

Post-graduate Studies and Training

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EFL Teachers` Perspectives on Game-Based Instruction for Teaching Vocabulary in Primary Schools in Al-Zawia City

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master's in Applied Linguistics

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Abstract

This study explored EFL teachers' perspectives on the use of games to teach English vocabulary in primary schools in Al-Zawia City, Libya. It also investigated the challenges teachers face when implementing game-based vocabulary instruction. The study adopted a mixed-methods research design. Combining quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data were collected using questionnaire distributed to 40 EFL teachers recruited via convenience sampling. These data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Qualitative data was obtained through semi-structured interviews with 10 teachers. These data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings revealed that teachers generally hold positive views on the use of games in vocabulary instruction. They believe that games increase students' motivation, participation, and vocabulary retention. However, teachers reported several challenges. These included limited time, large class sizes, classroom management difficulties, and a lack of resources. The study concluded that while game-based instruction is valued by teachers, effective implementation requires greater institutional support, training opportunities, and access to more teaching resources.

Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this dissertation entitled *EFL Teachers` Perspectives on Game-Based Instruction for Teaching Vocabulary in Primary Schools in Al-Zawia City*. No part of this dissertation has been published or submitted for any other degree or qualification at any other institution or university. I also declare that all sources submitted to this work, which are not my work, have been identified with proper citation and referencing.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Dedication

I dedicate this work to my family, especially my beloved father and mother, who were always by my side, securing the way for my educational success.

To my sweetheart husband, who believed in me.

To my beautiful daughter, whom I love the most.

To my role model sister, who never let me down, and her husband and children.

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List of Abbreviations

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

GBL: Game-based Learning

GBLL: Game-based Language Learning

GBVL: Game-based Vocabulary Learning

DGBVL: Digital Game-based Vocabulary Learning

Chapter One

Introduction

1.0 Introduction

The current chapter provides an overview of EFL teachers' perspectives on game-based vocabulary learning in primary schools in Al-Zawia City, with a particular focus on their perspectives toward the use of games and the challenges they encounter in implementing them in classroom practice. First, it discusses the study's background, the statement of the problem, and the research aims. It then presents the research questions, the significance of the study, and details of the methodology adopted to address them. The chapter ends with an outline of the study's structure.

1.1 Background of the Study

Vocabulary is one of crucial aspect in the acquisition of language. It plays a major role in the learning process and teaching languages. It represents the words and phrases needed by individuals to comprehend, communicate, and express ideas effectively. Wilkins (1972) states, "Without grammar, very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed" (p.111). This indicates that vocabulary forms the foundation of language proficiency and facilitates successful communication across various contexts, especially in educational settings.

In addition, vocabulary plays an important role in learning a language, especially because the ability to understand and use a wide range of words is crucial for both learning and teaching English. Having a strong vocabulary is closely linked to language skills and influences how well one reads, writes, and communicates overall. Building a strong vocabulary is not just about memorizing words; it is also about knowing what they mean, how to use them in different situations, and using them correctly.

In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, for example, innovative pedagogical approaches are continually explored to enhance vocabulary learning. The integration of games into language teaching practices is one of these approaches. Because it could offer a dynamic and engaging method to master vocabulary learning and teaching. It may also help accommodate diverse learning styles and foster a positive, enjoyable learning environment. When vocabulary is taught and/or learned, it is worth mentioning the significance of effective vocabulary instruction and the role that games can play in this process. Teaching vocabulary well

is a key part of learning a language, and it sets the foundation for becoming proficient and effective in communication.

Games are a designed form of play, usually adopted for entertainment or fun, and they can be used as an educational tool to provide a dynamic, engaging environment for vocabulary instruction. The interactive and participatory nature of games not only captures learners' attention but also promotes active engagement with language content. Whether through board games, word puzzles, or digital applications, games can be tailored to target specific vocabulary sets. It can allow for an immersive learning experience.

Building on the potential of games in vocabulary instruction, it is important to examine how the term 'games' is defined in the literature. The definition of a game was presented as an activity done for fun (Hornby, 1995). Similarly, Yip and Kwan (2006) describe games as tools that motivate learners and make language practice enjoyable. Additionally, numerous studies have explored the effectiveness of using games to teach vocabulary in various educational settings. Uberman (1998) observed her students' interest in learning through games. She believes that games help students not only enjoy and have fun with the language they learn, but also practice it incidentally.

Additionally, Lewis and Bedson (1999) stated that the usefulness of games lies in their ability to attract students to learn English because it is fun, encouraging them to experiment, discover, and interact with their environment. which studies have shown positive results, highlighting the potential of games to increase motivation, retention, and the application of vocabulary knowledge. However, the specific challenges EFL teachers in Libya face when incorporating games into their vocabulary instruction remain underexplored.

Therefore, understanding these challenges is significant for adapting instructional strategies to the unique context of Libyan primary schools. In light of these considerations, this study aims to bridge the gap by investigating EFL teachers' perspectives of using games as a tool for teaching vocabulary in Libyan primary schools. By exploring both the potential benefits and challenges of this pedagogical approach, the goal is to inform and guide educators in Libya and beyond, and to facilitate the development of effective vocabulary instruction strategies in primary school settings.

1.2. Statement of Problem

Despite the potential benefits of incorporating games into vocabulary instruction, there is little research examining the specific challenges EFL teachers in Libya encounter when using games for vocabulary instruction and investigating teachers' perspectives on their use. Understanding these perspectives and challenges is crucial to refining the adaptation of such teaching strategies and increasing the effectiveness of vocabulary acquisition in Libyan primary schools.

1.3. Aims of the Study.

This study has two main aims, the first aim is to investigate EFL teachers' perspectives in Zawia primary schools on the use of games in teaching vocabulary. Additionally, the second aim is to identify and analyze the challenges these teachers face in implementing games as an educational pedagogical tool for vocabulary instruction. To achieve these aims, the study also intends to provide a better understanding of current classroom practices related to game-based vocabulary instruction. The findings are expected to offer practical insights that can support these studies aims

1.4. Research Questions

The study is mainly based on the following research question:

1.What are the perspectives of EFL teachers in Al-Zawia primary schools regarding the use of games for teaching vocabulary?

2.What challenges do EFL teachers encounter when incorporating games into vocabulary instruction in the Libyan context?

1.5. Significance of Study

This current study aims to provide valuable insights into the dynamics of using games for vocabulary teaching in Libyan primary schools. The findings of this study might be valuable for teachers, as they reflect shared experiences and may help them recognize common difficulties and possible ways to address them. For curriculum developers and policymakers, the study provides evidence on the supports teachers need to successfully use interactive teaching methods, which can inform training programs that meet teachers' needs and curriculum design. Moreover, the study contributes to the limited research in the Libyan EFL context, particularly at the primary level, by focusing on teachers' voices rather than only teaching methods. This makes it a useful reference for future research aimed at improving classroom practices in response to real-world contextual challenges.

1.6. Research Methodology

The study used a mixed-methods research design. The qualitative portion used in-depth interviews to explore EFL teachers lived experiences and perspectives of using games to teach vocabulary, while the quantitative part employed questionnaire.

The research has been conducted in selected primary schools in Zawia. Convenience sampling was used to recruit 40 EFL teachers actively involved in vocabulary instruction. A wide range of experiences was considered. The participants were asked to complete a questionnaire and to participate in follow-up semi-structured interviews.

A structured, closed-ended questionnaire was administered to gather insights into teachers' general perspectives and experiences with the use of games in vocabulary instruction.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 EFL teacher to further explore teachers' experiences, challenges, and specific instances related to the use of games in vocabulary teaching. The interviews were audio-recorded. It provided a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by teachers.

The Qualitative data were thematically analyzed. This process involved identifying recurring themes, patterns, and variations in participants' experiences and perspectives. To ensure reliability, the data were systematically coded, organized in categories, and reviewed to ensure consistency and clarity in theme development. The quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Which included using percentages and frequency. The results were then presented in tables to provide a clear and organized summary of participants' responses. Frequencies were used to show how often specific responses occurred, while percentages were used to illustrate the proportion of participants selecting each response. This approach allowed for easy comparison of patterns in teachers' perspectives and highlighted the most common views and challenges reported in the study.

1.7 Outline of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters. The introductory chapter provides background on the study, followed by the research aims, objectives, and significance. Chapter Two begins with a review of relevant literature on young learners, teaching English to them, vocabulary instruction, and the use of games to teach vocabulary. Chapter Three describes the research methodology. It covers research design, instruments, pilot study, sampling procedures, data collection methods, and ethical considerations. Chapter Four analyzes and presents the data, outlining the methods for examining both quantitative and qualitative data. Chapter Five discusses the findings,

concludes the study, provides recommendations, and draws on insights gained to offer practical implications.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

This chapter describes some literature related to EFL Teachers` Perspectives on Game-Based Instruction for Teaching Vocabulary in Primary Schools in Zawia City. It focuses on teaching English to young learners, their characteristics, vocabulary instruction, and the use of games as a teaching strategy. The chapter also discusses how games can be used to teach vocabulary to young English learners.

2.1 Vocabulary in Language Learning and Teaching

Vocabulary is a core component of language learning and teaching. The following sections are dedicated to defining the term vocabulary and clarifying its critical role in language learning. Subsequently, the different approaches that teachers employ to teach vocabulary in the language classroom are presented.

Vocabulary is a key part of learning a language, and mastering it is essential for effective communication. A strong vocabulary helps learners succeed in school and in other areas of life. If students do not have the right words, they can find it hard to improve their language skills (Rosouli & Jafari, 2016). Vocabulary affects how well we read, write, and speak. It is the foundation of any language, so learners need to know many words to communicate clearly.

Simply memorizing words is not enough; learners need to understand their meanings, forms, and how to use them in various situations. This deeper understanding helps learners express themselves clearly and confidently, which boosts their overall language skills and success. Kopecek (2010) states that building vocabulary, or lexis, is important. As students learn new words, they begin to appreciate the richness of a foreign language. Over time, they become better at recognizing new words and comparing them to their native language, noticing similarities and differences. Additionally, as noted by Sutrisna and Artini (2021), a strong vocabulary makes it easier for learners to express their thoughts when speaking and to understand others when

listening. The next section will examine the definition of vocabulary and the teaching methods that match the needs of young learners and help them learn languages effectively.

2.1.1 Vocabulary Definition

The term vocabulary has been defined in various ways in the literature, with several scholars proposing different definitions. For instance, McCarthy (1990) emphasizes the central role of vocabulary, stating that it is the largest component of any language and essential for effective communication. Similarly, Nation (2001) defines vocabulary as the knowledge of words, including their meanings, forms, and uses. Schmitt (2010) expands this view by arguing that knowing a word involves multiple aspects, such as pronunciation, spelling, collocation, and contextual use. Other researchers adopt a broader perspective. For example, Richards and Renandya (2002) define vocabulary as encompassing not only individual words but also phrases and lexical chunks that function as single units of meaning. Likewise, Lessard-Clouston (2013) highlights that vocabulary includes words and groups of words that convey specific meanings, while Blachowicz and Fisher (2015) describe vocabulary as the set of words and phrases that represent concepts and ideas. In the context of language teaching, Cameron (2012) further explains that vocabulary involves not only words and their meanings but also the relationships between them within a language system. Despite these differences, most definitions share the understanding that vocabulary refers to the set of words a learner knows or uses within a language. Importantly, vocabulary is not limited to isolated words; rather, each vocabulary item may consist of a single word or a multi-word unit (Ur, 2012).

In addition, vocabulary knowledge is commonly categorized into two types: receptive and productive. Receptive vocabulary refers to words learners recognize and understand in listening and reading, whereas productive vocabulary refers to words they can use in speaking and writing (Nation, 2001; Schmitt, 2010). For the purpose of this dissertation, vocabulary is defined as the knowledge of individual words and fixed expressions that EFL learners need to recognize and produce in order to communicate effectively in English. This definition reflects the view that vocabulary is a foundational component of language learning and a key resource for expressing meaning in both spoken and written communication.

