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Thesis: Educational games as tools for enhancing learning abilities: theory and practice, at primary school"Rexhep Elmazi"

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ABSTRACT

Educational games have been used lately in any educational context all over the world. These types of games have proven to be efficient and effective especially during their use in EFL environments. They serve not only as a tool for enhancing students' proficiency, but also as a tool for reducing students' levels of stress and enhancing motivation. The main aim of this paper is to provide theoretical and practical insights on the use of educational games in the EFL environment in "Rexhep Elmazi" primary school, in the city of Gjilan. A mixed methodology has been applied in order to gain actual and real insights on the topic presented. The sample consisted of four teachers and twenty students from the same school. It was noticed that teachers in this school used educational games in all the classrooms and all levels of proficiency. It was concluded that educational games serve as a tool for enhancing students' proficiency, for reducing stress in the EFL classroom, for more communication purposes, for enhancing motivation and for more classroom interaction. We advocate that teachers in all EFL environments and proficiency levels use educational games.

ABSTRAKT

Lojërat edukative janë përdorur kohët e fundit në çdo kontekst edukativ në të gjithë botën. Këto lloj lojërash kanë rezultuar efikase dhe efektive veçanërisht gjatë përdorimit të tyre në mjediset e gjuhës angleze si një gjuhë e huaj. Ato shërbejnë jo vetëm si një mjet për rritjen e aftësive gjuhësore të nxënësve, por edhe si një mjet për reduktimin e stresit të nxënësve dhe rritjen e motivimit. Qëllimi kryesor i këtij punimi është të ofrojë njohuri teorike dhe praktike mbi përdorimin e lojërave edukative në mjedisin e gjuhës angleze si një gjuhë e huaj në shkollën fillore "Rexhep Elmazi", në qytetin e Gjilanit. Një metodologji e përzier është aplikuar për të fituar njohuri aktuale dhe reale mbi temën e paraqitur. Kampioni përbëhej nga katër mësues dhe njëzet nxënës nga e njëjta shkollë. U vu re se mësuesit e kësaj shkolle përdornin lojëra edukative në të gjitha klasat dhe të gjitha nivelet gjuhësore. U arrit në përfundimin se lojërat edukative shërbejnë si një mjet për rritjen e aftësive gjuhësore të nxënësve, për reduktimin e stresit në klasën e gjuhës angleze, për më shumë qëllime komunikimi, për rritjen e motivimit dhe për më shumë

ndërveprim në klasë. Ne mbrojmë tezën që mësuesit në të gjitha mjediset dhe nivelet e aftësisë gjuhësore të gjuhës angleze si një gjuhë e huaj të përdorin lojëra edukative.

FIELD: Teaching English as a Foreign Language

KEY WORDS: students, games, skills, proficiency, communication, fluency, motivation, interaction

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ABBREVIATIONS

ALM- Audio Lingual Method

DVG- Digital Video Games

EFL- English as a Foreign Language

ESL- English as a Second Language

FL- Foreign Language

FLL- Foreign Language Learning

FLT- Foreign Language Teaching

GTM- Grammar Translation Method

IR- Initiation Response

IRF- Initiation Response Feedback/Follow-up

LL- Language Learning

LLM- Language Learning Motivation

PC- Personal Computer

SLL- Second Language Learning

TEFL- Teaching English as a Foreign Language

TL- Target Language

LIST OF CHARTS AND TABLES

I. INTRODUCTION

Learning a foreign language can be considered as a complex process requiring hard work. Learners at all ages should make efforts at every moment that they are acquiring the foreign language, because of the continuous need for meaningfulness. Teachers usually make an authentic use of the language by employing different methods, techniques and approaches to teach the foreign language. They also try to create an interactive environment in the classroom environment, in order for learners to improve their language skills. Teachers usually assess learners' achievements by conducting pre and post tests. They use the same procedure in cases when they employ a new strategy for foreign language teaching (FLT).

Educational games can be defined as a technique or procedure that teachers use during their lessons. They are mostly used as a warm-up activity, in order for the teacher to set the context and make connections between previous and new knowledge. These types of games should not be considered as a marginal activity but as a tool for enhancing learners' abilities. Lately, educational games have turned into an innovative procedure for teachers of language learners. However, teachers should carefully choose suitable educational games according to the level of language learners, to their individual needs and many other factors which will be discussed on details later in this paper.

Educational games help learners to revise or recall the previous acquired material in a foreign language classroom. They have been considered as a pleasant and entertaining for foreign language learning. Scholars have studied educational games in relation to learners' motivation when learning a foreign or a second language. This will also be one of the scopes of this paper. Learners might also gain communicative competence and generate language proficiency and fluency thanks to educational games.

Cordon (2000) states that *"games, which include activities that involve goals, rules, and fun, have been considered as very important components in EFL education"*. Such games are useful for the encouragement of learners' motivation and serves as communicative practice for all foreign language classrooms. It is for certain that educational games reduce learners' anxiety levels as well as offer a pretty engaging platform, in which students get involved in the process of language learning.

Johnson (1995) considers educational games as learner-centered activities which provide opportunities for an active participation in the classroom. Many non-English scholars have used the terms "game" and "play" interchangeably in their studies. In this paper, we will differentiate between these two terms. As for digital video games (DVGs), they are also very important for learners' motivation, vocabulary acquisition etc. DVGs come with aesthetic elements such as animation, sound effect etc.

I.1. Aim and objectives of the study

The main aim of this paper is to analyze the use of educational games in foreign language classes, in order to bring data on how they enhance students' language learning.

In order to fulfill the main aim of this paper, the objectives that should be fulfilled are:

1- Provide the definitions of the main concepts discussed in this paper.
2- Review the literature available on the issues raised in this paper.
3- Raise a hypothesis and research questions to be answered.
4- Present the methodology employed for the analysis and presentations of the data derived from this study.
5- Conduct a case study on primary school "Rexhep Elmazi" in order to prove the hypothesis of the study and answer the research questions.
6- Draw conclusions on the study conducted and present the main findings and insights.

I.2. Research questions and hypothesis

The hypothesis raised in this paper is:

"Educational games help as a tool for students to enhance their learning abilities during the acquisition of English as a foreign language."

The research questions that this study aims to answer are:

1- How do educational games help learners enhance their language proficiency?
2- How do educational games help on the reduction of learners' level of stress?
3- How do educational games help on learners' motivation to learning a foreign language?

4- How do educational games impact EFL learners' willingness to communicate?

5- Do educational games help for more classroom interaction?

6- What views do students have towards the use of educational games in the EFL classroom?

I.3. Structure of study

This paper consists of five chapters. In the first introductory chapter, the main concepts discussed in this paper will be defined. Aims and objectives of the paper will also be arrayed and the hypothesis and the research questions raise will be elaborated. In the second chapter of the paper, there will be presented the review of the available literature on the issues raised in this study. In the third chapter, the methodology employed for the preparation of the paper will be described in details. In the fourth chapter of this paper, a discussion will be raised on the data resulting from the case study conducted. In the fifth and last chapter of this paper, the main conclusions will be drawn and main findings and results will conclude the study.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

II.1. Educational games as tools in the learning process

According to Carbonell and Nieto (2012), the incorporation of educational games in the learning process is crucially important. They believe that their importance is indisputable since they help teachers *"move from instructive recreations to supplement customary classroom direction"*. Charsky (2010) discusses on the fact that children and young people tend to play instructional PC games at home, and they seem to enjoy such an activity. Therefore, he suggests that games should be included in the learning process since they would at the same time educate and entertain learners. However, many scholars have discusses on the complexities that surround the issue of identifying and classifying the games which are appropriate for educational purposes. Some scholars think of them as a continuum (Aldrich, 2009), while others consider each game as *"various classes of the similar thing"* (Hendrix & Backlund, 2013).

