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FACULTAD DE LENGUAS MODERNAS

**Facilitating Learning Basic Vocabulary Through Games: A case study in
the Primary School Juan C Bonilla**

**A thesis submitted to the School of Language for the Degree of
Licenciatura en Lenguas Modernas**

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November, 2014

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26 – November-2014

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank to all the people that contributed in the process of this project, special to Mtra. Ma. Guadalupe Salazar Blanco, whose advice encouraged me to make it better, thanks for being me teacher and me inspiration, I will never forget all your academic and personal support in my live.

To our thesis readers Mtra. Georgina Aguilar González and Mtra. Fátima Encinas Prudencio for their supervision and advice, thank you very much for being part of this project.

Thanks to all of you for you academic support and advice, and for giving me the opportunity to work with you, but specially for being part of me dream.

DEDICATION

El éxito está fundamentado en esfuerzo, inspiración, perseverancia y amor, pero sobre todo está basado en grandes personas que a pesar de las adversidades nunca se rindieron a lo largo del camino y pusieron su granito de arena para hacer este sueño en una hermosa realidad. Por esta razón, este triunfo es dedicado a aquellas personas que han dejado una huella imborrable en mi vida.

A Dios por darme fuerza para seguir adelante y continuar con este sueño que marca el principio de una nueva etapa en mi vida tanto personal como profesional.

A mi madre por ser mi más grande motivación en la vida, porque a pesar de todas las dificultades, siempre confío en mí firmemente y por ser un digno ejemplo de lucha, ánimo y valor constante ante la adversidad, gracias mamá por ser el motor de mi existencia y por darme la vida, a mi padre que aunque ya no esté conmigo sé que él estaría orgulloso de mí y me bendice desde donde está.

Griselda Jiménez Francisco.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction

It has long been known that vocabulary is a central component of a language and all language learners are aware of the fact that limitations in their vocabulary knowledge affect their communication skills. Communication breaks down when people do not know and do not use the right word and it stops when people lack the necessary words (Allen, 2008). Vocabulary learning is effective when plentiful opportunities to engage with the words and to put them to work in a variety of context (Thornbury 2002). That is, the teacher's responsibility does not only lie in helping learners meet some new words, but also in making sure that those new words are learned, stored, and recalled. The learner needs not only to learn a lot of words, but to remember them as well.

In a Mexican Context, in view of the fact that English is learned as a foreign language, it is not present in many of the students' social environments; thus, the school is quite often the only space where they have a chance to learn a language mainly through vocabulary acquisition. Teaching vocabulary in Public Elementary Schools in Puebla can be difficult because the teacher needs to be aware of what kind of vocabulary is the most appropriate for the level and type of learners in that specific classroom. Adding to this, vocabulary is the selection of teaching approach, methodology and different kinds of activities that teachers could use. Using games is relevant considering the significant role vocabulary has when learning a language. In most of public schools in Puebla, children are taking English classes, and it is the first time most of them have contact with a foreign language teaching. The point here is to increase their vocabulary by using games because for them it is easier to relate to the new words that they will learn. If the teacher only explains definition,

pronunciation, spelling and grammatical functions every day; it may become boring classroom activities. Students may think of vocabulary learning the basic meaning of new words, and they become overlook all other functions of the words. So, the teacher must change their teaching techniques and make learning enjoyable. For example, teaching vocabulary using games. However, it is central to assess the effectiveness of learning vocabulary using games in the classroom, and to find out how students' experiences help their learning, and what progress they gain at the end. Students feel more comfortable and interested in learning the subject of vocabulary, specifically, when teacher applies games as an effective means.

A definition of game is provided by Brumfit & Tongue (1991) who says that "Game in language teaching is an organized activity that usually has the following properties, a particular task or objective, a set of rules of competition between players and communication between players". It refers to an activity which involves certain rules to follow to accomplish a main objective. This game can be developed between two or more people or it can be possible in groups to do competition among them. Teachers can infer that games help students to create contexts in which the language is useful and meaningful, and also the teacher needs to ensure that learners are being exposed to the activities that they will learn and expand their vocabulary in useful ways. The activities for children are based on the theory that children acquire language by watching, listening, doing things and imitating. One way that children absorb information is by looking at things (Slattery 2004, cited in Diaz-Rico, 2008, p. 72)

1.2 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this paper is to explore and understand the usefulness of some popular games that students are already familiar in their own language. In addition, raise teacher's awareness about teaching vocabulary through games for children in a Public Elementary School of Puebla (without previous English classes) to facilitate the learning and avoid the drilling or repetition in isolation. This study will provide reflective information about the games in relation to children's performance. The following questions are the base for this study.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What is the students' reaction and attitude when learning English vocabulary through games?
2. How is children's interaction when playing vocabulary games in English class?
3. What are some of the most effective GAME activities to teach vocabulary?