2.1.2 The Role of Vocabulary in Language Learning

Vocabulary plays a central role in language learning and is widely recognized as the foundation of communication. It enables learners to express ideas, convey meaning, and engage in

interaction. Like Wilkins (1972) indicated, “without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed” (p. 111), highlighting the essential role of vocabulary in communication. This view is supported by Schmitt (2010), who argues that vocabulary knowledge is fundamental to language use, as learners rely primarily on words to understand and produce meaning. Similarly, Nation (2001) emphasizes that vocabulary is a core component of language proficiency, as it directly supports both comprehension and expression. In addition to its role as a foundation of communication, vocabulary is closely linked to both receptive and productive language skills. Receptive vocabulary refers to the words learners recognize and understand in listening and reading, while productive vocabulary refers to the words they can actively use in speaking and writing (Nation, 2001; Schmitt, 2010). A well-developed receptive vocabulary allows learners to comprehend spoken and written texts more effectively, whereas productive vocabulary enables them to participate in conversations and express their thoughts clearly. Research has shown that growth in vocabulary knowledge enhances learners’ ability to process language input and produce meaningful output (Laufer & Goldstein, 2004). Therefore, vocabulary development supports the integration of language skills and contributes to more effective communication. Furthermore, vocabulary knowledge has been identified as a strong predictor of overall language proficiency. Learners with a larger and more extensive vocabulary are more likely to perform better on reading comprehension, listening, speaking, and writing tasks (Nation, 2001). Vocabulary size and depth are both critical, as knowing more words and understanding their multiple meanings and uses contribute to greater language competence. Stahl (2005) also notes that vocabulary knowledge involves not only knowing the definitions of words but also understanding how they relate to concepts and contexts, thereby enhancing cognitive processing and language use.

As a result, vocabulary development is not merely about memorizing words but about building a meaningful and functional linguistic system. In brief, vocabulary is essential for effective language use. It serves as the foundation of communication, supports both receptive and productive skills, and predicts overall language proficiency. Developing a strong vocabulary is, therefore, a crucial component of language learning and successful communication.

2.1.3 Approaches to Teaching Vocabulary in Language Classroom

Several approaches to teaching vocabulary have been identified in the language teaching literature. These approaches reflect different perspectives on how learners acquire vocabulary

and how teachers can effectively support this process. The main approaches include distinguishing between explicit and implicit instruction, between intentional and incidental vocabulary learning, and using various presentation techniques in classroom practice. Each of these approaches contributes to vocabulary development in different ways, depending on the learning context and instructional goals. The following subsections present these approaches in detail.

a. Explicit vs Implicit

Vocabulary can be taught through either explicit or implicit approaches. Explicit vocabulary instruction involves directly teaching target words, their meanings, forms, and usage. This approach often includes explanations, definitions, and focused practice activities. Research has shown that explicit instruction can lead to significant gains in vocabulary knowledge, particularly for learners with limited exposure to the target language (Nation, 2001; Schmitt, 2010). In contrast, implicit vocabulary learning occurs when learners acquire new words indirectly through exposure to language in meaningful contexts, such as reading or listening activities. In this approach, vocabulary is not the primary focus of instruction but is learned naturally as part of communication. While implicit learning supports long-term acquisition and deeper processing, it may be less effective without sufficient exposure and support (Krashen, 1989). A balanced approach that integrates explicit and implicit instruction is often recommended, as it allows learners to benefit from both focused learning and meaningful language use.

b. Intentional vs Incidental

Another important distinction in vocabulary teaching is between intentional and incidental learning. Intentional vocabulary learning occurs when learners consciously focus on memorizing and understanding specific words. This often involves deliberate strategies such as repetition, note-taking, and the use of vocabulary lists. Studies suggest that intentional learning is effective for building initial vocabulary knowledge, especially for high-frequency words (Laufer, 2005).

On the other hand, incidental vocabulary learning takes place when learners acquire new words unintentionally while engaging in activities such as reading, listening, or interacting in the target language. This type of learning is closely linked to exposure and context, and it helps learners develop a deeper understanding of word meanings and usage (Webb, 2008).

Both types of learning are important, as intentional learning helps establish foundational knowledge, while incidental learning supports vocabulary expansion and long-term retention.

c. Presentation Techniques for Vocabulary Teaching

In addition to instructional approaches, teachers use a variety of presentation techniques to support vocabulary learning in the classroom. These techniques include the use of visuals, realia, word mapping, and interactive activities that provide meaningful practice. Such techniques help make vocabulary more concrete and easier to understand, particularly for young learners.

Among these techniques, the use of games has been identified as a highly effective strategy. Games create a motivating and engaging learning environment, allowing students to actively and meaningfully practice vocabulary. They encourage interaction, repetition, and contextualized language use, which enhances both retention and understanding. Research has shown that game-based learning can improve vocabulary acquisition by increasing learners' motivation and participation (Cameron, 2012; Nation, 2001).

Overall, effective vocabulary teaching requires combining appropriate instructional approaches with engaging presentation techniques to support learners' understanding and long-term retention of new words.

2.2 Teaching Vocabulary to Young Learners

As stated by Johnstone in Copland et al. (2014), education may be the most important policy worldwide, and English is the most commonly taught language, especially to young learners or those in primary schools. Since language learning is emphasized, especially in primary schools, scholars agree that children are known for their ability to acquire language much faster than adults. Children have more opportunities to engage in language learning, which naturally enhances their ability to learn. Teaching language involves guidance and encouragement in the learning process by creating an environment that enables learners to acquire knowledge and behavior (Brier & Lia Dwi Jayanti, 2020). This ensures that education provides students with the necessary support and resources for effective learning. As teaching is essentially considered the act of transmitting knowledge from teacher to student, the teacher needs to be mindful of both their instructional methods and student behaviors.

Additionally, teaching English to young learners offers several advantages. Oktafiani and Fauzan (2017) stated that there are many benefits to learning English at an early age. For example, these benefits include the fact that young learners tend to achieve better proficiency when they start

learning early. Moreover, mastering good English can help them find a job in the future. Third, mastering English will provide social and economic benefits later in life. Learning to speak English at an early age helps learners gain confidence, making it easier to socialize with others. From these points, it is clear that teaching English at a young age is beneficial for learners in achieving a successful future. Furthermore, teaching English to young learners requires creativity to make learning entertaining, because children entertain themselves through playing and having fun. On the other hand, young learners are also known to easily lose concentration. Therefore, teachers should select the appropriate teaching methods for each age group (Bakhsh, 2016). Eventually, successful vocabulary learning for young learners relies on creative and engaging methods that foster active participation. This leads to a discussion on the definition of young learners and their unique characteristics in the context of language acquisition.

2.2.1 Definition of Young Students

The term young learners is widely used in language education; however, there is no universally accepted definition of the concept in the literature. Researchers and practitioners often define young learners differently according to age range, educational stage, or developmental characteristics. Consequently, clarifying how the term is used in a particular study is essential to ensure consistency and facilitate comparison across research contexts.

For example, Ellis (2014) noted that the term may refer primarily to primary school children, although in some contexts it can also include preschoolers or early adolescents. Similarly, Khotaman and Tekin (2017) argued that young learners may encompass children under the age of eighteen, while others restrict the term to learners in kindergarten through the end of primary education. These variations demonstrate the broad and flexible use of the concept.

Other scholars have proposed more specific age classifications. Slattery and Willis (2001) defined young learners as students between seven and twelve years old who are in the early stages of cognitive and social development. dividing them into two groups: younger learners (7–9 years old) and older learners (10–12 years old). In contrast, Butler (2021) focused mainly on children in primary school, typically between six and twelve years of age, whereas later work by Butler (2024) broadened the category to include children aged three to twelve. Likewise, Wolf and Butler (2017) described young learners as school-aged children between 5 and 13 years old.

Despite these differences, most definitions agree that young learners generally begin around the preschool or early primary stage and extend to the end of primary or early secondary education.

The lack of a single definition is significant because children at different ages possess distinct cognitive, emotional, and social characteristics, which influence how they learn languages. As Alsalmiah (2022) emphasized, teachers need to recognize these developmental differences in order to select appropriate teaching strategies and classroom practices. Younger children, for instance, often learn effectively through songs, games, movement, and visual support, whereas older learners may benefit more from structured tasks and explicit language instruction.

For the purpose of the present study, young learners refer to primary school children in the Libyan context, particularly those in the early years of formal English language learning.

2.2.2 Characteristics of Young Learners and Language Learning

Young learners have special qualities that affect how they learn a new language. Their brains are very flexible (brain plasticity), which helps them make quick connections when they hear new words. At the same time, their memory and attention continue to develop. Younger learners learn best through short, repeated activities. They also benefit from multisensory learning (using pictures, sounds, and actions together) to make words easier to remember. In addition, play is important for young learners because it keeps children motivated and makes learning fun. Finally, as social learners, children do well when teachers give clear guidance and create chances for them to work with others. The following subsections will explain each of these characteristics in more detail.

a. Brain Plasticity (High Ability to Change with Experience)

Young children's brains exhibit significant flexibility, which is known as brain plasticity. When they meet a new language, their brains quickly form new connections. Studies show that even a few weeks/hours of vocabulary acquisition can produce measurable brain changes in children. This plasticity makes playful and repetitive activities particularly effective for early vocabulary development. (Ekerdt et al., 2020).

In summary, young learners experience significant brain plasticity, which allows them to acquire new language efficiently. Their brains form new connections quickly through meaningful and repeated exposure. Consequently, early language education can strongly support vocabulary growth and long-term outcomes. Therefore, interactive and engaging teaching techniques are especially beneficial at this stage.

b. Developing Working Memory and Attention.

As Children’s working memory and attention are still developing. This means they learn best when new words are presented in small sets with regular review. "Small sets" refers to breaking down a larger group of information into smaller and more manageable portions. For example, instead of introducing a long list of new vocabulary words all at once, the teacher might introduce just five or six words at a time. This makes it easier for children to focus on each word, understand its meaning, and remember it. It helps them not feel overwhelmed by too much information at once. Research shows that working memory strongly predicts how well children learn new words. In brief, repeatable game rounds (levels, turns) are a good fit. (Gray et al., 2022.)

To conclude, children's working memory and attention are still developing, which affects their ability to process new vocabulary. They learn more effectively when information is presented in small, clear, and manageable steps. Regular review also enhances retention and comprehension.

c. Multisensory

Young learners are more likely to remember words when learning uses pictures, sounds, movement, and actions. Visual memory relates to vocabulary growth in children, and experimental studies show that gestures and physical movement support foreign-language word learning. Well-designed games naturally combine images, audio, and action. (Mathias, et al 2022)

In summary, multisensory learning significantly aids young learners in retaining vocabulary. Incorporating visuals, sounds, movement, and actions enhances engagement and supports memory retention. It also makes lessons more enjoyable and relevant for children. As a result, integrating different sensory activities can greatly enhance vocabulary acquisition.

d. Playfulness

Young learners are naturally playful, and this playfulness is important for their growth. Through play, children explore the world around them, make friends, and develop their thinking skills. Studies show that play helps boost creativity and language skills, making learning enjoyable and effective. Playing vocabulary games assists children to capture their interest and improve their educational success in language acquisition (Alotaibi, 2024).

In summary, young learners are naturally playful, and this characteristic strongly supports their learning and development. Play creates enjoyable opportunities for children to explore, communicate, and build thinking skills. It also increases motivation and attention during

vocabulary activities. Therefore, integrating games into lessons can make language learning both effective and engaging.

e. Social Learners

Young learners are social learners who gain a lot from interacting with their peers and teachers. To work together effectively, they often need clear roles and turn-taking. Studies in English as Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms show that teacher support (like modeling, prompts, and visual aids) helps improve learning. Due to such characteristics, cooperative vocabulary games are considered especially effective when this support is clear (Jamali Kivi et al., 2021; Naserpour & Zarei, 2021).

To conclude, young learners benefit greatly from social interaction with teachers and peers. Cooperative activities help them practice language, exchange ideas, and develop confidence. However, clear guidance and structured support are necessary for successful participation. Thus, collaborative vocabulary games can be highly effective in language classrooms.

In brief, young learners have special qualities that make them good at learning languages. Their brains are very flexible, so they can quickly form new connections when they hear or use new words. However, their memory and attention are still developing, which means they learn best when lessons are short, simple, and repeated often. They also learn better when many senses are used together, such as seeing pictures, hearing sounds, and using actions or gestures. Play is another important part of their learning because it motivates them and helps them enjoy the process. In addition, children learn a great deal from others, so they benefit from clear teacher guidance, support, and structured interactions with peers. These characteristics explain why game-based language learning works well for young learners, as games provide short, repeatable practice, use visuals and actions, provide immediate feedback, and encourage cooperation.