Boyle (2011) defines educational games as pedagogical gadgets, since he considers them as crucially valuable for the learning process. According to him, educational games are able to charge instructing points and they can help learners achieve success, while helping them developed some basic intellectual abilities and skills. Educational games are also considered as a tool for building learners' self-confidence and they have the ability to remove the gap that exists sometimes between quicker and slower students (Hendrix & Backlund, 2013).

There are many rules that teachers should follow if they plan to incorporate educational games in the classroom. One of this rules is that the games to be incorporated in the learning process, should try to recreate learners' motivation. Also, games should accomplish the educational objective, or in other words to ensure that this educational objective is worthy to be used in the educational activity. As Johannesson and Lundqvist (2012) state, *"the principal thing to make educational games arrangement is to assemble the educational reason, making the educational reason concrete, furthermore, and isolate the games"*.

II.1.1. The various roles of educational games

There are many types of educational games that have been applied in schools or other educational institutions all over the world. They have been mainly used in such environments due the fact that many scholars think that they can improve learners' critical thinking skills in every subject possible. As Yue and Zin (2009) state, educational games make it possible for learners *"to think outside the box as they follow rules".* As for games which are used only for a specific subject, they tend to limit the improvement of knowledge.

Boyle (2011) asserts that the most vital role that educational games have is building learners' self-confidence. Also, considering games as educational tools, he states that they are constructive in the meaning that they liven up teaching methods which most of the time are considered as dull or boring. When games are used as an educational tool, they tend to engage students actively in the lesson and also provide them with the courage to participate. Boyle (2011) also thinks that games can help students remember best what they learn during the process of being active participants in the lesson. He also emphasizes that learning should not be considered as a simple rote memorization; on the contrary, teachers should incorporate educational games in order for learners to use them to remember the main points of the lesson. These points will later become available for application in learners' tests as well as in their daily real-world situations.

Boyle (2011) deals also with the role of video games used as educational tools in the classroom. He thinks that they build learners' visual and computer literacy. Since nowadays we live in a technological and innovative world, visual and computer literacy is vital for learners at all levels of education. Such skills will later serve learners when applying for jobs in the future.

When games are used as an educational tool, they help learners to acknowledge the importance of following rules and also help them build problem-solving skills. Boyle (2011) mentions here game drills which have to be completed by following rules and achieving sufficient scores to go through the stage. Therefore, learners will then be able to apply this kind of knowledge in their daily life situations by thinking outside of the box. Educational games also benefit learners who suffer from attention disorders since

games have proven to being able to capture learners' attention. In a study by Yue and Zin (2009) learners with attention disorder were more engaged during the lesson, and they considered the inclusion of games in the lesson as a fun way of learning. Educational games have also proven to teach other skills to learners such as: *"critical thinking, problem solving, sportsmanship, interaction and collaboration with peers"* (Yue and Zin, 2009).

II.2. Using educational games in EFL classroom

Using games as an educational tool in the FL (foreign language) classroom has turns to be a very useful strategy for teachers. Ersoz (2000) defines games *as "a form of play concerning rules, competition, and an element of fun"* and claims that teachers of FL use games in their classroom due to the three features mentioned in the definition. On the other hand, he claims that there are many teachers who think that games during FL classes are a waste of time. Despite the negative views, educational games have proven to be really helpful for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) or English as a Second Language (ESL) learners and teachers. Amato (1996) states that *"among several strategies used to improve students' proficiency such as visual aids, CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning), drama, role-play, and so on, games are another useful strategy to promote students' language proficiency"*.

Foreign language learning (FLL) has been considered as a complex process which can sometimes bring frustration to learners, since they need to make constant effort in order to understand, produce and manipulate the target language (TL). Therefore, teachers choose to incorporate educational games in order for learners to "take a break" while they practice their language skills. These types of games are also highly motivating because they amuse and challenge learners at the same time. Ersoz (2000) states that educational games in FL classes encourage and increase cooperation between learners.

Byrne (1995) asserts that educational games in language classes should not be used by teachers only "to break the ice" or "to kill time". On the other hand, he states that "they are not just a diversion, a break from routine activities, but a way of getting the learner to use the language in the course of the game" (Byrne, 1995). Similarly, Jill Hadfield (1990) defined games as *"an activity with rules, a goal and an element of fun"*.

As for language classes, there are many educational games from which FL teachers might choose. However, there are many factors that teachers should take into account when deciding which educational game would serve a particular class in order for learners to achieve success. According to Carrier, (1990) one factor that teachers have to consider is the level or proficiency of learners' language knowledge. In other words, the level of learners' language knowledge should fit to the difficulty of the game presented in the classroom. Secondly, teachers should take into account the fact that the educational game should also fit the lesson or class content. Finally, Carrier (1990) suggests that teachers should take into account learners' personal characteristics when deciding on the best educational game to be involved in the classroom. He states that *"teachers should consider students' characteristics like whether they are old or young, serious-minded or light-hearted, and highly motivated to learn or not"*.

According to Amato (1996), despite the fact that games are usually associated with fun, teachers should make sure that games to be included in the classroom, do not lack pedagogical values, particularly in the context of FLT. He further claims that educational games provide the right motivation for learners to be involved in the classroom's activities, help on lowering learners' stress, and also provide them with the opportunity for building communication and interaction between one-another.

II.2.1. How and when to incorporate games in the EFL classroom

Scholars have mostly dedicated their attention to the effectiveness of educational games. For them, this effectiveness is undoubtedly significant; however, they think that teacher should consider the manner to involve these games in the lesson, in order to make the best use of them. In many countries of the world, main educational games are played by learners on their assigned computers during the lesson process, but few teachers give learners the possibility to play on mobile or tablet devices. Therefore, this may result in the limitation of the usage of educational games outside of the classroom environment, which means that learners might not benefit to a full account from these educational games.

It is important to note that learning and studying can and should take place in other environments outside the traditional classroom. Since in the modern society we live today

children and young people tend to spend many hours on their mobile phones, it is important that educational games should enable learners to play and learn at the same time, inside and outside of the classroom. Hanson et al. (2010) conducted a study on college students in order to deliver insights on the period of time these young people spend on their phones. They found out that college students spend around twenty (20) hours on their mobile phones per week, especially in cases when they are traveling or waiting in a queue. Therefore, he suggests that teacher, tutor or professor should use educational games which might be available on learners' mobile phones or tablets. This will provide learners with the opportunity play and learn outside of the classroom environments and they would tend to play educational games more often, at any time it would be convenient for them.

When deciding on the educational game to be used in the classroom, teachers should base their selection by bearing in mind the syllabus, the text-book or subject program, and the way this game will benefit individual learners. Hanson et al. suggest that educational games should be selected based on *"their adherence to principles of task-based instruction and communicative approaches to pedagogy"*. One type of educational game that fulfills these features is the word game. During the incorporation of this type of game, learners tend to enhance a classroom environment and also enhance their relationship with their teacher.

Bailey (1999) states that teachers should incorporate innovative educational games in the classroom, only in cases when they want to enhance learners' enthusiasm and reinforce the didactic information they have previously presented to these learners. Also, if teachers aim on teaching students how to learn in a team, they should give students some peer-to-peer instruction in order to reinforce the educational game they are incorporating.