1.4 Significance of the study

This research will provide information about useful games for teaching and learning English vocabulary in a Public Elementary Schools. These study outcomes could be shared with the rest of the teachers, and could be also useful to apply them for the rest of the curriculum subjects. This way of teaching helps to channel all the children's energy, curiosity and spontaneity; at the same time it facilitates the development of some skills to get better outcomes.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a brief overview of the theoretical framework considered in this study. It will discuss the main factors and the adequate activities that a teacher needs to consolidate when teaching English vocabulary in basic education. Such factors involve the developmental stages of children, the methodology, strategies to teach them; how to present vocabulary to children through effective and enjoyable games.

2.1 How children learn

The use of language is a complex system of knowledge which can be acquired easier than other in a very earlier level. A difference between children's facility in their mother tongue and the difficulty in learning the target language occurs when they enter school with proficiency in their mother tongue which is used as scaffolding, a natural foundation in the target language. The process for learning a foreign language is gradual and follows similar patterns as in the development of the first language acquisition.

Most of the theories about children's learning and cognitive development have been influenced by three psychologists: Piaget, Bruner and Vygotsky. According to Piaget (1964) "all children pass through a series of stages before they construct the ability to perceive and think in a concrete form". Children have specific periods during their childhood in which they develop the ability to think. Piaget's first stage is the "sensori-motor" stage, which lasts from birth to approximately 18 months. In this stage children learn through the exploration of activities such as touching, moving, grasping and tasting objects which gives direct contact with their new environment (Piaget, 1964). For example,

very young children take their favorite toy and put it into the mouth. In this way, children are learning about the environment.

Piaget's second stage is the concrete operational period, which lasts from 18 months to approximately 11 years. This stage is divided into two periods: pre-operational and operational. The pre-operational stage lasts until about the age of seven. During this stage, the child's thoughts emerge. During the operational (from the age of seven to eleven) stage, mental operations are established and consolidated (Piaget, 1964).

Piaget's last stage is the formal operations period, which lasts from the age of 11 until adulthood. In this stage, children have the ability to understand more complex concepts (Piaget, 1964). In sum, Piaget said that children develop their mental operations through actions.

On the other hand, Bruner (1996) said that children understand the world through contact with their environment, through actions and explorations; consequently, he identified three stages of cognitive development. Bruner's first stage is the "enactive stage" where children understand the world through direct contact with their environment (action). The next cognitive stage is "iconic". During this stage, children gain information through visual recognition, but they still need direct contact with objects. The last cognitive stage is the "symbolic stage", where children understand the world through a system of symbols. As a result of this, Bruner believes that children learn through social interaction.

Like Bruner, Vygotsky thought that social interaction is an important role during cognitive development. Children need a social environment to extract their concepts, ideas and mental abilities (Vygotsky, 1978). In other words, children need to have interaction with

adults. Vygotsky paid special attention to the role of adults in the cognitive development of children since adults have the function of a guide through the children's cognitive learning (Vygotsky, 1978). A second aspect of Vygotsky's theory is termed "Zone of Proximal Development". It is the idea that children's cognitive levels differ when they work alone from when they work with an adult. When a child works alone, his or her cognitive level is limited, yet with an adult, their cognitive level is optimal (Vygotsky, 1978).

Children are able to learn another language because they have different characteristics that make them very different as language learners; they have the ability to understand more complex concepts that help them to learn another language in an easy way in this case using games as a tool, also they are able to understand the meaning or connect it with their mother tongue.

2.1.1 Characteristics of children at Primary level

The way children learn a foreign language depends on their developmental stage. According to Flavell (1989, cited in Cole 1996, p.290) there are some characteristics in children between 10 to 11 years old. These characteristics are the following:

- Their basic concepts are formed. They have very decided views of the world.
- They can tell the difference between fact and fiction.
- They ask questions all the time.
- They are able to make some decisions about their own learning.
- They have definite views about what they like and don't like doing.

It is important that teachers know what the characteristics of children are in each age, they need to choose the most appropriate activity for this age, because it is not the same if the teacher does or applies an activity with children between six to seven years old. Another point is that children have all the basic elements in their mother tongue and they are able to use or connect this knowledge with another language, also children need opportunities to try out and experiment with language, but they also need feedback to confirm or modify their knowledge.