2.2.3 Techniques for Teaching Vocabulary to Young Students

Through the years, educators have developed various techniques to help students acquire and remember new words more efficiently. These techniques include explicit teaching, contextual learning, the use of visuals and realia, word mapping, and interactive classroom activities that provide meaningful practice. Each technique offers unique benefits to support understanding and retention. Using games is a particularly powerful approach among these diverse techniques. It creates a motivating learning environment, as students can actively and enthusiastically practice

vocabulary. This section discusses some of the most common vocabulary teaching techniques and highlights how games can be effectively used to support vocabulary learning

a. Explicit Vocabulary Instruction

Refers to a teaching technique in which vocabulary items are taught directly and systematically. It includes explaining the meanings of words, demonstrating their pronunciation, and showing how they function in sentences. According to Michael and Graves (2006), explicit vocabulary instruction involves providing learners with direct explanations of word meanings and strategies for understanding words. A research study by Tonia and Hengtao (2022) found that explicit vocabulary instruction led to significant improvements in students' vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension. The findings emphasized the need to focus on teaching Latin and Greek roots. For elementary educators, the study highlights the importance of implementing explicit vocabulary strategies, such as morphology and context clues. In classroom practice, teachers can use this technique by selecting keywords from a lesson, writing them on the board, providing simple definitions, and asking students to repeat and use them orally. In addition, teachers may provide worksheets, flashcards, and sentence-completion tasks to support students' understanding.

b. Contextual Teaching

Is another method that is significant for teaching vocabulary because it allows learners to comprehend and remember new words through hands-on, meaningful experiences. Instead of simply memorizing unusual word lists, learners are exposed to vocabulary in real-life contexts such as stories, dialogues, videos, or classroom discussions. This method helps students understand a word's definition, how to use it correctly, and its connotations and typical combinations with other words. According to Johnson (2002) "Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL)" enables students to connect academic content with real-life situations, encourages them to link knowledge to its practical use in their roles as family members, citizens, and workers, and actively involves them in the effort required for meaningful learning. In the classroom, teachers can apply this method by asking students to read a story and infer the meanings of unfamiliar words from the surrounding sentences. They may also organize pair-work conversations, role plays, or projects in which students use new vocabulary in authentic situations. For instance, students may act out a restaurant conversation to practice food-related vocabulary.

c. Using Visuals and Real Objects (Realia)

It is another effective way to teach vocabulary. This approach helps learners connect words to real-world meanings. As a result, it improves their ability to remember new words and makes those words feel more meaningful and relevant. When learners can relate words to specific objects or concepts, they are more likely to retain the information and understand the vocabulary better. Tools like pictures, flashcards, videos, and charts promote understanding by providing context that helps infer meaning without translation. At the same time, using real objects adds authenticity to the learning experience, allowing students to see, touch, and interact with real items. For example, when teaching about different kinds of fruit, both teachers and students can bring real fruit into the classroom to touch and explore, helping grasp the meaning. According to Marfil (2018), realia are real objects or items used as examples or discussion points in the classroom. It is also used by educators to help students grasp concepts more effectively.

d. Word Mapping

It is also an activity designed to encourage students to think creatively about a word provided by the teacher. In this approach, students are expected to creatively identify various words related to the "focus word." These include synonyms, antonyms, dictionary definitions, other forms of the word, and relevant sentences or phrases. According to Utami (2017), word mapping is a visual organizer strategy that can help students develop their vocabulary. By showing the word's branches, students will think more deeply and gather more information. Seeing the branches of the word map automatically makes students' thinking easier to explore. It challenges them to think more broadly and more deeply about each word in relation to others.

e. Interactive Classroom Activities

They are essential techniques for improving English vocabulary skills among learners by emphasizing the use of English in real-life situations, thereby enhancing active communication and language application. Activities such as role-plays, debates, and group discussions motivate students to participate in meaningful practice of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Tasheva, in her study (2024), demonstrates that interactive methods are invaluable tools for educators seeking to improve their vocabulary teaching practices.

Lastly, using games is an important technique for teaching English vocabulary, which transforms the classroom environment. They motivate learners and create a challenging context (Iaremenko,

2017). Furthermore, games foster fluency, fun, and relaxation, which is why learners in English classes enjoy this atmosphere (Ashraf et al., 2014).

2.3 Game-Based Instruction in Language Education

Using games to teach English is becoming an increasingly popular and effective method of language instruction. Not only do games keep students engaged, but they also create opportunities to learn vocabulary, grammar, and communication skills. While traditional methods often depend on memorization, incorporating games promotes active involvement and interaction among students. For example, when students play word matching games or other activities, they practice language in a meaningful way, which enhances retention and understanding. Additionally, games can help reduce anxiety related to language learning, making students more confident and willing to take risks. Because of these advantages, teachers worldwide are increasingly using games as a valuable tool to boost motivation and improve English language skills. Games also provide important opportunities for students to use the target language in real-life situations. As Yolageldili & Arikan (2011) state, students become more engaged in the learning environment of the target language while participating in games.

Alaa and Abeer (2022) in their study reported that using educational games as a learning method to teach vocabulary to young learners increased learner engagement, enhanced knowledge retention and memorization, and provided learners with the opportunity to see real-world applications. Therefore, this study recommends using educational games more creatively to teach vocabulary to young learners.

To sum up, using Kopecek (2010) words, “teachers should use games because young learners love them, in many cases, they fairly call for them. They understand games as a natural part of their lives, something they need to surround them to evoke an enjoyable and friendly environment” (p.21).

2.3.1 Definition of Games and Game-Based Learning

The word “game” comes from the Old English noun "gamen," which means “joy, fun; game, amusement” (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2023). Games can be defined as activities played for entertainment. Kopecek (2010) stated that games are “the different activities which evoke a pleasant and enchanting atmosphere for participants" (p.21). They are activities students engage in to learn through entertainment. Meanwhile, Moon (2005) describes game-based language

learning as activities with clear language goals, a reason for playing games, and opportunities to develop the target language.

In addition, according to parents, games are extra activities they do for fun outside their daily routines, serve as learning tools that make lessons enjoyable for teachers, and are activities through which children can spend their entire day. In fact, play is an inseparable part of children's lives (Aksoy & Çiftçi, 2020). Moreover, “It is entertainment that develops talent and intelligence, has certain rules, and helps to have a good time” (TDK, 2017). This means that games are joyful activities that may enhance hobbies and intelligence, have specific rules, and provide fun times.

From the previous definitions, it is clear that games are activities that the teacher uses to engage each learner in a fun, entertaining way, while also encouraging them to improve their memory and cognitive skills without feeling bored.

2.3.2 Theoretical Framework

There are many of theories support the use of games and teaching vocabulary here I am going to present two main theories the first one is cognitive theory and the second one is sociocultural theory.

a. Cognitive Theory

From the cognitive approach, language learning is an active mental process: learners use attention, memory, and problem-solving to acquire, structure, and retain knowledge. Unlike behaviorist models that highlight external reinforcement, cognitive theories focus on how learners interpret information and link new content to existing knowledge. These perspectives emphasize the roles of understanding, meaningful practice, and cognitive engagement in fostering linguistic competence, especially when teaching techniques encourage active learner participation and deeper cognitive procedure.

b. Sociocultural Theory

I used sociocultural theory as the theoretical framework to discover how games can be used to teach vocabulary in Libya. Sociocultural theory, developed by Lev Vygotsky (1978), emphasizes the role of social interaction and cultural education in learning. Vygotsky (1978) argues that cognitive processes are deeply embedded in a cultural context and are shaped by social interactions with more knowledgeable others, such as parents, peers, and teachers. According to

this theory, learning is not an isolated process but is deeply connected to social activities and the environment in which a learner is situated. In the case of using games to teach vocabulary, this theory highlights the importance of interaction between learners, as well as the cultural and social aspects that shape language use.

Games create a collaborative and engaging environment where learners can practice new vocabulary in meaningful, real-world contexts. By applying sociocultural theory, I examined how games facilitate language learning through social interaction, peer collaboration, and cultural relevance. This approach will allow me to discover how games can help learners in Libya to gain vocabulary in ways that are not only educational but also reflective of their social and cultural environment.

2.3.3 Benefits of Game-Based Learning in Language Education

Game-Based Learning has become a successful technique in language education because it creates an attractive and motivating learning environment. When games are incorporated into language lessons, students are more likely to participate actively in their learning process. Instead of passively receiving information, students interact with vocabulary, rules, and their peers, which allows them to use the language in meaningful ways.

In recent research on language teaching, there has been a growing focus on incorporating games into English vocabulary instruction for young learners. Scholars argue that games provide more than just entertainment; they enhance motivation, sustain engagement, encourage meaningful interaction with new vocabulary, and create an interactive, entertaining learning environment (Rahman et al., 2020). According to Kuzu and Ural's findings (as cited in Donmus,2010, p.1499), "when games and education are combined, it can be educative, and educational environments can be entertaining. The learners who learned with the use of games gain positive attitudes and can be more motivated while learning." This suggests that blending games with education can make the learning process more enjoyable, enabling students who learn through games to develop positive behaviors and show increased motivation.

Additionally, recent studies continue to highlight the positive role of game-based and gamified approaches in EFL vocabulary learning. For example, Zhang and Hasim (2023), in their systematic review of gamification in EFL instruction, reported that game-based approaches consistently support learner motivation, engagement, and vocabulary development, especially when learning activities involve interaction and meaningful practice. Similarly, Vnucko and

Klimova (2023) reviewed digital game-based vocabulary learning studies and found that games support vocabulary acquisition. Games provide repeated exposure to lexical items in engaging contexts. Furthermore, Game-Based Language Learning (GBLL) complements many characteristics of young learners. Games provide short and repeatable practice activities that enhance working memory, while rich visuals, sounds, and actions support multisensory learning. They also offer immediate feedback that increases learners' motivation and encourage cooperative learning through teacher guidance and peer interaction. Chowdhury et al. (2024) indicated that well-designed GBLL significantly improves vocabulary learning among school-age learners.

Kapp (2012) assert that elements of games, such as competition, rewards, and immediate feedback, enhance learners' motivation and help maintain their attention during language activities. This leads to students being concentrated for longer periods, making the learning process more enjoyable instead of stressful.

Another important benefit of game-based learning is that teachers can effectively address the different learning styles and abilities found in their classrooms. Games can be designed to accommodate visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning styles, thereby making language instruction more comprehensive. Moreover, both digital and non-digital games provide immediate feedback, which helps learners to identify their mistakes and gradually enhance their skills. As highlighted by Plass et al. (2015), well-structured educational games support both cognitive and emotional learning processes. Therefore, Game-Based Learning not only advances language proficiency but also fosters a supportive, student-centered learning environment.

Finally, Game-Based learning can improve students' communication skills through interactive and social experiences. When learners take part in games that involve teamwork, role-playing, or discussions, they are encouraged to actively use the target language. This type of interaction helps students become more confident, expressive, and fluent in their speaking abilities, as they practice the language in meaningful contexts instead of simply completing worksheets or attending lectures. For instance, a recent qualitative study by Gunawan (2025)

found that interactive game-based learning significantly enhanced students' communicative abilities, including speaking practice, vocabulary use, and class participation, by increasing their confidence and enthusiasm during language lessons. The researchers observed that students

became more engaged, more willing to participate, and better able to convey their ideas in English after the implementation of game-oriented activities.

2.4 Using Games for Vocabulary Instruction with Young Students

The use of games in vocabulary instruction has gained considerable attention as an effective technique to enhance language learning among young learners. Games create a meaningful and engaging learning environment in which students are actively involved in the learning process. They reduce anxiety and increase motivation, which are important factors in early language acquisition. Moreover, game-based instruction supports repetition and contextual use of vocabulary, enabling learners to retain new words more effectively. As a result, games are widely recognized as a pedagogical tool that facilitates both enjoyment and learning in primary English classrooms.