II.2.2. Benefits of using educational games in the EFL classroom

Calderón and Ruiz (2015) have conducted a systematic literature review on the effectiveness of educational games. Their findings suggest that almost 53 of the studies consulted had adopted various methods on assessing the effectiveness of many educational games. From their data resulting for the period between 2013 and 2015, almost 60% of the studies consulted dealt with the effectiveness of these games in the

higher education setting, while the remaining 40% were mostly concerned with primary and secondary school settings. These data indicate that teachers in higher education have the tendency to combine educational games with traditional teaching techniques, in order to build learners' experiences.

Education nowadays has employed a new technique in the language classrooms, that of "gamification". Adachi and Willoughby (2013) claim that there are many ways in which learners might benefit from gamification. To start with, they claim that educational games provide learners with the possibility to learn in a multi-sensory, active and experimental environment. Therefore, they can benefit from these educational games since experimental learning helps learners develop decision-making and problem-solving skills, especially in a dynamic learning environment. Furthermore, they suggest that when dealing with educational games in the classroom, learners are able to receive instant feedback or results, instead of waiting to receive "delayed feedback", as they consider the traditional assessment methods.

Hanus and Fox (2015) claim that many educational games might help on reducing time and place limitations, which means that portable devices give learners the possibility to study and/or learn at any time and at any place. Considering educational games "user-friendly tools" they further claim that they have the ability to transform difficult subjects into easily understandable one, as well as easily memorized.

Other scholars have tried to characterize educational games as turning the learning process to a more interesting one (Calliari, 1991), highly motivating learners to achieve (Sun-Lin and Chiou, 2019), helping learners achieve knowledge retention (Gros, 2007), helping teachers get learners' attention (Prensky, 2003), and a tool which promotes not only peer communication but also social and life skills (Liao et al., 2011).

Many scholars are supportive to the use of educational games for the enhancement of students' learning experience; however, others assert that educational games should not be used with young students, since they have the tendency to become more inattentive to the lesson process (Wickens, 1974). Other researchers have dealt with students' attitudes toward learning through educational games. According to Vernon and Blake (1993),

educational games benefit young students since they increase class attendance and improve students' mood, to a broader account than using traditional methods of both teaching and learning.

Zapalska et al., (2012) claim that in cases when educational games are involved in the teaching process, learners tend to enjoy the opportunity to participate in decision-making while learning and playing at the same time. As Wickens (1974) states *"even though as children grow older, their attention and concentration may correspondingly increase, it is important to ensure that students' learning motivation can remain at a high level"*. In other words, involving educational games during the lesson is a great tools for teachers, since learners are required to focus on the content the teacher is introducing, in order to be able to complete the tasks of the game correctly. Also, learners' motivation remains at high levels because they feel included in the lesson process.

Despite the positive views, there are many scholars who have criticized the use of educational games in the learning process, especially in EFL classes. Whitton (2007) for instance, in a study on gamification, concluded that the participants did not find educational games motivating or interesting, because they normally tend to play games only for entertainment purposes. He further asserted that the deployment of gamification in the learning process does not produce any motivational effect on learners of EFL. Karakus et al. (2008) states that if learners would be given the opportunity to decide on playing educational or casual games, they would certainly choose the casual ones. Dominguez et al. (2013) goes further claiming that *"the utilization of education games is associated with a decline in academic performance"*.

II.2.2.1. Learners' willingness to communicate

Many scholars have studies on the fact whether educational games make learners more willing to communicate in the EFL classroom. Thomas (2004) considers educational in the EFL classroom as energizers and tools for both teachers and students. In his study, he considers educational games as short warm-ups activities, and he claims that they *"provide enjoyment, pleasure, passionate involvement, structure, and motivation to learners among other benefits"* (Thomas, 2004).

Prensky (2011) states that learning activities should be held alongside educational games in the EFL classroom, and teachers should assist instruction to learners. Therefore, learners tend to show an increasing will to communicate in the TL and also achieve more in FL classes. Furthermore, in cases when learners practice their foreign language knowledge through games, they will achieve better results than practicing in a traditional approach. Prensky (2011) recommends all EFL teachers to include educational games when dealing with difficult tasks which tend to enhance speaking skills. He does not emphasize any specific games, as he asserts that all educational games are equally important. Teachers might say that they have reached their goals when learners learn through the educational games they have chosen to incorporate in the lesson, have fun while learning, and enhance their language skills through them. Also, educational games enhance social and communicative skills, since learners get used to interacting and communicating with their peers for the successful completion of the games' task.

Lee and Drajati (2020) state that many changes have occurred to the methods and techniques used for TEFL, including here the employment of educational games. Students are now at the center of the lesson, and have turned to be much more active during EFL lessons. Therefore, they suggest that educational games should be incorporated not only in the learning process, but also in the teaching process. However, they think that the teacher here should have a background role, allowing so students to take more responsibility. This will also result in lowering students' anxiety level, as well as motivating them to be involved in the process. Teacher should also make sure that the educational game they choose, meets learners' individual needs. If the teacher is incorporating an educational game to a children's classroom, he/she should never ignore their natural instincts for games, but turn their learning process into edutainment.

Ozmen (2004) claims that educational games help create diversity in the classroom at a positive rate, making it possible for learners to sustain interest in this environment. If teachers manage to create and maintain diversity in the classroom, then he/she can be able to reach out to a broader group of learners. This is a very crucial aspect since learners are first of all individuals, and they differ from each other in many different ways.

II.2.2.2. Learners' motivation

In this section we will discuss on the motivation and encouragement that stands behind the popularity of recreational games, since it will later serve as a complete understanding on why educational game developers are trying to create more of the latter. Interactive Software Federation of Europe (2016), in a study with participants coming from the Great Britain, France, Germany and Spain, concludes that individuals usually spent more than 6 hours per week playing video games. They claim that these individuals tend to play games for enjoyment without any pressure from outside in participation, which means that they are just attracted to these games and there is no other individual forcing or encouraging them to play.

Malone and Lepper (1987) state that playing games is intrinsically satisfying for individuals, since through games, they start experiencing a sense of enjoyment and fun. Furthermore, there are also other who are willing to pay an absurd amount of money in order to participate in some types of video games. Many education scholars have showed a special interest on studying the sources of motivation, which "push" individuals to spend their time and money on these entertainments. Therefore, they are suggesting educational game developers to create new and entertaining educational games, which can enhance motivation for learners. As we previously stated, there are many studies which have proven the fact that educational games can enhance learners' motivation.

II.2.2.3. Reduction of learners' stress

Teachers tend to use educational games in the EFL classroom in order to reduce learners' stress levels. We should admit that a lot of pressure and stress is put on EFL students in conventional classrooms, while they are trying to master the target language. Schultz (1988) states that

"Stress is a major hindrance in language learning process. This process (Learning language in traditional way) is by its nature time consuming and stress provoking... ... raise the stress level to a point at which it interferes with student attention and efficiency and undermines motivation. One method has been developed to make students forget that they are in class ....relax students by engaging them in stress-reducing task (games)."

Learners tend to suffer from high levels of stress in the classroom during cases when they face any unfamiliar or unknown grammatical structure, word, texts and so on. It is this unfamiliarity which makes them often feel uncomfortable and insecure during FL classes, which later also impacts their ability to learn of perform the tasks given by the teacher. Therefore, educational games are a great tool for learners to lower their anxiety level, start feeling comfortable in class, and be willing to learn more. During educational games in the EFL classroom, learners tend to relax and enjoy the process. Furthermore, they do not have to worry about making mistakes or errors, and the teacher doe not correct them in every single sentence, as it usually happens in conventional classroom. As soon as learners free themselves from worry and stress, they start improving their fluency and natural speaking styles (Schultz, 1988).