2.1.2 The role of age in the teaching-learning of English vocabulary

Age plays an important role in the learning of English since young children neither learns in the same way as adults, nor in the same way as older children because the psychological level changes according to the age. As Brown (1994) says “To successfully teach children a second language requires specific skills and invitations that differ from those that you would use for adult teaching”. Children do not understand grammar rules because these are abstract concepts, so these rules must be approached with caution (ibid). Children are centered in their immediate physical environment, so they need to learn through real objects in contrast to adults who understand abstract concepts (Brown, 1994). Another difference between adults and children is the attention spans. As Brown explains, the short attention spans come down only when you present stuff that is boring to them, useless or too difficult or that the real cause for children losing their attention quickly is because the activities are boring or inappropriate to their level. Teachers need to stimulate children’s senses more than with adults because children are just starting to know the world (Brown, 1994). For

this reason, it is important that children have contact with their environment through actions and explorations. Lessons with physical activity such as role play and games are necessary at this level because children are not verbal, so the immediate resource is the use of gestures, facial features and touching (Brown *ibid*). Furthermore, affective factors are another element that differentiates children from adults. Children are more sensitive because they are having their first experience with the society away from motherly protection, so it is necessary for the teacher to help develop their self-confidence (Brown, 1994). Authentic, meaningful language is a factor that must be included during the learning process since children need the teacher to present them with activities that are related to their environment, things with which the children are familiarized (Brown, *ibid*).

2.2 Learning and teaching vocabulary

Vocabulary learning is a memory task, but it also involves creative and personalize use, that is, learning and using (Thornbury 2002). Nation (1990) argues that meeting a word in a number of different environments will help learners grasp its full meaning. Moreover, it will help the learner realize what part of speech the word is, that is, if it is a noun or a verb, etc. Students need to practice regularly what they have learnt; otherwise, the material will fade away. This means that languages teachers' great responsibility is to create opportunities through which learners are exposed to the new items. Schmitt & McCarthy (2008) argues that the most effective way of improving incidental learning is by reinforcing it afterwards with intentional learning tasks.

Before starting to teach vocabulary, there are many points that must be considered. For example, the main sources of vocabulary, but besides this point, there is another concern, how teachers are going to present the new vocabulary to children. It is necessary to consider pre-planned aspects such as lesson plans, students' needs and so forth. Scott and Schmitt & McCarthy (2008) explain that good word instruction takes place in classrooms where lessons pay special attention to specific words and word-learning strategies, where learners are provided with ample opportunities to talk about words, and there are many occasions for applying the taught material into content-rich texts with motivating purposes.

As a teacher goes into the class, the teacher will realize that some of the points that were planned will work, but at times teachers may find some new "unprepared" items of vocabulary. These unprepared items are the result of the interaction and the use of the daily language in the classroom and that can be viewed without any problem.

According to Hatch and Brown (1995), vocabulary learning is divided in intentional learning and incidental learning. The first one is defined as being designed, planned for, or intended by teacher or students while the second one is defined as the type of learning that is the product of doing or learning something else. Besides, there is a ramification between intentional learning and incidental learning regarding vocabulary: receptive and productive vocabulary. However, there are some authors who say that the division is between "passive" and "active" vocabulary rather than between receptive and productive vocabulary (Hatch & Brown 1995). The ability of a person to actively produce their own speech and writing is called their active language knowledge. This is compared to their ability to understand the speech and writing of other people who have passive language knowledge.

On the other hand, Seal (1991) divides it into planned and unplanned activities. Unplanned vocabulary teaching happens when the students request the meaning of a vocabulary item during a lesson or when the teacher realizes that a word that just came up needs to be clarified. However, Seal (ibid) suggests a method that he calls the three C's to be used in such situations. In this process firstly, the teacher *conveys* the meaning, perhaps via mime, synonyms or an anecdote; secondly, the teacher *checks* if the meaning is understood, possibly by a series of questions, and thirdly the teacher *consolidates* the information by trying to get the students through the context or their personal experience. The teacher might approach the former or writing the word on the whiteboard, asking students to say the word or perhaps spelling the word. Certainly, no teacher would take much time away from the lesson without first deciding that the word was important and worth teaching. If the word is low frequency, it is better to give a brief definition. If it is worth teaching, Seal (1991) argues that it is worth carrying out all three steps.