2.4.1 The Alignment of Games with Young Students Characteristics

Games are particularly well aligned with the characteristics of young learners, who typically have short attention spans, a strong need for interaction, and a preference for active learning. At this stage, children learn best through play, movement, and social engagement rather than abstract explanation. Games provide opportunities for physical involvement, repetition, and collaboration that match their cognitive and emotional development. In addition, they support a low-anxiety environment for learners to feel more confident when participating in class. Therefore, integrating games into vocabulary classroom instruction corresponds effectively with the developmental needs of young learners to use language, especially when speaking and/or writing.

2.4.2 Practical Techniques and Game Types for Vocabulary Teaching

The use of games in vocabulary instruction provides learners with meaningful opportunities to practice new words in engaging and low-anxiety environments. Rather than memorizing isolated vocabulary items, students interact with language actively. This, in turn, supports retention, recall, and contextual understanding. In Libyan EFL classrooms, where traditional methods often dominate, incorporating structured game-based techniques can significantly enhance student participation and motivation. As Bakhsh (2016) state that teachers can use a variety of practical games, including flashcard games, bingo, memory games, guessing games, role-play, and board games, to provide meaningful opportunities for vocabulary practice. These activities encourage

active participation, reduce learners' anxiety, and improve vocabulary retention by allowing students to use new words in enjoyable and communicative contexts.

a. Word Association and Memory Games

Word association games help learners connect new vocabulary with prior knowledge, which strengthens cognitive links and supports long-term retention. A common example is the word chain game. In this particular game, one student says a word, and the next student must produce a related word. Another variation is matching games, where students match words with definitions, pictures, or synonyms. The teacher can divide students into small groups and provide sets of vocabulary cards. Students work collaboratively to match words and meanings, followed by a class discussion to reinforce correct usage. These games are particularly useful for introducing or reviewing vocabulary.

b. Guessing Games

Guessing games encourage learners to use descriptive language and contextual clues. Activities such as “Guess the Word” or charades require students to explain or act out vocabulary items without directly stating them .A student describes a word while others guess it. This pushes learners to use synonyms, definitions, and examples, thereby deepening their understanding of the target vocabulary. This type of game promotes speaking skills alongside vocabulary development.

c. Digital and Mobile-Based Games

With the increasing availability of mobile devices, digital games have become a valuable tool in vocabulary learning. Platforms such as quiz-based applications or interactive storytelling tools allow students to engage with vocabulary through multimedia elements.

Teachers can design short quizzes or challenges using mobile applications where students answer vocabulary questions in real time. These activities can be used as warm-ups or formative assessments. According to Klimova (2021), mobile-assisted vocabulary learning enhances learners' vocabulary memorization, motivation, and engagement by providing interactive, multimodal, and flexible learning opportunities that complement classroom instruction. In contexts like Libya, even limited access to technology can be supplemented by group work around shared devices.

d. Role-Play and Simulation Games

Role-play activities allow students to use vocabulary in realistic communicative contexts. By simulating real-life situations, learners practice using new words meaningfully rather than in isolation. Students can be assigned roles (e.g., customer and shopkeeper) and asked to use specific vocabulary related to a lesson topic. This method supports both vocabulary acquisition and communicative competence. In addition, the use of role-playing games, staging, and dramatization games in lessons has been recognized as an effective strategy in English language teaching (Kozyar, et al., 2020).

e. Competitive Games

Competition can increase motivation and engagement when used appropriately. According to (Deesri, 2002) Competitive games are classified as an extrinsic motivator because of the reward of winning. Students want to win so they try their best when competing with others to win. Games such as vocabulary bingo, team quizzes, or board races encourage quick recall and active participation .The teacher divides the class into teams and asks vocabulary questions. Students earn points for correct answers, which creates excitement and encourages participation. However, teachers should ensure that competition remains friendly and inclusive.

f. Story -Based and Creative Games

Storytelling games require students to use vocabulary creatively. Yu and Zeng (2026) stated that digital storytelling provides meaningful opportunities for learners to use vocabulary in authentic contexts while promoting creativity, communication, and language development. Activities such as story completion or digital storytelling allow learners to integrate new vocabulary into meaningful narratives .Students work in groups to create short stories using a set of target vocabulary words. They can present their stories orally or digitally. This type of activity is particularly effective for deeper processing and long-term retention.

g. Implementation Considerations

For effective use of games in vocabulary teaching, several factors should be considered. First, games should align with lesson objectives and target vocabulary. Second, instructions must be clear to avoid confusion. Third, teachers should balance fun with learning by incorporating follow-up activities such as reflection or discussion. Finally, classroom constraints in Libyan

contexts, such as large class sizes or limited technology, should be addressed through group work and adaptable game formats.

Game-based vocabulary instruction offers a practical and effective approach to enhancing student engagement and learning outcomes. By incorporating a variety of game types that range from simple word-association activities to digital storytelling, teachers can create dynamic learning environments that support both language development and student motivation.

2.4.3 Effectiveness of Game-Based Vocabulary Teaching with Young Students

Research has shown that game-based vocabulary teaching is highly effective for young learners in improving both word acquisition and retention. Games increase learners' motivation and encourage repeated exposure to target vocabulary in a meaningful way. They also promote active learning, which helps students adopt new words more efficiently than traditional rote memorization. Furthermore, the use of games enhances classroom interaction and supports communicative competence. According to Wright et al, (2006) language games provide meaningful and enjoyable opportunities for learners to use vocabulary in original communicative situations, which increases motivation and enhances language learning. However, the effectiveness of this approach depends on the teacher's ability to select appropriate games and integrate them purposefully into lesson objectives.

2.5 Challenges and Limitations of Game-Based Instruction

Using Games in Teaching Vocabulary to Young Learners may represent an active and fun atmosphere. However, teachers might face challenges and difficulties in vocabulary teaching through games that are supposed to be considered.

One of these challenges is choosing the suitable kind of games that fit the young learner's need to be engaged in the educational process. Without selecting the right games for vocabulary instruction, children might lose concentration, focusing on play rather than learning.

Another limitation is time. Games generally take time to achieve their learning goal. Schmitt (2020) believe that one of the challenges teachers face in classroom practice is time. This can be a problem in the classroom, where limited time for lessons requires the teacher to balance fun with making progress in vocabulary acquisition.

Finally, classroom management. It can be difficult to manage learners when games are used, especially as students become more excited and noisy. If the number of learners is large, that

could cause more challenges. It is also hard to keep young learners focusing on learning tasks, especially if they're active groups. Brown (2025) noted that teachers should understand learners' characteristics to create an engaging learning environment.

Even though these challenges can be faced, when difficulties and limitations are well planned, games can be a useful technique to teach vocabulary to young learners. Teachers need to consider potential challenges and select appropriate games that meet learners' needs.

2.6 Previous Research Studies

This chapter reviews previous research studies related to vocabulary instruction in English language learning, with particular emphasis on primary school contexts. It examines findings on the importance of vocabulary development and the challenges learners encounter in acquiring new words. Special attention is given to studies investigating game-based learning as an effective technique to enhance vocabulary achievement and learner engagement. The chapter also identifies gaps in the existing literature to establish the basis for this study.

Numerous studies have explored the effectiveness of game-based learning in vocabulary instruction. Research indicates that students who engage in game-based activities demonstrate higher levels of motivation and retention compared to traditional instructional methods. These studies highlight the importance of integrating games into the curriculum to enhance vocabulary acquisition and overall language proficiency.

A study, conducted by Pratiwi (2025) investigated the effectiveness of Game-Based learning in improving vocabulary mastery among elementary school learners. Recognizing vocabulary development as a crucial element of early language education. The primary aim was to explore the extent to which game techniques aid in vocabulary acquisition, enhance learning motivation, and increase classroom involvement. A Systematic Literature Review (SLR) methodology was developed to gather 50 studies published from 2020 to 2025 across various sources via Publish or Perish, which were then analyzed using specific inclusion and exclusion criteria. The results indicated that game techniques positively influenced students' vocabulary mastery, motivation, and active engagement. Different games, including flashcards, Scrabble, word games, and Word wall, proved effective in helping learners grasp and retain new vocabulary. Nonetheless, several challenges were identified. these included limited time, inadequate resources, and a lack of teachers' proficiency in effectively applying game-based methods. The study suggested that

educators, researchers, and policymakers leverage these insights to create more engaging and effective English teaching strategies for elementary students.

Similarly, Andriani (2023), in his study, investigated teachers' perspectives on the use of games in teaching English vocabulary within the Indonesian educational context. The study aimed to examine how games contribute to vocabulary learning and enhance students' motivation and classroom participation. A descriptive case study design was adopted. and the data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed thematically.

The findings indicated that games positively influenced vocabulary teaching and learning by increasing students' engagement, enthusiasm, and active participation while also improving their vocabulary comprehension and retention. Furthermore, the use of games created a more enjoyable teaching environment and increased teachers' enthusiasm during instruction. The study recommended incorporating games into vocabulary lessons as an effective pedagogical strategy and providing teachers with appropriate training to maximize the benefits of game-based learning.

Moreover, in their 2022 study, Purba and Katemba examined how English teachers perceive game-based learning for vocabulary instruction in the Indonesian context. the main aim was investigating teachers views regarding the effectiveness of game-based learning in their classroom. Quantitative research design was adopted. The results indicated that teachers felt that game-based instruction not only enhanced students' vocabulary knowledge but also made learning more enjoyable. Additionally, teachers reported that games reduced students' anxiety levels and increased their motivation to engage actively in lessons. Consequently, the study concluded that teachers regard game-based learning as an effective and beneficial approach to teaching vocabulary.

In addition, many other studies focus on teachers' perspectives and the challenges of implementing game-based instruction. Wu (2023) reports that teachers generally hold positive attitudes toward digital game-based learning but face challenges related to time constraints, classroom management, and resource access. Similarly, Zhang et al. (2023) investigated learner engagement in digital game-based vocabulary learning (DGBVL) and its effects on vocabulary development among Chinese EFL university students. The study was conducted in response to the growing use of digital game-based learning in language education and the limited research addressing how learners engage behaviorally, cognitively, and emotionally in such

environments. The main aim was to explore patterns of learner engagement in DGBVL and examine how these dimensions influenced vocabulary acquisition. A mixed-method research design was employed; Data were collected through pre-, post-, and delayed vocabulary tests, questionnaires, interviews, and eye-tracking records using a Tobii eye-tracker.

Findings indicate that while game-based activities increase learner engagement, successful implementation depends on contextual factors such as class size, instructional time, and teacher support. These findings reflect the concerns identified in the present study, as they suggest that although teachers value game-based vocabulary instruction, institutional and classroom conditions play a critical role in shaping its use.

In conclusion, prior research indicates that teachers typically view game-based learning as a beneficial strategy for teaching vocabulary. The research findings across these studies highlight that teachers value games for their capacity to enhance motivation, engagement, and retention of vocabulary. However, the results also imply that successful achievement depends on effective planning, effective classroom management, and the alignment of games with teaching objectives. These studies provide a strong basis for examining teachers' opinions about game-based vocabulary instruction in Al-Zawia City's primary schools.

2.7 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter has emphasized the central role of vocabulary instruction in language education, particularly at the primary school level. It examined game-based instruction by discussing its theoretical foundations and its potential contribution to vocabulary acquisition. In addition, the chapter analyzed the characteristics and learning needs of young learners and reviewed a range of methods for teaching vocabulary effectively. It also highlighted the major benefits of using games, such as increased motivation, participation, and engagement, as well as the practical challenges teachers may encounter during implementation.

A review of previous studies indicates that game-based instruction is generally viewed as a valuable technique for vocabulary teaching; however, the findings also reveal several limitations, including issues related to classroom management, time constraints, and resource availability. Despite these positive contributions, most existing studies have been conducted in contexts that differ from Libyan primary schools. This, in turn, limited their direct applicability and provided a gap. Moreover, limited attention has been given to teachers' perspectives and the specific challenges they face when integrating games into vocabulary lessons in Libya.

Therefore, this study differs from earlier research by focusing specifically on Libyan primary school teachers' perspectives, experiences, and challenges regarding the use of games in vocabulary instruction. Consequently, it aims to address this gap in the literature and provide insights that are relevant to the specific context that may support more effective teaching practices.