Furthermore, Schultz (1988) believes that students can learn without realizing that they are learning, if teachers incorporate educational games in the classroom. He brings the example of students playing a game called *"What Would You Do If?"*, where students have to pick a hypothetical question from what they have previously written in a box. Since questions differ, and answers are always subjective, students start using their own imaginations in order to explain any bizarre answers, while peers enjoy listening to these answers. While they try to explain their answers, they do not have to worry too much about grammar mistakes, since they just want to communicate their thoughts and ideas. Apart from having fun, they do not have to worry about any mistakes they make or any punishment from the teacher; on the other hand, they will learn a new grammatical rule and they will have the chance to use it in further games. This means that *"they learn unconsciously and stop thinking about language and begin using it in a spontaneous and natural manner within the classroom"* (Schutz, 1988.)

II.2.2.4. Language proficiency
The main aim of TEFL is to develop students' language proficiency in the four language fundamental skills, which are: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Educational games benefit EFL learners because they increase their language proficiency. While playing games in the EFL classroom for educational purposes, students increase their ability of using language in a specific context. Also, teachers provide them with a specific

situation or purpose for the use of language. Therefore, as Hadfield (1990) confirms *"games provide as much concentrated practice as a traditional drill and more importantly, they provide an opportunity for real communication, albeit within artificially defined limits, and thus constitute a bridge between classroom and the real word."* What the incorporation of educational games in an EFL classroom has in common with a traditional classroom, is the fact that students have an opportunity to drill and practice grammatical rules and their different functions in the sentence. The only differentiating point is the fact that students enjoy the former better since they learn through playing.

II.2.3. Video games in EFL learning

Tsai and Fan (2013) define game-based learning as *"any initiative that combines or mixes video games and education"* with a game consisting of *"a system in which players engage in an artificial conflict, defined by rules, which results in a quantifiable outcome"*. Reinhardt and Sykes (2012) assert that LL through digital video games (DVGs) can be of two forms game-based, which refers to games which focus on a direct representation of learning materials, and game-enhanced, which refers to the use of "commercial-off-shelf DVGs" in educational settings. The latter mostly aims on the individual to win the match rather than learning the foreign language, but each of the players needs English language knowledge for obtaining, creating, using or manipulating items in a game. Also, as English is a lingua-franca, players would need to have some language competence in order to communicate to, or understand the other players. Therefore, English language knowledge is needed for both types of DVGs.

Gee (2007) presents the learning principles of a language, and he considers *"the semiotic principle"* as the third one. In relation to DVGs, he states that there exists a clear correlation between sign systems incorporated in a DVG, such as images, colors cods, word etc. This means that language learning can be improved through playing DVGs. The author has classified DVGs and he refers to games which employ all language learning principles as good games.

DVGs and movies have been considered as informal language learning instruments in educational institutions. Cole and Vanderplank (2016) found in a study that students who were introduced to DVGs had higher learning outcomes compared to students who only

undertook classroom practice. Previous studies have also suggested that DVGs in formal educational contexts result on more encouraging students' results. However, the classroom environment remains to be the most important environment for the incorporation of informal language learning instruments (Cole & Vanderplank, 2016). If these DVGs would be used at another environment, they would not serve the purpose of FLL.

II.2.3.1. Enhancing learners' motivation through DVGs

Kinzie and Joseph (2008) have indicated that learners usually assume that educational games are boring; therefore, the presentation of a suitable DVG in the classroom will improve their motivation. They further claim that activities involved in DVGs are richer at nature rather than simple educational games. They suggest that educational games should be enriched with DVGs' activities in order for learners to remove the "boring" label to them.

Denis (2010) on the other hand, states that *"language learning software may provide substantial exposure to the content, but fails to affect change since it does not motivate learner participation"*. He asserts that participation in the classroom is closely related to learners' motivation, so teachers have to employ a variety of instruments in order to ensure that most or all learners are engaged in the learning process.

Rosas et al. (2003) state that teachers should select an appropriate commercial DVG for language learning processes, in the meaning that learners try to achieve victory in the games, while being involved in a learning process. Also, teachers should take care that the DVG is rich both in content and appearance, since learners tend to focus mostly on the aesthetics elements of a game in order to find it attractive. Rosas et al. (2003) further identifies four factors which build learner's motivation in educational games, namely: challenge, curiosity, control, and fantasy. The challenge that the chosen game presents should be adapted to learner's abilities in order to avoid frustration, anxiety, and boredom. As for curiosity, it is the aesthetic element which motivates learners to take part on the game. Control refers to the fact that learners tend to need a sense of control over the game. As for fantasy, the game should make learners experience states, conditions, or situations which are not real.

II.2.3.2. Introducing teamwork through video games

Newman (1980) defines teamwork as *"a dimension added to an individual's consideration of success and failure"*. This means that, if a participant feels that his/her individual contribution to the teamwork is considered essential by other members, he/she starts having the same high expectations in future situations. Also, he/she might also feel less debilitation of the team fails. Newman (1980) further claims that teamwork serves to participants as an opportunity to share experiences for purposes of self-evaluation, as well as encourages them to draw effective social comparisons when interacting, collaborating and cooperation with others in their teams.

Oxford (1997) claims that teamwork can enhance language learning motivation (LLM) for EFL learners. He states that put together, learners' collaboration *"results in superior learning gains since it can "generate a powerful motivational system to energize learning"*. DVGs provide FL learners with a suitable environment to promote teamwork.

II.2.4. Educational games for children with learning disabilities

EFL children with learning disabilities tend to have many difficulties when being encountered with unfamiliar vocabulary while they are trying to acquire the language. Since they find it difficult to learn, recall or retain the new vocabulary presented in the classroom, scholars suggest that they should be involved in task-based activities. For instance, they could be asked to guess a task, describe an exercise, or build a short conversation. Such activities are believed to help these special learners learn better. Other activities include vocabulary games, through which children with learning disabilities can learn on how to use words in different context. When games are included, these learners tend to perceive the lesson as an exciting and enjoyable one (Decarrico, 2001).

In the traditional classroom, there are two popular methodologies for teaching vocabulary, namely: the grammar translation method (GTM) and the audio lingual method (ALM). The former focuses mostly on learners memorizing vocabulary lists in order to complete translation tasks or final assessments in the language classroom. This methodology or approach is mostly used by teachers to explain grammatical rules. The latter approach focuses mainly on issues of pronunciation or intensive oral drilling. However, these methods have faced much criticism lately due to the fact that words are

learned in isolation from the contexts in which they are used. Decarrico (2001) for instance, states that learners should not learn words separately or by memorization without understanding. Furthermore, he considers the process of learning new words as a cumulative process, which means that the translations or meanings of words enrich and establish as learners face them again.

Gentry and Lindsey (2008) conducted a study on many children with learning disabilities in reading and writing skills and limited English proficiency. They used visual representations (such as student drawings) in order to view the process in which learners attached an individual vocabulary word to the context of the text they just read.

Ciaramella (2017) conducted a study with children with learning disabilities in order to evaluate the effect of Kahoot! (an educational game) on vocabulary acquisition and retention and determine student satisfaction with using Kahoot as an intervention. Learners involved in the study had either a learning disability or health impairment. The author collected data in order to determine the amount of vocabulary words each learner acquired and retained during the baseline phase of the game. Data were then again collected during the intervention stage and they were compared to the previous one. The findings indicated that *"using game-based learning platforms for children with learning disabilities can lead to an increase in vocabulary acquisition and retention"*.

