learners expressed in word game questionnaires as well as the interview, through playing competitive word games, the class was more learners-centered. They also claimed that the teacher had a more favorable manner toward them.

Another positive effect of using two types of word games was providing positive classroom atmosphere. According to the data obtained through classroom atmosphere questionnaire and what learners stated in the interview, using competitive word games could provide a more positive, free-stress, and relaxing atmosphere in the classroom.

5. Implications

5.1. Theoretical Implications

The results of the study have implications for the field of second language acquisition. This study explored the effects of two types of word games on EFL learners` motivation, classroom atmosphere, and vocabulary achievements. In this respect, having fun is the result of experiencing word games as the pedagogical tools in learning new English words, as well as enjoying engaging in a learning task (Ojeda, 2004; Yu, 2005). Naturally, this assertion begs the question of whether learners learn better, or learn more, if the learning experience provokes joy, laughter, glee (especially when the activity has specific pedagogical objectives with which to comply). Future research may investigate the effect ludic tasks may have on language learning.

The design of the word games used in the classroom should adhere to certain parameters to ensure success in language acquisition. They ought to obligate the learners to use specific vocabulary features, in a repetitive manner without falling into the rote, and routine reviewing of words that is unproductive. In the case of the cooperative word games, learners played in groups in order to practice the newly taught words. This permitted them to participate in the learning procedure more actively. Moreover, they can motivate learners in learning new vocabulary items, and change the classroom atmosphere into a more relaxing, positive one. Besides, learners ought to learn in a cooperative manner. However, using competitive word games could tap into a source of motivation that may facilitate second language acquisition. Competitive games often engage learners to actively participate in the activities. These games, also, provide a more stress-free atmosphere in the classroom which may foster learning process. When learners compete in a classroom setting, they often allocate additional energy and focus toward word production (if one of the objects of the game is to produce the correct words). When that is the case, these types of word games have been identified as important conditions for second language acquisition (Fotos, 1993).

5.2. Pedagogical Implications

The findings of this can give useful information to language teachers as well as curriculum designers, since it can help them get familiar with new teaching strategies which can provide better learning environment for language learners to promote their amount of learning. Curriculum designers can use the findings of this study to get familiar with useful, enjoyable, and effective game-based language instruction and use these games in English textbooks to provide more productive and creative language classroom, and, as a result, a relaxed, flexible, and effective learning environment.

Instructional games can help teachers minimize their use of traditional strategies which are boring and learners dislike them. This has an important effect on learners` amount of motivation which encourages them to continue their language learning process. However, it does not mean that language teachers can use all kinds of language games in their classrooms, but the games which are going to be used must be in accordance with the time of language class since timing is a critical factor in these classes, so they must be used during reasonable times.

Another factor which is of great importance is that language games must be used to achieve particular pedagogical goals, such as learning vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and etc. Therefore, if language games are implemented strategically, they can be effective compliment for communicative language teaching.

6. Suggestions for Further Research

This study shows the effects of two types of word games on EFL learners` motivation, attitudes toward their teacher, classroom atmosphere, and vocabulary achievement, but some other questions remained unanswered and to be investigated more. For example:

- Does the effect of instructional games on learners` motivation change in accordance with learners` age?
- Do instructional games have an effect on teachers` motivation for teaching foreign languages?
- Do instructional games have an effect on the rate of language learning?
- Do instructional games improve learners` retention of language?

Since this study used non-computer games, it can be replicated with computer games as well. It can be also suggested that other researchers investigate other games which improve learners` learning of other language elements such as grammar, pronunciation, intonation, idioms, etc.

7. Conclusion

As mentioned before, language games are components of communicative approach in language teaching which can maximize learners` use of target language by providing collaborative as well as competitive problem solving tasks. This is what mentioned by the learners who took part in this study.

In this way, competitive word games can be used as a communicative approach to promote learners` motivation for learning a foreign language. These games can not only diversify the language teaching methodology, but also provide more fun and interest in the language classroom; besides, they can produce a lively atmosphere in the classroom which makes vocabulary instruction more effective.

According to the results of this study, using competitive word games as dynamic and communicative pedagogical strategies, instead of tedious, old ones in English vocabulary cases have many positive results, such as:

- They motivate learners to enjoy language learning;
- They help learners adopt different attitudes not only to language learning process but also to their teachers;
- They provide a learning environment which enhances interaction among language learners;
- They provide a positive, relaxed, and stress-free atmosphere in the classroom which enhances learners` performance in the classroom.

According to what has been found in this study, it can be concluded that whatever teacher does in a language classroom has a profound effect on learners` success or failure in language learning process. In this regard, using pedagogical strategies which can promote learners` motivation is considered as an effective strategy for language learning and teaching. In order to achieve this goal, particular types of language games can be used.

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