Chapter Three

Methodology

3.0 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to investigate the perspectives of English as a foreign language teachers on the use of game-based instruction to teach English vocabulary in three different primary schools in Zawia city. The focus was also on using games to teach vocabulary to young learners. Thus, the main purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the methodology used to answer the research questions related to this study, which are:

1. What are the perspectives of EFL teachers in Al-Zawia primary schools regarding the use of games for teaching vocabulary?
2. What challenges do EFL teachers encounter when incorporating games into vocabulary instruction in the Libyan context?

This chapter reviews the research design adopted for this study. It provides detailed information about the sampling, techniques used to recruit participants, data collection methods, research ethics, as well as validity and reliability measures of the study. It also presents the method applied to analyze the data of this study.

3.2 Research Design

In this study, a mixed-methods approach is adopted to collect and analyze the data of this study. This approach is "the combination of at least one qualitative and at least one quantitative component in a single research project or program" (Bergman, 2008, p.1). The use of this approach is to provide in-depth insights and measurable data to support the findings of this study. The quantitative method provides a measurable pattern and direction on a large scale, while qualitative methods provide context and explain the underlying reasons. The quantitative data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Whereas, the qualitative data were collected by interviews and analyzed by using the thematic analysis method.

3.3 The Context of the study

Context refers to the specific location or site where the research was conducted. This could be a particular city, region, institution, organization, or any other defined setting. According to Yin (2018), understanding the context helps researchers gain insights into the unique characteristics, social dynamics, and cultural influences of the chosen place. This study took place in three different public primary schools in Zawia city, which provides a wide range of EFL teachers who teach English to students from different grades and ages. Starting from first to sixth grade and between 6 to 12 years old. The students' level is typically beginners with different abilities. Teachers in public primary schools are usually generalist teachers who teach multiple subjects, such as reading, writing, speaking, listening, and mathematics, to the same group of students.

The classrooms are classified as moderately sized classrooms that typically contain between 20 and 30 students. Each classroom contains a whiteboard and desks arranged in lines. The textbooks used in these classrooms are primarily those prescribed by the national curriculum,

particularly English for Libya (from primary 1to primary 6). In addition to textbooks, teachers often depend on supplementary materials such as worksheets, flashcards, and simple educational games to enhance vocabulary learning. The main sources supporting instruction include the official teacher's guide, curriculum frameworks issued by the Ministry of Education, and occasionally simple resources adapted to suit the learners' level. Overall, the learning environment reflects a combination of traditional teaching practices and emerging efforts to incorporate more interactive and student-centered approaches.

3.4 Sampling and Participants

Sampling plays a fundamental role in the research process, as it involves selecting participants and significantly influences the validity and generalizability of the study's findings. The sample has been defined by Dornyei (2007) as "a group of participants whom the researcher actually examines in an empirical investigation" (p.96)

To recruit participants for this study, convenience sampling was used. Convenience sampling is a popular technique, mainly because of its implementable benefits. Since it is frequently used inexpensive and easy to carry out sampling method, especially when researchers are limited by time and resources Golzar et al. (2022). The method implements the selection of participants in terms of how accessible they are rather than through structured or random methods (Raifman et al. 2022) Therefore, convenience sampling was considered appropriate, as it ensured feasibility while still allowing for the collection of meaningful and relevant data.). Convenience sampling was used to recruit those who participate in the questionnaire who were 40 EFL primary schools' teachers from three primary schools in Al-Zawia city during the academic year (2025-2026). These schools namely are Bahr Al-Samah primary school, Khaled ben Waleed primary school and Othan ben Afan primary school. And this sample is also used to recruit those who participated in the interview who are 10 and these teachers answered the questionnaire and show willingness to participate in the interview

3.4.1 Participants of the Questionnaire

A total of 40 EFL teachers participated in the questionnaire. Most participants were female, with 98% identifying as female and 2% as male. The teachers' experience ranges from 7 to 10 years. (31.8%) represents the largest proportion, followed by 1 to 3 years (27.3%) and 10 years or more (18.2%). Participants taught across different primary grade levels, which included first to third

grade, third to fifth grade, and sixth grade. This was a descriptive overview of EFL teachers working in primary schools where the study was conducted.

		Number of Participants	Gender	Experience	Grade level
EFL Teachers		40	Female =38 Male=2	1 to 3 y=12 3 to 5 y = 4 5 to7 y =2 7 to 10 y = 14 More than 10 y = 8	First to third grade Third to fifth grade Sixth grade

Table 3.1: Participants in the Questionnaire

3.4.2Participants of the Interviews

Fifteen EFL teachers were selected to participate in semi-structured interviews. These participants were chosen based on their desire and willingness to participate their experiences. They included 10 females, all of them where primary EFL teachers. Six teachers are teaching first to third grade, another seven are teaching from third to fifth grade and only two were teaching the sixth grade. Most of the teacher were from 25 to 36 years old. Each teacher expresses their willingness to share their experience in teaching at public primary schools in Al-Zawia city.

Table 3.2: Participants of the Interviews

	Number of Participants	Gender	Experience	Grade level
EFL Teachers	10	Females	From 3 y to 10 y	From first to sixth Grade

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used for collecting data for this study. A questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data on teachers' perspectives regarding using games to teach vocabulary in primary schools, and a semi-structured interview was used to collect qualitative data specifically in some points that were not included in the questionnaire and that need more spot and focus on teachers' challenges in using games to teach vocabulary in primary schools in Libya.

3.5.1 The Questionnaire

A closed-ended questionnaire was used to gather data about teachers' perspectives. Johnson and Christensen (2012) defined a closed-ended questionnaire as questionnaires designed to collect participants' responses to standardized questions for confirmatory research on specific variables, where hypotheses and measurements are evaluated. The questionnaire was a very effective quantitative technique, as it allowed the collection of large-scale numerical data in a short period of time (McLeish, 2009).

The questionnaire started with introductory paragraph that explained the aim of the study and invited participants to take part in the research. The introduction assured participants that their identities would be anonymous and that all information would be treated confidentially. Finally, the researcher thanked the participants for their time and cooperation . Then the questionnaire was divided into four sections with about 29 items. The first section aimed to collect personal information about the participants, while the second section aimed to gather teachers' perceptions of game-based learning. The third section aimed to determine the current methods and usage, and the fourth section highlighted the challenges teachers faced when using games. And I asked the participants who wanted to participate in the interview a question, "If you would like to participate in the interview, please let me know how I can contact you." The questionnaire was used to collect data on EFL teachers' perspectives on teaching English vocabulary using game-based learning in public primary schools in Zawia city.

3.5.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used to collect the data. Semi-structured interviews are a qualitative research technique frequently used for data collection. According to Patton (2015), these interviews are based on a predetermined set of open-ended questions and topics determined by the researcher, while still allowing interviewers flexibility to ask additional questions that clarify and expand on the topic. In the study, seven open-ended questions were developed for semi-structured interviews (see to Appendix 2). The primary objective of these interviews was to gather detailed information on EFL teachers' activities and the main challenges they face in their professional level..

3.6 The Pilot Study

In research methodology, piloting refers to conducting a pilot study or pilot testing. This involves a limited scale in order to evaluate and refine its overall design, procedures, and data collection tools. According to Neuman (2013), piloting is a practice implementation of the research

methods. where researchers conduct a small-scale version of the study to signific potential issues, enhance the design of research, and assure the validity and reliability of the data collection tools. Prior to data collection, efforts were made to test the questionnaire. Piloting the questionnaire was beneficial in uncovering any mistakes, ambiguities, unclear, or unnecessary questions. Kumar (2011) emphasized the necessity of pre-testing the questionnaire before actual data collection to ensure that respondents understand and interpret each question correctly.

Furthermore, establishing validity and reliability was a fundamental concern in this study; the piloting phase played a pivotal role in achieving these objectives by identifying unclear or potentially biased questions. As noted by Taherdoost (2016), piloting is instrumental in enhancing the reliability and validity of research instruments through systematic evaluation and revision. The expert feedback contributed to ensuring that the questionnaire items were both meaningful and accurately interpreted by respondents.

Overall, the piloting process strengthened the credibility and consistency of the questionnaire. By addressing potential issues before the main data collection phase, the study was better positioned to produce reliable and valid findings.

To pilot the questionnaire, it was sent to three experts to give their comments on the clarity and the content of the questionnaire. This process aimed to ensure the questionnaire's clarity before its actual implementation. Based on the feedback from the professors, some questions were removed, and the structure of others was modified to ensure that the questionnaire was clear and easy to navigate. For example, one of the professors' suggestions was to change the design of some items so they would be clearer and easier to use on a mobile phone.

The questionnaire, was given to 5 teachers from various primary schools who are from the same population and they were asked to answer the questionnaire and provide the researcher with the time when they completed the answers and if they have comments about the clarity or any other comments. Each teacher answered all the items and found it clear, comfortable, and easy to answer. And one of them said, " I felt fun while I was answering the questions."

Piloting semi-structured interviews constitutes a fundamental stage in the research process, as it ensures the clarity, relevance, and effectiveness of the interview questions in gathering meaningful data.

To pilot the interview guide was carefully reviewed with three applied linguistics professors from the University of Zawia to give their comments about the appropriateness and structure of

the questions. This dissection aimed to enhance clarity, avoid repetition, and ensure that each question aligned with the research objectives. Consequently, the number of questions was reduced from 9 to 8, and the structure of some questions was revised to prevent ambiguity.

During the pilot study, two teachers from various primary schools who are from the same population were interviewed, to answer the questions of the interview, to manage the time and gather their comments about the clarity or any other comments. both of them found the questions clear and easy to understand. This indicates that the interview questions are appropriate and ready to be used to collect real data

Careful consideration was taken to establish the validity and reliability of the semi-structured interviews during the piloting process. Validity was addressed by ensuring that the interview questions carefully reflected the aims of the study and were capable of generating relevant and insightful responses. The expert feedback provided by the three professors contributed significantly to this process, as it supported the alignment between the interview content and the research objectives. Reliability, on the other hand, was strengthened by revising unclear and repetitive questions, thereby reducing the likelihood of differing interpretations among participants. This improvement enhanced the consistency of the interview procedure when applied across similar contexts. Overall, the piloting process resulted in the development of a well-structured and dependable interview guide, thereby supporting the collection of accurate and consistent data.

3.7 Data Collection Procedures

After piloting the questionnaire and interview I started the procedure of collecting the data of this study, the process started by visiting several primary schools, and identifying a group of teachers who are specialized in the English language subject, principals, and experts in the English language subject at schools. The questionnaire link was given directly to them, along with a brief explanation of the purpose of the study and a request for their participation. They were also requested to share the link with their colleagues. This approach allowed the sample to grow organically, with more participants recruited through personal connections. It was sent to more than 150 teachers via Facebook and WhatsApp; however, only 40 responded. Also, printed copies of the interviews were distributed to teachers in different schools in Al-Zawia City. To promote anonymity and encourage candid feedback, participants were not required to include

their names. All collected data was securely stored in protected files to ensure participants' confidentiality.

To conduct the interview with the teachers, I contacted those who showed willingness in the questionnaire to participate in the interview to arrange a convenient time for the interview. I fixed specific data for 10 EFL teachers who were interviewed in a semi-structured way. All the interviews were conducted in English. The process of interviewing started on the 7th of February and continued until the 23rd of February 2026. The interviews went smoothly as the researcher started the interview with a warm welcome and expressed gratitude to the participant for volunteering to be involved in the study. The researcher explained the study title and asked for the participant's permission to record the interview to ensure accuracy during data analysis. Some of the interviews were face-to-face, while the others were conducted via Zoom and WhatsApp video calls, as teachers preferred online interviews to accommodate their availability and ensure a more comfortable environment.

The researcher began the sessions with some introductory questions before moving on to the primary topics. Participants were invited to respond to seven open-ended questions openly, to enable the researcher to gather comprehensive and insightful data. At the conclusion of each interview, participants had the chance to offer any additional thoughts or suggestions, and the researcher thanked them for their time and contributions. No personal names or identifying details were requested during the interviews. To ensure confidentiality, all recorded interviews were safely stored in protected files.

3.8 Data Analysis

The analysis of the collected data was an important step in this study. Different methods were used to analyze the quantitative and qualitative data. The findings from both methods provided a clear understanding of the research topic.