Mohamed (2021) conducted a study recently, focusing on EFL learners with learning disabilities vocabulary acquisition, using the educational game strategy. According to him, teachers face many challenges when trying to facilitate vocabulary learning to such learners. He suggests that teachers who have such learners at their classroom should definitely employ the educational games strategy. In his case study, he tried to evaluate the effectiveness of using this strategy in order to enhance vocabulary acquisition and retention.

II.3. Language learning in primary education

II.3.1. Interaction in the classroom
Classroom interaction comes in various forms; therefore, it has been difficult for scholars to assign a specific definition to it. Some examples of interaction are choral repetition,

eliciting, responding to questions or acting out a dialogue. By reviewing the available literature on classroom interaction, some definitions have been consulted. Johnson (1995) has defined classroom interaction in classes of language learning as an explicit behavior through which students exploit their learning opportunities and use of the target language. Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) have defined an interaction as *"an exchange containing either a complete initiation-response feedback/follow-up (IRF) sequence as described by or a partial, initiation-response (IR) one"*. Ellis (1990) describes the term interaction in the context of SLL (second language learning) as *"the process through which learners are exposed to the target language and therefore how different language samples become available for learners to use in the classroom in an interactive way"*. By consulting these definitions, we might conclude that classroom interaction refers to all types of interaction which happen between learners themselves, or between learners and their teacher.

Scholars have identified many patterns of classroom interaction, especially in primary education classes. Lier (1988) states that classroom interaction it is not formed by random act, so, it has its own patterns. Sincliar and Coulthard (1975) have brought some of the most significant findings as it pertains to classroom interaction. They conducted a study on classroom interaction patterns on some primary schools in the UK. They found that there were three steps followed by learners and teachers while interacting in the classroom: initiation, response and feedback. This means that, it is usually the teacher the one who starts the interaction by initiating a question, then students respond or answer the question, and lastly the teacher gives feedback to them (the feedback might come as an assessment, correction or comment). The process starts again and goes on in a cycle, so the teacher asks another question.

Hall and Walsh (2002) define the same cycle, but in their study, the teachers asked the question and students were expected to answer in a brief manner. The feedback from the teacher usually came with short phrases such as "Good", "That's right", or "No, that's not right". This is mostly considered as the interaction pattern, to which teachers gave a high priority in traditional classrooms of English language. Candlin and Mercer (2001) state that one advantage of the IRF pattern is the fact that it can be used by language teachers

in order to check students' comprehension and students can receive immediate feedback from their teacher.

II.3.2. Language games in primary education

Corden (2000) claims that in EFL and ESL classrooms, children tend to use English language as a medium of interaction. In other words, children use English in order to socialize and interact with one-another and with the teacher. In primary education, scholars suggest that teachers should create a playful context so that learners can profit from talking opportunities. Also, this context results in an enjoyable and stress-free climate in the classroom. According to Vygotsky (1978) *"the context of play creates zones of proximal development of the child"*. He further claims that children's behavior tends to change to a positive way in cases when teachers create e playful context.

The term "play" in the classroom context is hard to define, since it has a broad sense and is a very complex phenomenon. Wood and Attfield (1996) have used this term in order to describe various types of activities, in which children and adults are involved, but *"not all of which are conductive to learning"*. They name some type of play as "trivial" which means that can somehow be considered as pointless, while they characterize others as highly serious and purposeful. They further claim that if language games are creative in nature, learners will be highly motivated to take part in the lesson, therefore enhancing their learning. On the other hand, if they are not creative, learners will perceive them as meaningless and futile.

As for the context of language learning, games have been defined as *"activities governed by rules, which set up clearly defined goals ... the achievement of these goals signals the end of the game"* (Brumfit et al., 1991). Langran and Purcell (1994) define a language game as *"a tool to create a situation in the classroom which provides learners with opportunities for using the target language they have already learnt in a stress-free environment, with the maximum possible free expression in order to carry out a simple task, solve a problem or communicate a piece of information"*.

Language games refer to movement or memory games, in which children work collaboratively with one-another, being guided and supported by their teacher. The

teacher here guides learners to use English language as a mediation tool in order to reach the clear and purposeful goals assigned prior the lesson.

III. METHODOLOGY

The methodology applied for the preparation of this paper is a mixed one, so there has been employed a qualitative and a quantitative methodology.

III.1. Qualitative research methodology

Bhandari (2020) defines a qualitative research as one involving *"collecting and analyzing non-numerical data (text, video, or audio) in order to understand concepts, opinions, or experiences"*. A qualitative research is usually employed for gathering in-depth insights about a specific problem or for generating new ideas for other research papers. Since our topic is mostly connected to foreign language teaching/learning, as a thesis related to education, we decided to use this approach during most of the preparation of paper. Bhandari (2020) refers to the quantitative methodology as *"a set of strategies, techniques and assumptions used to study psychological, social and economic processes through the exploration of numeric patterns"*. Quantitative methodology is considered as the dominant research framework in social sciences. By employing this methodology, researchers usually gather a range of numeric data. In this paper, we have employed this methodology to present results of the questionnaires conducted in graphics or charts.

III.2. Methods for data collection

Each researcher can use different qualitative methods of data collection. Gill et al. (2008) presents the methods:

1- *Observations.* The researcher records what has been seen, heard, or encountered, and then presents them in a detailed manner.

2- *Interviews.* The researcher conducts one-on-one conversations by asking questions to the participants and records the data. Then, the data are analyzed in a detailed descriptive way.

3- *Focus groups.* The researcher asks questions to a specific group of people in order to generate a discussion for the problem raise in the paper.

4- *Surveys.* The researcher distributes questionnaires to participants which can be chosen purposefully or occasionally and can be created by different types of questions.

5- *Secondary research.* The researcher collects existing data on the problem raised as texts, images, audio, video recordings, etc.

In this study, we have employed three types of qualitative data collection methods. First of all, we have employed the secondary research method for our data collection in the theoretical part of the paper. We have gathered sufficient data in forms of text for the presentation of the context and background of study. Many secondary sources have been read, analyzed and summarized for the presentation of the literature review on the issue raised. We have also used interviews and questionnaires as the best approach for gathering actual and real data on the thesis.

The chronological steps followed for the preparation of the first part of this paper are:

1. Searching for appropriate sources and literature available.
2. Collecting appropriate information on the issues rose.
3. Analyzing, summarizing and structuring the main data.
4. Presentation of the main information received.

III.3. Research instruments

As for the second part of this paper (the practical part) interviews and questionnaires were employed as a qualitative method in order to get current and actual data for the issue raised. Students were asked to complete a questionnaire, while the four teachers of English language were interviewed. Questionnaires are considered as one of the greatest tools available for gaining actual and real data.

As for types of interviews, Gill et al. (2008) presents three main types: structured, semi-structured and unstructured. Structured interviews are types of questionnaires which are verbally administered. In this type of interview a list of predetermined questions is prepared, and there can be no variation in them and *"there is no scope for follow-up questions to responses that warrant further elaboration"* (Gill et al, 2008). These interview as considered as quickly and easily administered questionnaires. On the other hand, an unstructured interview does not need any type of organization. It starts with a general question and the other questions are mostly based on the response given from the first one. A disadvantage of this type of interviews is the fact that they usually time-

consuming and in many occasions the researcher finds it difficult to get proper data. Gill et al. (2008) claims that this type of interview is mostly employed for issues of healthcare. Semi-structured interviews are based on some main questions which are totally based on the topic raised by the researcher. This type of interview helps the researcher to follow an idea of interest in a detailed manner. This is mostly the reason why we have decided to employ this kind of interview as a method for our data collection. The semi-structured interviews are totally flexible compared to the other above-mentioned types.

III.4. Research sample

As for the participants of the study, they were purposefully chosen. The teachers' interviews conducted included 5 questions all related to the literature presented in the first part of the paper and to the issues raised in the paper. The questionnaire included 7 questions related to students' views on the use of educational games.

The sample consisted of 24 individuals, from which 4 were teachers of English as a Foreign language in "Rexhep Elmaz" primary school, and the other were students of EFL in the same school. Students were all in the sixth (VI) grade. We have decided to keep a small sample since it would be easier to gather data on the context of our study.

IV. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

IV.1. Teachers' interview

An interview was conducted with teachers of EFL in "Rexhep Elmaz" school in the city of Gjilan in order to understand if these teachers use educational games in their classrooms, and to gain insights on their views toward the use of such games for the reasons we have outlined in the theoretical part of this paper: enhancing language proficiency, reducing stress in the classroom, increasing students' motivation, increasing the willingness to communicate in English, and enhancing classroom interaction.

IV.1.1. Demographic data

There were four teachers interviewed for this study, from which three were female and one was a male (Chart 1). The four teachers had significant experience as a teacher of EFL (Chart 2). The first teacher had 22 years of experience, the second 13, the third 15 and the fourth had almost 11 years of experience in this profession. They will be referred to as T1, T2, T3, and T4 in order to maintain their anonymity. Teachers were willing to participate in the study and they answered the questions with pleasure.
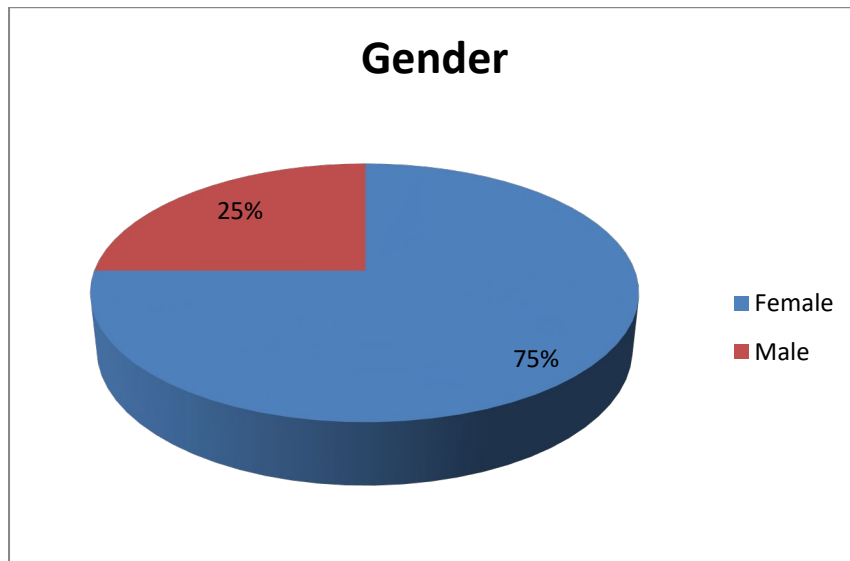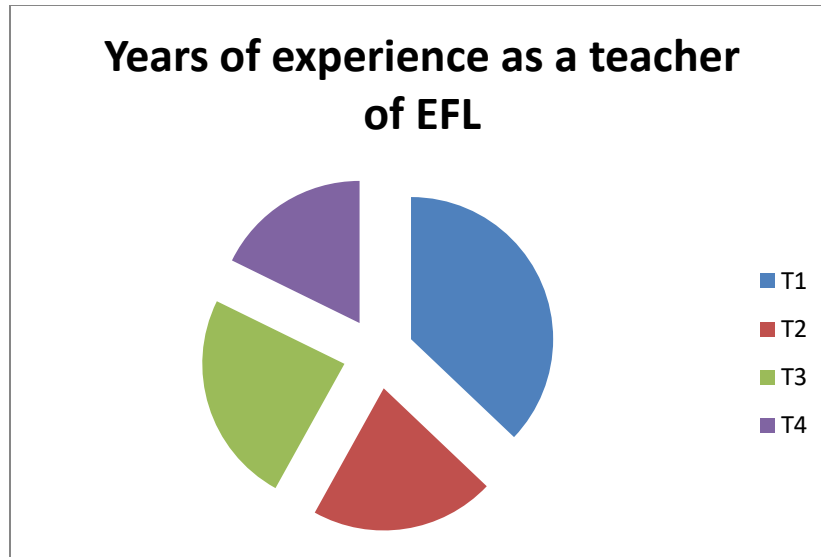

Chart 1, Teachers' gender

Chart 2, Teachers' years of experience as an EFL teacher

IV.1.2. Interviews' analysis

The first question of the interview (Do you use educational games in each classroom you teach?) aimed at getting data on whether teachers use educational games in their classrooms on different levels of proficiency. All four teachers stated that they use educational games in their classroom, even though two of them stated that they use them only during specific classes. They did not teach only in the sixth grade, but also in upper grades. T3 stated that: "I tend to use educational games in all the grades I teach, but I use them the most in the ninth grade, since students are more mature and take the games more seriously". This goes in the same line with Wickens's (1974) idea that educational games should not be used with young students, since they have the tendency to become more inattentive to the lesson process.

However, on the other hand, T1 states that: "I use educational games a lot during my classes, especially with younger students since it makes it easier for them to learn English, and they need games more since they are little children". This goes in the same line with Vernon and Blake's (1993) idea that educational games benefit young students since they increase class attendance and improve students' mood, to a broader account than using traditional methods of both teaching and learning. Despite teachers' different view on the use of educational games in the classroom, we might say that they are supportive to them.

Hadfield (1990) claimed that educational games in the EFL classroom Help students enhance their language proficiency. Therefore, the second question of the interview (Do you think the use of educational games help students on enhancing their language proficiency?) aimed at exploring teachers' view on this matter. From the teachers' answers we can understand that they are supportive of this idea. T1 stated that: "I totally believe that it does. I have proven it myself. When we play such games in the classroom, students tend to have better results in the tests because they practice their knowledge through these games." We might also conclude here that educational games help students improve their academic achievements. T2 thought that educational games help students enhance language proficiency and language skills. She stated that: "Yes, for certain. I have noticed that it also help students enhance their language skills. For example, when we play such games in reading classes, through the game they come to a better understanding of the passage they just read".

T3 states that she uses such games for grammar explanation also, and students were able to practice grammar rules while being involved in the game. T3: "Yes, educational games do enhance students' language proficiency. I use them during grammar classes and students practice the rules better when being involved in these games." This again goes in the same line with Hadfield (1990) who further claims that educational games provide concentrated practice as a traditional drill. T4 only admitted that these games enhance students' language proficiency.

The third question of the interview (Do you think the use of educational games help your students reduce their stress in the classroom?) aimed at understanding teachers' views on the use of educational games for the reduction of students' stress in the classroom. It is certain that the process of acquiring a new language is a stressful process, especially for beginners. Schultz (1988) studied on this matter and claimed that the process of acquiring a foreign language is time consuming and stress provoking.