For the quantitative data, descriptive statistics were used to analyze the responses from the questionnaires. The data were organized and summarized using frequencies and percentages, which facilitated a clear representation of participants' responses. These statistical results were presented in tables to enhance readability and to allow for easy comparison across different items. Such an approach enabled the researcher to identify general patterns within the data in a careful and summarized way.

In addition to the quantitative analysis, the qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis. This method was selected due to its effectiveness in identifying patterns and meanings within textual data. The process began with the careful transcription of the interview recordings to ensure accuracy and completeness. Next, the researcher coded the data by identifying meaningful parts and assigning relevant labels.

Subsequently, the codes were examined and grouped into broader categories, which led to the development of initial themes. These themes were then reviewed and refined to ensure that they were coherent, relevant, and representative of the data. Any inconsistencies were addressed during this stage to improve the overall quality of the analysis. Finally, the findings were presented under clearly defined themes, allowing for an organized and meaningful discussion of the participants' perspectives.

Overall, the integration of both quantitative and qualitative data analysis provided a deeper insight into the research problem. The use of structured statistical techniques with thematic analysis ensured that the findings were both reliable and well supported; furthermore, they strengthened the validity of the study.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Before issuing questionnaires and conducting interviews, participants were informed about the purpose of the study. and they were not asked to write their names to respect their privacy and anonymity. This was stated by Dornyei (2007), "The primary principle of research ethics is that no mental or physical harm should come to the respondents as a result of their participation in the investigation" (p.67).

The researcher told the participants that their participation was voluntary, and they could withdraw from the study at any time. And that they are highly appreciated and significant for the integrity of the study. Therefore, their answers are kept confidential and are used only for the purpose of the study. In addition, the issue under investigation is not sensitive, and the questionnaire statements and interview questions did not cause any physical or mental harm to the participants.

Furthermore, after taking permission from the teachers, the interviews were recorded.

3.10 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter presented the methodology used in this study. It described the research design and the context in which the study was conducted. It also explained the sampling method and the characteristics of the participants who took part in both the questionnaire and the interviews.

Furthermore, the chapter described the data collection instruments, including the questionnaire and the semi-structured interviews. It also explained the pilot study, the data collection procedures, and the methods used to analyze the quantitative and qualitative data. Finally, the chapter discussed the ethical considerations followed throughout the study to ensure the participants' privacy, confidentiality, and voluntary participation.

Chapter Four

Findings and Results

4.0 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the study's findings, including both quantitative and qualitative results. It starts with the quantitative findings from the questionnaire, which aim to assess teachers' perspectives on the role of games in vocabulary instruction. In contrast, introduces the qualitative findings from the semi-structured interviews.

4.1 The Finding of the Quantitative Data (The questionnaire)

Quantitative data were collected through a closed-ended questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistical procedures. These findings were classified to four main heading: (1) Teachers' perspectives of the effectiveness of game-based learning, (2) The frequency of game usage by teachers in vocabulary teaching (3) The types of games used in the classroom, and (4) The challenges faced in implementing games. The results are presented in tables for clarity and facilitate interpretation

4.1.1 Teachers' Perspectives of Game-Based Vocabulary Instruction

The perspectives of teachers on game-based instruction provide a significant understanding of its effectiveness and practical application in classrooms. Their opinions are shaped by their experiences, beliefs, and the challenges they encounter in implementing these methods. For this reason, it is important to comprehend these insights to evaluate the role of game-based learning and to identify ways to support teachers in its effective use.

Table 4.1 Teachers' Perspective of Game-Based Vocabulary Instruction

No	Statement		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	disagree	Strongly disagree
5	Games make vocabulary learning more enjoyable.	Count	30	9	1	-	-
		%	(%75)	(22.5)	(%2.5)	-	-
6	Games are effective for introducing new vocabulary.	count	23	16	1	-	-
		%	(%57.5)	(%40)	(%2.5)	-	-
7	Games help reinforce and review vocabulary.	count	16	21	2	1	-
		%	(%40)	(%52.5)	(%5)	(%2.5)	-
8	Games increase student motivation.	count	26	8	5	1	-
		%	(%65)	(%20)	(%12.5)	(%2.5)	-
9	Games encourage shy students to use English.	Count	20	13	3	2	2
		%	(%50)	(%32.5)	(%7.5)	(%5)	
10	Games promote communication and interaction.	count	16	18	5	1	-
		%	(%40)	(%45)	(%12.5)	(%2.5)	-
11	Games help retain vocabulary longer	count	17	20	2	1	-
		%	(%42.5)	(%50)	(%5)	(%2.5)	-
12	Games are suitable for all proficiency levels.	count	16	19	3	2	-
		%	(%40)	(%47.5)	(%7.5)	(%5)	-
13	Games create a positive classroom environment.	count	25	13	2	-	-
		%	(%62.5)	(%32.5)	(%5)	-	-
14	Game-based instruction is valuable overall.	count	15	22	3	-	-
		%	(%37.5)	(%55)	(%7.5)	-	-

The quantitative findings indicate a strongly positive perspective on game-based vocabulary instruction. The responses to the perspective items were heavily concentrated in the Agree and Strongly Agree categories. Still, very few neutral responses were documented, and almost no

disagreement was noted. Teachers overwhelmingly agreed that using games makes vocabulary learning more enjoyable for students. As shown in Table 4.1, 75% of respondents strongly agreed, and 22.5% agreed with this statement, indicating almost total support. Other than enjoyment, teachers also perceived games as pedagogically effective. For the statement "Games are effective for introducing new vocabulary," more than 97% of respondents selected Agree or Strongly agree. Similarly, for "Games help in reinforcing and reviewing vocabulary effectively," the vast majority of teachers reported agreement. Teachers also reported strong perceptions related to motivation and participation. For the statement "Games increase student motivation to participate in English lessons," approximately 65% of respondents strongly agreed and *20% agreed. In addition, teachers perceived games as encouraging shy or less confident students to use English and as promoting meaningful communication among students. Moreover, perceptions of the classroom environment and retention followed the same pattern. More than 97% of respondents agreed that games help create a positive classroom environment, and nearly 95% agreed that game-based instruction supports longer-term vocabulary retention. Together, these results highlight a strong and consistent pattern of positive perceptions toward game-based vocabulary instruction.

4.1.2 Use of Games in Vocabulary Instruction

The use of games in teaching vocabulary is widely recognized as an effective classroom strategy. It represents a move toward more interactive and engaging methods of instruction. Games can make vocabulary learning more enjoyable and encourage students to participate actively in lessons. Moreover, they provide opportunities for practice in meaningful contexts, which can help learners remember and use new words more effectively.

Table 4.2 The Use of Games in Vocabulary Instruction

No	Statement	Option	Count	Percentage
15	Frequency of using games	Never	3	7.5%
		Sometimes (2-3 times a month)	9	22.5%
		Very often (every lesson / multiple time a week)	13	32.5%
		Often (once a week)	12	30%
		Rarely (once a month or less)	3	7.5%
16	When games are	As warm up-activity	6	15%

	mostly used	During the main lesson.	17	42%
		As a review/ consolidation activity.	9	22.5%
		At any stage (depending on aim)	8	20%
17	Types of game used	Physica/active games.	19	47.5%
		Board /card games	21	52.5%
		Digital Online games.	7	17.5%
		Word games	10	25%
		Role-play /simulation.	9	22.5%
		Team based quizzes	9	22.5%
		Others	5	2.5%

After investigating teachers' perceptions, the questionnaire explored teachers' reported use of games in EFL vocabulary instruction. A significant majority of respondents (85%) indicated that they had used games in their vocabulary lessons, while a smaller proportion (15%) reported not using games in their vocabulary lessons. Teachers reported varying frequencies of use. Approximately 32.5% reported that they are using games very often, and 30% said they used them often. In contrast, 22.5% indicated they used games sometimes, 7.5.% rarely, and a small minority claimed they never used games. These findings suggest that while game-based instruction is widely recognized, its implementation into regular classroom practice varies based on who teaches. In terms of game formats, teachers most frequently reported using board or card games (52.5%) and physical or active games (47.5%). Other formats included word games (25%), role-play or simulation activities (22.5%), and team competition games (22.5%). A smaller proportion of teachers (17.5%) reported using Digital or online games, showing a stronger reliance on low-technology resources.

4.1.3 Challenges in Implementing Game-Based Vocabulary Instruction

While there are positive perceptions, teachers have reported facing several practical challenges when implementing game-based vocabulary instruction. These challenges were primarily related to time, classroom context, and resources rather than to negative attitudes toward games.

Table 4.3 Challenges Teachers Face when Using GBVI.

No	Challenge	Not a challenge		Minor challenge		Moderate challenge		Major challenge		Extreme challenge	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
18	Lack of time to prepare games	11	27.5	8	20	13	32.5	6	15	2	5
19	Lack of time within the lesson/curriculum	4	10	9	22.5	10	25	12	30	5	12.5
20	Large classroom size	6	15	5	12.5	10	25	11	27.5	8	20
21	Managing classroom noise and discipline	7	17.5	6	15	13	32.5	9	22.5	5	12.5
22	Lack of access to technology /resources	9	22.5	3	7.5	5	12.5	8	20	15	37.5
23	Lack of knowledge /training	6	15	11	27.5	12	30	10	25	1	2.5
24	Difficulty aligning games with curriculum	5	12.5	10	25	15	37.5	9	22.5	1	2.5
25	Difficulty assessing student learning	8	20	11	27.5	10	25	6	15	5	12.5
26	Lack of physical space	6	15	9	22.5	12	30	9	22.5	4	10
27	Limited budget for material	7	17.5	5	12.5	10	25	12	30	6	15

a. Lack of Time

Time limitation emerged as a significant challenge. Table 4.2 shows that 32.5% of respondents identified a lack of time to prepare games as a moderate challenge, while 27.5% reported that it was not a challenge, indicating differences across teaching contexts. Teachers also reported limited time for lessons or curriculum. Nearly 30% identified this issue as a major challenge. Such percentages suggest that curricular time design and pacing restrict opportunities to use games consistently. A large number of participants rated this as a challenge that is moderate to extreme. This indicates that even though teachers are willing to use games, the strict curriculum may not provide enough time for interactive learning experiences. This could be a consequence of the pressure to finish syllabus content within a limited timeframe, which restricts the use of creative teaching techniques.

b. Lack of Classroom Size and Management

Factors related to the classroom were recognized as important challenges. About 20.5% of respondents identified the large size of this issue as an extreme challenge, while many others rated it as moderate or major. Managing classroom noise and discipline during games was also highlighted as a moderate challenge (32.5%). This indicates that managing many students during games can be difficult, especially in terms of ensuring participation and maintaining control. This could be a result of overcrowded classrooms, which makes it harder to organize interactive and engaging activities effectively.

Limited physical classroom space added constraints to implementation. Nearly 30% of teachers identified space as a moderate challenge, highlighting the influence of physical learning environments on instructional practices. This indicates that limited classroom space makes it difficult to conduct movement-based or group games. This could be a result of overcrowded or poorly designed learning environments.

c. Limitation in Resources, Training, and Curriculum Alignment

As with the challenges, there were clear resource-related challenges. Around 45% of teachers rated the limited budget for materials or resources as a major or extreme challenge. This suggests that monetary constraints might stop teachers from acquiring or creating effective game materials. This could be a consequence of the limited budget schools have for teaching resources. Teachers also faced moderate challenges related to aligning games with curriculum objectives (37.5%) This indicates that teachers sometimes struggle to connect games with specific learning outcomes. and assessing students' learning during or after games, with approximately 52,5% identifying assessment as a minor-to-moderate challenge. This suggests that evaluating learning outcomes from games can be complex and unclear. This could be due to a lack of clear assessment tools for game-based learning.

Overall, these findings suggest that teachers' challenges are mainly contextual and institutional rather than reflective of resistance to game-based learning.

4.1.4 Support Needs and Professional Development

Teachers expressed a strong interest in receiving training on game-based vocabulary instruction. As presented in Table 4.4, 77.5% reported that they would definitely be interested in receiving training, and an additional 17.5% reported possible interest.

Table 4.4. Teachers' Interest in Receiving Training courses or workshops.

No	Statement		Yes, definitely	Yes, perhaps	No, not really	No, not at all
29	Interest in training	Count	31	7	1	1
		Percentage	77.5%	17.5%	2.5%	2.5%

Teachers were also specific about the type of support that would improve their use of game-based learning more effectively. As shown in table 4.5, nearly 47.5% of respondents identified access to better technology as a key need. Professional development workshops were selected by 35%, and 32.5% identified the importance of having a dedicated budget. Almost 30% selected practical supports such as ready-to-use game ideas, physical resources, and additional planning time.

Table4.5. Support Needed to Use Game-Based Vocabulary Instruction (Multiple Responses)

28	Type of support	Frequency	Percentage
	Ready -to use- games ideas/ templates.	12	30%
	Professional development workshop.	14	35%
	Access to better technology.	19	47.5%
	Dedicated budget for materials.	13	32.5%
	Support from colleagues.	9	22.5%
	Resource library of games/materials.	12	30%
	More time for lesson planning.	12	30%
	Others	1	2.5%

Note. Percentages are based on valid responses (n = 40). Percentages exceed 100% because multiple selections were allowed.

4.2. Summary of Quantitative Findings.

This section presents a summary of the quantitative findings, which indicate that EFL teachers in Zawia City hold strongly positive perceptions of game-based vocabulary instruction regarding enjoyment, motivation, classroom interaction, and perceived vocabulary retention. focusing on teachers' perceptions, practices, challenges, and support needs regarding the incorporation of games in vocabulary instruction.

The main findings of the questionnaire are presented in the following points:

1. All the teachers have a positive attitude toward the use games in teaching vocabulary and they believe that games are beneficial in their classrooms.
2. A view number of teachers apply games in their classrooms because of the differences in teaching experience, available resources, or confidence in applying game-based methods.
3. Teachers face some challenges from using games such as limited time, Classroom management challenges, Limited access to resources, negatively impacts the effective use of game-based learning.
4. Teachers find it difficult to align games with curriculum objectives and to assess students' learning.
5. Teachers show their willingness to attend professional development courses and express their need to receive professional training to use game-based instruction effectively.

4.3 The Finding of the Qualitative Data (Interview)

While the quantitative findings provided a clear descriptive overview of teachers' perspectives, practices, and challenges, they did not fully explain how teachers experience and manage these constraints in real classroom contexts. Therefore, the following section presents the qualitative findings of the study, which offer a deeper insight into teachers' experiences with game-based vocabulary instruction and provide contextual explanations for the patterns identified. These findings are based on a thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews conducted with EFL teachers in primary schools in Al-Zawia City.

In addition, the analysis of the interview data revealed four main themes: positive views of game-based vocabulary teaching, student engagement and vocabulary learning, classroom and institutional challenges, and support and professional development needs. To protect participants' identities. participants are referred to using codes such as T1, T2, T3, and so on.

Theme 1. Positive Views of Game-Based Vocabulary Teaching

All interviewed teachers expressed positive attitudes toward using games to teach vocabulary. Teachers described games as enjoyable, motivating, and suitable for young learners. Many teachers explained that games make lessons more interesting and help students feel more comfortable during learning activities. For example, one teacher (T2) explained that games make learning enjoyable for students. She stated that *"Students love learning through games. When we use games, they become more active and interested in the lesson."* Another teacher emphasized

that games help create a positive classroom atmosphere: *"Teaching children should be fun. Games make the lesson enjoyable and help students stay focused."* (T10)

The teacher also mentioned that games help break the routine of traditional teaching methods. Instead of only listening to explanations, students can interact with the lesson in a more dynamic way. While (T2) described her experience in teaching English as both rewarding and challenging. She stated, *"It's a great experience, and it's exhausting at the same time… I love teaching kids because whatever you give, they gain it, and you find it the other day."*This extract shows that although teaching primary learners can be tiring, it is also highly satisfying due to the students' obvious progress. The teacher emphasizes young learners' responsiveness, noting that children tend to retain what they learn quickly, making teaching more meaningful. Therefore, these responses show that teachers see games not only as entertaining activities but also as useful instructional tools for vocabulary learning.

Theme 2. Student Engagement and Vocabulary Teaching

Teachers frequently mentioned that games increase student participation and engagement during lessons. According to the teachers, students become more willing to participate when games are used. One teacher explained: *"Even quiet students start to participate when we play games. They feel less afraid to speak."* (T8) Additionally, another teacher highlighted how games support vocabulary learning. She said: *"Students remember vocabulary better when they learn it through games because they repeat the words while playing." (T1)*

Teachers also mentioned that games allow students to practice vocabulary in a natural way. Activities such as guessing games, drawing, and group competitions help students repeatedly interact with the new vocabulary. For example, one teacher described how guessing games help students learn new words*: "When students guess the word from pictures or drawings, they repeat the vocabulary many times, and this helps them memorize it."* (T5). Thus, all these comments indicate that teachers believe games help students learn vocabulary more effectively by combining practice, repetition, and interaction.

Theme 3. Classroom and Institutional Challenges

Although teachers valued game-based instruction, they also reported several challenges when using games in vocabulary lessons. One of the most common challenges mentioned by teachers was limited time. Teachers explained that preparing and implementing games requires additional time, which can be difficult within a busy curriculum. One teacher stated: "*Games are very*

useful, but they take time to prepare and sometimes we do not have enough time during the lesson." (T6)

Teachers also mentioned difficulties with classroom management, especially when classes are large. Some teachers explained that games can increase noise levels and make classroom control more difficult. One teacher described this challenge as follows: *"Sometimes the class becomes noisy during games, and it is difficult to control all students when the class is large."* (T3) In addition, fixed seating arrangements limit flexibility. (T2) stated that *"Most classes have fixed seating… It's hard to put students in pairs or groups."*

This shows that the physical classroom structure restricts the use of collaborative games.

Another challenge mentioned by teachers was the lack of resources and materials. Some teachers reported that they often rely on simple or self-made materials because schools do not provide enough resources. A teacher participant explained: *"We try to create games ourselves because the school does not always provide materials for these activities."* (T2). It is clear from these responses that while teachers value game-based instruction to process difficult. These difficulties include conditions and limited resources affecting how often games are used.

Theme 4. Support and Professional Development Needs

Teachers also emphasized the need for training and institutional support to help them use games more effectively in vocabulary teaching. Several teachers suggested that training workshops would help them learn new strategies and improve their teaching practices. One teacher stated: *"Training workshops would help teachers learn new games and ways to use them in lessons."* (T4) Another teacher explained that teachers would benefit from sharing ideas and experiences with colleagues*: "If teachers share ideas and examples of games, it becomes easier to use them in the classroom."* (T5) Teachers also highlighted the importance of support from schools and administrators, including providing materials and encouraging interactive teaching methods. These responses suggest that teachers are willing to use game-based instruction but need additional support and guidance to apply it effectively.

4.4. Summary of Qualitative Findings

The qualitative analysis revealed that teachers generally hold positive views toward using games for teaching vocabulary. Teachers believe that games increase student engagement, participation, and vocabulary learning. However, teachers also face several challenges, including limited time, large class sizes, and lack of resources. Despite these challenges, teachers expressed strong

interest in training and institutional support that would help them use game-based vocabulary instruction more effectively. Overall, the qualitative findings complement the quantitative results and provide deeper insight into teachers' experiences with game-based vocabulary teaching in primary school classrooms.

The main findings of the interview are presented in the following points:

1. Teachers reported having positive experiences using games in teaching English vocabulary.
2. Games were found to increase students' motivation, engagement, and enjoyment while learning.
3. Teachers indicated that games help to improve vocabulary memorization and understanding.
4. A variety of games were used, including flashcard games, matching games, and digital games.
5. Some teachers highlighted that games encourage student participation and interaction

However, several challenges were identified by teachers, such as a lack of time, a lack of large classrooms, classroom management issues, limited resources, and limited access to technology, which affected the effective use of games.

4.5 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter presented the results obtained from both the questionnaire and the interviews. The findings emphasize that games are seen as an effective and beneficial strategy for teaching English vocabulary in primary schools. They encourage active learning, increase student participation, and support better vocabulary memorization. However, their implementation is often limited by factors such as large class sizes, time constraints, curriculum demands, and exam pressure. The findings also highlight the need to provide teachers with adequate training, resources, and institutional support to facilitate the successful integration of game-based learning into primary education.

Chapter Five

Discussion and Conclusion

5.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the study on EFL primary teachers' perspectives on game-based vocabulary instruction in primary schools in Zawia City. The discussion integrates findings from both the quantitative questionnaire and the qualitative semi-structured interviews. In addition, it relates them to the theoretical framework and previous research. The results are discussed in research questions approach. First, teachers' perceptions of game-based vocabulary instruction are discussed in relation to sociocultural theory and previous studies. Second, the challenges teachers face when using games are examined, considering classroom and institutional contexts, as well as earlier and recent research**.**

5.1 Discussion

The finding of the study will be discussed under three main headings the first heading is teachers' perspectives of game-based vocabulary instruction. the second about the challenges in Implementing Game-Based Vocabulary Instruction and the last one is teachers' Need for Support and Professional Development.

5.1.1 Teacher Perspective of Game-Based Vocabulary Instruction

The first question provides a critical analysis of the teachers' beliefs on the use of game-based strategies in vocabulary instruction within primary EFL classrooms. It emphasizes the degree to which teachers appreciate these strategies and explores their perceived effects on learners' engagement, motivation, and vocabulary development.

The findings of this study indicate that EFL teachers in Al-Zawia City hold strongly positive perspectives toward the use of games in teaching vocabulary. Quantitative results showed high levels of agreement that games make learning enjoyable, increase student motivation, and support vocabulary learning and retention. These results were strongly supported by qualitative interview data, especially as teachers consistently described games as effective, engaging, and suitable for young learners.

These findings align with the sociocultural theory of learning underpinning this study. From a sociocultural perspective, learning occurs through social interaction and shared activity. Teachers in this study described games as activities that promote interaction, cooperation, and communication among students. By encouraging learners to work together and use language in meaningful contexts, games function as mediating tools that support learning through interaction, as proposed by Vygotsky (1983).

The findings also support earlier research discussed in the literature review. For example, Uberman (1998) argued that games increase learners' interest and allow vocabulary to be practiced in a natural and enjoyable way. Similarly, Lewis and Bedson (1999) suggested that games encourage learners to experiment with language without fear. Teachers in the current study expressed similar views, noting that games reduce anxiety and encourage participation, especially among shy or low-level students. In addition, teachers' views support Yip and Kwan's (2006) view, which emphasized the motivational role of games in language learning.

Recent research further supports these findings. For example, Zhang and Hasim (2023), in their systematic review of gamification in EFL instruction, reported that game-based approaches consistently enhance learner motivation and engagement. Likewise, Vnucko and Klimova (2023) found that digital game-based vocabulary learning supports vocabulary development through repeated, meaningful exposure to lexical items. The positive perspectives reported by teachers in the present study, therefore, reflect both earlier and more recent research in the field.

Overall, the findings suggest that teachers' positive perspectives of game-based vocabulary instruction are well-grounded in classroom experience and strongly supported by theory and prior research.

Another key finding of this study is teachers' belief that games improve student engagement and support vocabulary learning and retention. Teachers reported that students participate more actively, feel more confident, and remember vocabulary better when games are used. From a sociocultural perspective, these findings can be explained by the role of interaction and collaboration in learning. Games create opportunities for students to engage with peers, negotiate meaning, and use language for genuine communication. Teachers' descriptions of group work, guessing activities, and shared problem-solving reflect learning situations that view knowledge as socially constructed rather than individually.

These findings also connect with cognitive views of vocabulary learning. They emphasize repetition, practice, and meaningful use of words. Teachers explained that games involve repeated exposure to vocabulary through guessing, drawing, and interaction, which supports memory and recall. This supports earlier views discussed in the literature, which suggest that vocabulary learning is strengthened when learners encounter words repeatedly in meaningful contexts

Recent empirical research further supports this interpretation. Zhang et al. (2023) found that learner engagement in digital game-based vocabulary learning plays an important role in vocabulary development. Similarly, Vnucko and Klimova (2023) reported that game-based activities support vocabulary acquisition by combining repetition with engagement. This study extends these findings and shows that teachers clearly recognize these benefits in primary school classrooms.