From teachers' answers, we understand that only two of the teachers thought that educational games reduce students' stress in the classroom. T3 stated that: "I don't think

that students are stresses in the classroom. They are too little to have stress. They just need such games to remove monotony for some time."; while T1 stated that: "I don't think they are connected to one-another. Educational games are still educational, so they are based on the lesson". As for T2 and T4, they were certain that educational games help students reduce their stress. T2 stated that: "Yes. I have noted that students tend to be more happy and calm during these games. It seems like they need some of these games. T4 also stated: "Yes, my students are less stressed about the lesson when we include educational games."

It seems that two of the teachers do not agree to Schultz's view that students tend to suffer from high levels of stress in the classroom during cases when they face any unfamiliar or unknown grammatical structure, word, texts and so on. It is this unfamiliarity which makes them often feel uncomfortable and insecure during FL classes, which later also impacts their ability to learn of perform the tasks given by the teacher. Therefore, educational games are a great tool for learners to lower their anxiety level, start feeling comfortable in class, and be willing to learn more.

Educational games are closely related to students' motivation in the classroom, as scholars suggest. Therefore, with the fourth question of the questionnaire (Do you think students feel more motivated lo the learning process if you use educational games in the classroom?) we aimed at understanding teachers' views on this matter. From the teachers' answers we understand that three of the teachers maintain positive views on the matter, while T3 stated: "Well, the passive students still remain passive, since they think that if they fail in the game their peers will be mad, so they decide not to take part. So, they don't feel motivated. But the active one yes, they feel really motivated." Her views are contrary to that of Amato (1996) who states that, despite the fact that games are usually associated with fun, teachers should make sure that games to be included in the classroom, do not lack pedagogical values, particularly in the context of FLT, and also that educational games provide the right motivation for learners to be involved in the classroom's activities.

As for the other teachers, T1 stated that: "Yes, my students enjoy such games and they seem more motivated to be involved in the lesson."; T2: "Yes and this remains true for

cases where I see that my students get bored from the lesson. I include an educational game and they start to perceive the lesson differently, so they feel more motivated."; T4: "Yes, because it is our duty to make students feel motivated. If we include these games they will learn and more knowledge on the language means more motivation to participate in the lesson".

Yue and Zin (2009) claim that educational games have proven to teach skills like critical thinking, problem solving, sportsmanship, interaction and collaboration with peers to learners. Therefore, the last question of the interview aimed at gaining insights on teachers' view on this matter. From the teachers' answers, we notice that they all think that educational games enhance classroom interaction. T1 answered: "Yes because students have to interact with their peers or group members.", referring to learner-learner interaction. T2 answered: "Yes. Students interact with me and their friends in order to do better in the game and in the lesson.", referring to learner-learner interaction and learner/s-teacher interaction. T3 answered: "I guess it is the nature of the games that enhances classroom interaction. I mean, students have to interact with one-another for the purpose of the game". While T4 stated: "I might say that it is the greatest tool for improving classroom interaction. In traditional classrooms where there are no games, there is little interaction."

IV.2. Students' Questionnaire

The questionnaire was completed by 20 students in the VI grade, in "Rexhep Elmaz" primary school in the city of Gjilan. The main aim of the questionnaire was to conclude on students' views on the use of educational games during English classes. The data will be presented in charts and it will be decided on whether students' views go in the same line with what scholars have concluded on the matter.

The first question of the questionnaire aimed at understanding whether students' perception of the lesson change if they are involved in educational games in the classroom. From what we see from the students' answers (Chart 3), they perceive the lesson as more enjoyable when they are involved in educational games. Students' answers go in the same line with scholars views. We might mention here Corden's (2000) view that in primary education, teachers should create a playful context so that learners

can profit from talking opportunities, since this context results in an enjoyable and stress-free climate in the classroom. Decarrice (2001), who was mostly concerned with children with learning difficulties or children with special needs, claimed that when games are included, these learners tend to perceive the lesson as an exciting and enjoyable one. It seems that this remains the same also for other students.

Chart 3, Educational games and students' perceptions about the lesson

The second question of students' questionnaire dealt with the role of educational games for enhancing students' competition in the classroom. Most of the time, competition between students results in a greater level of motivation. As we might see from students' answers (Chart 4), they tend to like the competition nature that educational have in the classroom. We might recall here Ersoz's (2000) definition of educational games as a form of play concerning rules, competition, and an element of fun. He claimed that teachers of FL use games in their classroom due to the three features mentioned in the definition. Therefore, it is the rules of the games that make students compete with one-another in the classroom for better results.

I like to compete with my friends during educational games in English classes.

20%

80%

- Yes
- No

Chart 4, Educational games and competition between students in the classroom

The third question of the questionnaire aimed on understanding students' views on their participation in the educational games in the English classes. As we might see in chart 5, all students admitted that they like to participate in such games. This result goes in the same line with what Johnson (1995) suggests that educational games provide opportunities for an active participation in the classroom. As learner-centered activities, educational games help students be more active in the classroom.

I always like to participate in educational games in the English lesson.
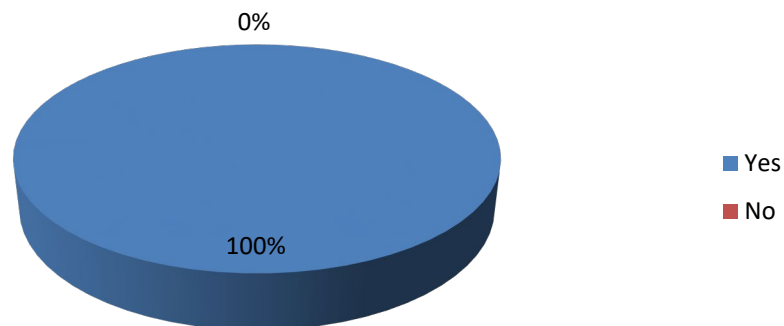
0%

100%

- Yes
- No

Chart 5, Educational games and students' active participation in the classroom

The fourth question of the questionnaire aimed at gaining data on the enhancement of students' level of proficiency through educational games in the classroom. From what we might see from students' answers (Chart 6), almost all students admitted that they learn more about the language through educational games, increasing so their level of proficiency. This result goes in the same line with what Gordon (2000) has stated on educational games and language proficiency. He claims that educational games help learners to revise or recall the previous acquired material in a foreign language classroom, which will help them do better in these games and in the overall course of the subject. He further claims that learners might also gain communicative competence and generate language proficiency and fluency thanks to educational games. By saying that they learn more English if they play educational games in the classroom, we mean that they increase their level of proficiency and perform better in English classrooms. Therefore, educational games serve as a tool of increasing language proficiency.
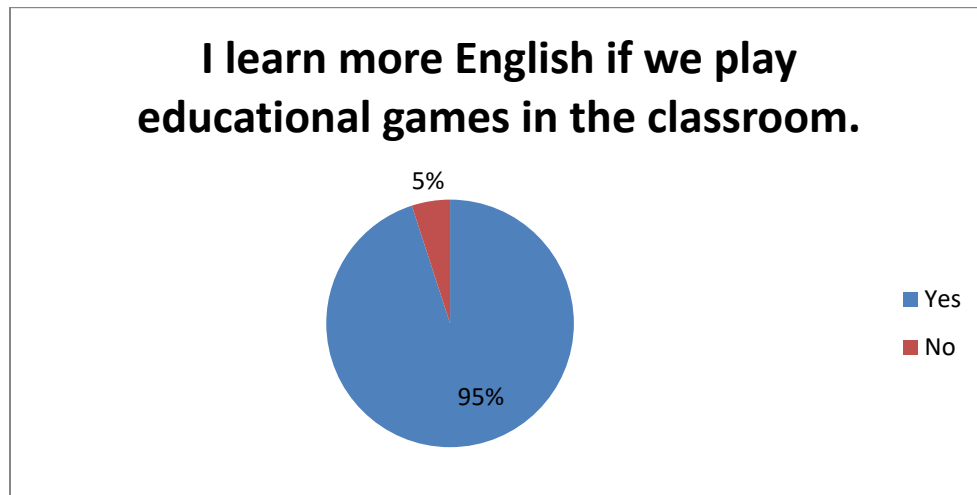

Chart 6, Educational games and students' level of proficiency

Question 5 of students' questionnaire was an indirect question. Our aim was to gain insights on students' level of stress during the incorporation of educational games in the English classroom. From what we might see from students' answers in chart 7, all students admitted to feeling calm and happy when they get involved in educational games in the English classroom. This means that educational games serve as a tool for reducing students' stress during the lesson. This result goes in line with many scholars' views on the relationship that exists between educational games and students' level of stress in the

classroom. We can mention here Amato's (1996) view on educational games, that they help on lowering learners' stress, and also provide them with the opportunity for building communication and interaction between one-another. Schultz (1988) also claims that through educational games, students can free themselves from worry and stress/

Another similar view is that of Langran and Purcell (1994), who refer specifically to language educational games, which is also the case here. They state that such games are a tool to create a situation in the classroom which provides learners with opportunities for using the target language they have already learnt in a stress-free environment, with the maximum possible free expression in order to carry out a simple task, solve a problem or communicate a piece of information.

I feel calm and happy when we play educational games in the English class.

0%

100%

Yes
No

Chart 7, Educational games and students' stress in the classroom

Many scholars have studied the interrelationship that exists between the use of educational games in the English classroom and classroom interaction. From what we see from students' answers on this matter (Chart 8), we see that the majority of the students consider educational games as a tool which help them interact with their friends and their teacher.
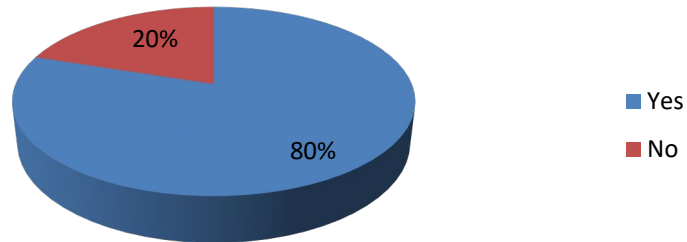
Chart 8, Educational games and classroom interaction

As for the last question of students' questionnaire, we aimed on getting data on the manner how educational games impact students' behavior in the classroom. From what we might see in chart 9, students' answer suggests that such games do impact students' behavior in a positive way. This goes in the same line with Vygotsky's (1978) views that go back many years ago. As he states, the context of play creates zones of proximal development of the child, which means that children's behavior tends to change to a positive way in cases when teachers create e playful context. This remains true for students in the sixth grade, since they are yet children in this moment.
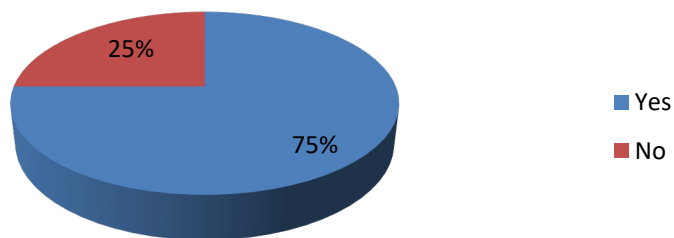

Chart 9, Educational games and students' behavior in the classroom

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

V.1. Conclusions

Educational games have been considered as a tool for teachers in all fields of education. They have been used in different educational context and environments, and as scholars have suggested, they have resulted efficient and effective for many different purposes. The main aim of our paper was to prove the hypothesis "Educational games help as a tool for students to enhance their learning abilities during the acquisition of English as a foreign language.". Through the case study conducted we took into account teachers and students' views on this matter.

Educational games help students enhance their learning proficiency. EFL teachers use educational games in order to explain any grammatical category or issues, and since children and young students enjoy the idea of play, they have the tendency to get involved in such games, and be active participants in the classroom. Therefore, they start acquiring more of the FL, resulting so in enhancing their language proficiency. Also, through educational games, students are more willing to communicate in the FL, because of the nature of such educational games. Thus, they start gaining fluency and proficiency in the FL. This fact was also confirmed from teachers and students' views presented in this paper.

In addition, educational games have resulted effective for reducing students' stress in the classroom. As we stated in this study, the process of acquiring a new language is stressful by its nature. Therefore, EFL teachers should incorporate various educational games in the classroom, in order for students to feel more comfortable and less stressed in the classroom. Also, since during such games there is no right or wrong answer, and the aim is language practice, students will not feel the anxiety of answering in a wrong way. Furthermore, being a learner-centered approach, the use of educational games in the classroom is far from the traditional methodology of teaching, which is believed to have been a methodology causing much stress to students. As participant students in the case study confirmed, they feel more calm and happy when teachers employ such games in the EFL classroom.

Motivation has always been considered as a crucial factor when it comes to foreign language learning. Most of the time, it is the duty of the teacher to make sure that students feel motivated to participate in the lesson. One way to do that is incorporating educational games during the lesson. It was proved from the case study, by both teachers and students that educational games help students feel more motivated in the classroom. This remains especially true for primary education environments, since children are more connected to play than adult ones.

Classroom interaction is also crucial when it comes to every educational context. Learners need to interact with one another, and with their teacher, in order to succeed in class. Classroom interaction is sometimes considered as the key of a successful educational environment. It was proven in this paper that educational games contribute to effective classroom interaction. In other words, students interact with one-another since the game expects them to work in pairs, groups or teams. In addition, they have to interact with their teacher in order to get instructions for the successful completion of the games, and also for getting feedback. As participant students and teachers in the study approved, educational games can help for more classroom interaction in the EFL environment.

V.2. Recommendations

The use of educational games in the EFL classroom, especially the digital ones, remains yet a topic to be further explored. Being an innovation approach to foreign language learning classes, there are not much studies on the issue. Therefore, scholars might deal with this new topic of interest, and develop case studies with larger champions. Also, we recommend scholars, students or other interested parties to conduct researches on EFL environments in which teachers use digital video games for language learning or for language acquisition, since in our timeframe and the context available, it was not a possibility.

As for EFL teachers, we would recommend that they start incorporating educational games during their English classes, at all levels of proficiency. Especially, teachers of primary education students should employ more of such games since children are more

closely related to play context, and they would acquire the foreign language better and faster.

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Appendix

TEACHERS' INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Gender:

Years experience of TEFL:

1- Do you use educational games in your classroom?
2- Do you think the use of educational games help students on enhancing their language proficiency?
3- Do you think the use of educational games help your students reduce their stress in the classroom?
4- Do you think students feel more motivated lo the learning process if you use educational games in the classroom?
5- Do you think educational games help for more classroom interaction?

STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

1. I think the English lesson sounds more fun if we play games.

■ YES   ■ NO

2. I like to compete with my friends during educational games in English classes.

■ YES   ■ NO

3. I always like to participate in educational games in the English lesson.

■ YES   ■ NO

4. I learn more English if we play educational games in the classroom.

■ YES   ■ NO

5. I feel calm and happy when we play educational games in the English class.

■ YES   ■ NO

6. I interact with my friends more if we use educational games in the English classroom.

■ YES   ■ NO

7. I behave better if we use educational games in the English classroom.

■ YES   ■ NO