5.1.2 Challenges in Implementing Game-Based Vocabulary Instruction

The second question was centered on explaining the main challenges that hinder the effective use of game-based strategies in vocabulary instruction. It helps in understanding how contextual and practical limitations influence teachers' practices.in tern, this assesses with relating these findings to existing research to enhance the understanding of the complexities involved in classroom application.

Despite positive perceptions, the study found that teachers face several practical challenges when using games for vocabulary instruction. The most commonly reported challenges were related to time constraints, classroom conditions, and limited resources.

Time constraints were highlighted in both the quantitative and qualitative findings. Teachers explained that games require time for preparation and classroom use, which is difficult to manage within a crowded curriculum. This finding is consistent with Wu (2023) as he reported that although teachers generally view game-based learning positively, time limitations often restrict its use. The present study confirms that time pressure remains a key barrier in real classroom contexts.

Classroom management and physical conditions also emerged as challenges. Teachers reported difficulties related to large class sizes, increased noise levels, and limited classroom space. These challenges help explain why some teachers use games less frequently, despite their positive attitudes. Zhang et al. (2023) similarly noted that contextual factors such as class size and

classroom conditions influence the how game-based learning is effective. This study adds context-specific evidence from Libyan primary schools.

Limited resources and budget constraints were another important challenge. Teachers often relied on simple or self-made materials due to limited access to resources or technology. Even though earlier studies emphasized the benefits of games (Lewis & Bedson, 1999), this study highlights that material and institutional limitations continue to affect implementation, particularly in under-resourced contexts. Overall, these challenges do not contradict previous research but rather provide contextual depth, showing how classroom and institutional realities shape teachers' instructional practices.

5.1.3 Teachers' Need for Support and Professional Development.

An important finding of this study is the strong need among teachers for training and institutional support. Quantitative findings showed high levels of interest in professional development, and qualitative interviews provided clear explanations for this need. Teachers expressed a desire for training workshops that focus on practical strategies for using games effectively, managing time, and aligning activities with curriculum objectives. This finding aligns with Wu (2023), who reported that teachers need guidance and institutional support to implement game-based learning successfully

From a sociocultural perspective, teacher learning is also socially mediated. Training workshops and collaborative opportunities allow teachers to share experiences and develop new practices together. Teachers' expressed interest in training suggests readiness to improve their instructional approaches when appropriate support is available.

In conclusion, the chapter presented the study's main findings in relation to theory and prior research. It showed that EFL teachers in Zawia City have positive perceptions about using games to teach English vocabulary. Most teachers believe that using games enhances students' motivation, engagement, and vocabulary learning. These findings supported the sociocultural theory and highlighted the importance of interaction and meaningful practice .However, the finding also indicated that the use of games is limited by challenges such as a lack of time, large class sizes, and limited resources. Additionally, it revealed teachers' need for training and institutional support. Overall, while games are effective, their successful use depends on improving classroom conditions and providing professional development for teachers.

5.2 Conclusion of the Whole Study

This study investigated EFL teachers' perspectives. It also identified the challenges that face the teachers as they use games to teach vocabulary to young learners. A mixed-methods research design was adopted. The data was collected using a closed-ended questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while the qualitative data were examined through thematic analysis.

The findings revealed that teachers generally have positive attitudes toward using games to teach vocabulary and recognize their effectiveness in enhancing students' engagement and learning.

However, the data also highlighted several challenges that limit the effective use of games in classroom practices. This study presents several significant conclusions, which are summarized as follows.

The majority of EFL teachers viewed games as an effective and motivating tool for teaching vocabulary. They emphasized that games help increase student engagement, improve participation, and create a more enjoyable learning environment. Teachers also acknowledged the role of games in facilitating better understanding and retention of vocabulary. However, some concerns were raised regarding classroom management and the suitability of games for all lesson objectives.

The data indicated that teachers use games with different frequencies in their vocabulary lessons. Many reported using games repeatedly or very often, integrating them as part of their teaching strategies to support learning. Teachers used different types of games to encourage interaction and support vocabulary knowledge. Despite this, some teachers reported less frequent use due to time constraints and the effort required for preparation.

Teachers faced several challenges when implementing games in vocabulary instruction. The most common difficulties include a lack of time to prepare games, limited time within the lesson, large classroom sizes, and challenges related to classroom management, such as noise and discipline. In addition, limited access to resources and technology was reported as a barrier. These challenges often reduced teachers' ability and willingness to use games effectively in their teaching.

5.5 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are suggested for teachers, schools, and future practice.

5.5.1 Recommendations for Teachers

Based on the study's findings, it is important to provide practical recommendations to improve teachers' classroom practices. These recommendations focus on maximizing the benefits of game-based vocabulary instruction.

- EFL teachers should continue using games as part of their vocabulary instruction.
- Teachers should use games to increase student engagement and motivation during vocabulary lessons.
- Teachers should consider selecting simple, low-cost games that can be easily adapted to different lesson objectives and class sizes.
- Teachers should use games strategically rather than frequently, choosing moments where games best support learning goals, such as introducing new vocabulary or reviewing previously learned words.

5.5.2 Recommendations for Educational Authorities.

Schools and educational authorities are urged to provide increased institutional support for interactive teaching methods. This includes

- Supplying essential teaching materials and resources.
- Offering access to simple technology where possible.
- Allowing flexibility in lesson planning.
- Encouraging collaborative planning among teachers.
- Supporting teachers in these ways may help reduce the challenges identified in this study and enhance the effectiveness of vocabulary instruction.

5.5.3. Recommendations for Educational Institutions

Educational institutions play a significant role in supporting the effective implementation of game-based vocabulary instruction. Providing structured support can enable teachers to apply interactive teaching strategies more confidently and successfully.

- Educational institutions should arrange training programs and workshops that help teachers develop the skills needed to use games effectively in vocabulary instruction.
- These programs should emphasize practical strategies for selecting, adapting, and integrating games in line with curriculum objectives.

5.6. Limitations of the Study

Despite its contributions to the current literature, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged:

First, the quantitative data were collected using a self-reported questionnaire, which reflects teachers' perceptions rather than direct classroom observation. Teachers' responses may therefore be influenced by personal beliefs or social expectations.

Second, the qualitative data were collected from a limited number of interview participants, which may not represent the views of all EFL teachers in Libya. Although the interviews provided rich insights, the findings cannot be generalized to all contexts.

Third, the study focused only on primary schools in Zawia City, which limits the generalizability of the findings to other regions or educational levels. Different contexts may present different challenges and opportunities for game-based instruction.

Finally, this study focused on teachers' perspectives and did not directly measure students' vocabulary learning outcomes. Future research could include classroom observations or assessment data to provide additional evidence of learning impact.

5.7. Suggestions for Future Research

Given the study's limitations, several directions for future research are suggested. Future research could explore students' perspectives on game-based vocabulary learning to complement teachers' views. Researchers might also examine the effects of specific types of games on vocabulary acquisition and retention. Additionally, future studies could investigate game-based instruction across different educational levels or regions in Libya to gain a broader understanding of its effectiveness. Longitudinal studies may also help determine how sustained use of games impacts vocabulary learning over time.

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Appendix (1):

The questionnaire

EFL Teachers` Perspectives on Game-Based Instruction for Teaching Vocabulary in Primary Schools in Zawia City.

Dear teachers

I appreciate your participant in this research study, which aims to investigate your perspectives and experience of using games-based instruction to teach English vocabulary to primary schools' students at Zawia city. This questionnaire is nameless and confidential. Your truthful answers are important and will greatly help convey the questions about this teaching method. please answers should be based on your own experiences and beliefs. It should take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. I appraise your effort.

Section 1: Demographic Information

Instructions: Please tick (✓) the appropriate box or fill in the blank.

1.Gender

a. Male □ b. Female □

2.How many years have you been teaching? □

a. 1 to 3 years □ b. 3 to 5 years □ c. 5 to 7 years □ d. 10 years or more □

3.Which level do you teach?

a. First to third grade □ b. Third to fifth grade □ c. Sixth grade □

4. Have you ever used games in your EFL vocabulary lessons?

a. Yes □ b. No □

Section 2: Perceptions of Game-Based Vocabulary Instruction

Instructions: Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements by circling the number that best represents your perspective.

(1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

No	Questionnaire Item	1	2	3	4	5
5	Using games makes vocabulary learning more enjoyable for students.					
6	Games are effective for introducing new vocabulary.					
7	Games help in reinforcing and reviewing vocabulary effectively.					
8	Games increase student motivation to participate in English lessons.					
9	Games encourage shy or less confident students to use English					
10	Games promote meaningful communication and interaction among students.					
11	Game-based instruction helps students retain vocabulary longer.					
12	Games are suitable for teaching vocabulary to students of all proficiency levels.					
13	Games help in creating a positive classroom environment.					
14	Overall, game-based instruction is a valuable method for teaching vocabulary.					

Section 4: Current Practice and Usage

Instructions: Please select the answer that best reflects your teaching practice.

15. How often do you use games specifically to teach or practice English vocabulary

- Never.
- Rarely (once a month or less).
- Sometimes (2-3 times a month).
- Often (once a week).
- Very Often (every lesson or multiple times a week).

16. When do you MOSTLY use vocabulary games in your lessons? (Choose one)

- As a warm-up activity.
- During the main lesson to introduce/practice new words.
- As a review or consolidation activity at the end.
- At any stage, depending on the lesson aim.

17. What types of games do you use? (You may select more than one)

- Physical/Active games (e.g., Charades, Simon Says, running dictation).

- Board games / Card games (physical or printable).
- Digital/Online games (e.g., Kahoot, Quizlet Live, online quizzes).
- Word games (e.g., Pictionary, Hangman, crossword puzzles, word searches).
- Role-play / Simulation games.
- Team-based quiz/competition games.
- Others.

Section 3: Challenges Faced by Teachers Using Game.

Instructions: Please indicate the extent to which each of the following is a challenge for you when implementing game-based vocabulary instruction.

(1 = Not a Challenge, 2 = Minor Challenge, 3 = Moderate Challenge, 4 = Major Challenge, 5 = Extreme Challenge)

	Questionnaire Item	1	2	3	4	5
18	Lack of time to prepare games.					
19	Lack of time within the lesson/curriculum to play games.					
20	Large classroom size.					
21	Managing classroom noise and discipline during games					
22	Lack access to technology or digital resources.					
23	Lack of knowledge or training on effective game-based pedagogy					
24	Difficulty in aligning games with specific curriculum objectives.					
25	Difficulty in assessing students learning during/ after games.					
26	Lack of physical space in the classroom					
27	Limited budget for materials or resources for games					

Section 5: Support and Development Needs

Instructions: Please select the options that apply to you.

28. What kind of support would help you use games more effectively? (You may select more than one)

- Ready-to-use game ideas/templates specifically for vocabulary
- Professional development workshops on game-based learning
- Access to better technology (computers, projectors, internet)
- A dedicated budget for teaching/game materials
- More time for lesson planning
- Support from colleagues (sharing ideas, co-planning)
- A resource library of physical games/materials.

- Other.

29. Would you be interested in receiving training on implementing game-based vocabulary instruction?

- Yes, definitely
- Yes, perhaps
- No, not really
- No, not at all

..Thank you very much for your time ..

Appendix (2):

The Interview Questions

Section 1: Background Information

1. Can you tell me about your experience teaching English in primary schools and which grade?
2. Can you describe your experience, if any, with using games when teaching English vocabulary?

   What types of games have you used to teach vocabulary?

Section 2: Teachers' Perceptions and Experiences

3. What is your view on using game-based learning to teach vocabulary in primary schools? and do you have any teaching experience that supports this view? Please explain.
4. What benefits, if any, do you think students gain from learning vocabulary through games؟

Section 3: Challenges in Using Games

5. What challenges or difficulties have you encountered when using games to teach vocabulary؟
6. Can you describe any classroom, institutional, or contextual factors that make it difficult to use games؟

(I mean, for example, class size, time limitations, curriculum demands, exams, classroom management).

Section 4: Support and Suggestions

7. What kind of support or resources do you think teachers need to use games more effectively in vocabulary teaching?

(For example, training, materials, technology, administrative support)

Closing Question

8. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience using games in teaching English vocabulary?