As a conclusion, it is important to mention that the method of three C's can help in the students' vocabulary practice and help them to learn more vocabulary when they know about the use of the words not only to introduce vocabulary but to consolidate it.

2.3 Teaching children using appropriate methods

It can be said that that it is not the same to teach a foreign language in the same way to a child, a young or adult. Larsen and Long mention some methods than can be used for teaching young learners. For instance, the Total Physical Response (TPR) or Audio Lingual Method can be very useful, although it has some limitations in advanced level. In the

elementary level, these methods can create a high language competence in the students given that they are children.

It has been mentioned that children follow certain patterns in the learning process of the target language as in their mother tongue; for instance, the order of adjectives is different, because in Spanish adjectives are located before nouns opposite to English (la manzana roja/ the red apple). When the child makes errors in English he/she reflects the linguistic rules of his/her mother tongue. Certainly if a young child is exposed to more than one language before the age of puberty they will acquire all of them in acceptable way.

2.4 How to present vocabulary

According to Thornbury (2002), using translation has the advantage of being the most direct route to a word's meaning assuming that there is a close match between the target word and mother tongue. But it has one disadvantage the over using of translation in the vocabulary may affect the development of their independence of the target language lexicon. An alternative to translation is to somehow illustrate or demonstrate them. This can be done either by realia, it means using real objects, pictures or mime. If the teacher uses those techniques, s/he will be using the Direct Method, and rejecting the use of translation. Such approach is especially appropriate for teaching beginners. Another method that has been reclaimed by practitioners is the use of Total Physical Response (TPR). This method promotes initial immersion of comprehensible input. A TPR lesson typically involves the teacher demonstrating actions, using real objects and then getting the learners to perform the same or similar actions in response to commands for example: point to the apple. A

principle that can be applied for the perception of the vocabulary is “memorization”. This way child can form associations and catch up to the meaning and reflect it, but most of the time words frequently come up incidentally and the teacher will not have to use any visual aids. An alternative of conveying the meaning of a new word is simply to use other words verbal means or clarifying meaning include: give several examples of vocabulary providing synonyms, antonyms or giving the full definition. This procedure can be used in conjunction and in combination with visual means such as board drawings or mime. The advantages are that the learners are getting extra “free” listening practice and work a little harder to get the meaning of a word.

Another technique that can be used by the teachers is a situational presentation where the teacher will provide a scenario with contextualizing the target word or words. The teacher can also include reinforcing the presentation with pictures, drawings or gestures to make them memorable. The teacher can also tell them a story using or practicing one or two items of vocabulary and once again students will practice listening free.

2.5 Activities for teaching English vocabulary to children

Teaching young learners a particular group or group of words has been selected so the teacher has to think about what is going to be thought. There are some other concerns that should be taken into account for example: vocabulary relevant to children, having a basic group of words and classifying words that are difficult to remember.

According to Whitebread’s view (1996), he emphasized the meaningful presentation of vocabulary in situations and context where real objects, pictures and mime in presentation

are used. There are also some ideas that can help the teacher in the classroom when teaching vocabulary. For example, clapping to stress the word or dividing a word into syllables. Whitebread (ibid) suggests how to teach new vocabulary to children, some of them are games and activities really useful and children can enjoy them.

Using pictures: Using pictures are simple and easy ways to teach vocabulary, attractive to children, children will be fascinated with them if they are attractive, they are easy to find. We can make them simple, clear and visible. We can choose different colors as a background. We also have to remember the name of the object. It is a good idea to give the children some copies of it.

Murals: They are good means which can work as teaching material, especially if children make them themselves. The disadvantage is that it may take more than one class to finish it. They can be done about any topic: city, town, food and so forth.

Craft: By making or creating something is also a good way to teach vocabulary. They are authentic activities that involve children and of course teacher participation. It is found and easy to make some animals or other creative things, students will listen to instruction and will do the activity with interest.

Stories: It is a funny and a good technique for children to learn vocabulary. By using stories, teacher can have other sources to exemplify what s/he is saying, for example to use the whiteboard, drawing and pictures and even act some parts of the story. But, we also have to take something into considerations for example, do not make them so complicated, teacher can tell some parts by using other source (e.g. pictures) to keep children's attention

and probably teacher can continue with the story and many lessons. An effective way to review or assess is to ask students to tell the story among them and so forth.

Picture dictation: This is a simple activity; here children just listen to what is being said and then draw what teacher says. It is a good activity to improve listening and comprehension skills, and also it can work as a way to evaluate the pupil's understanding. Another point here is that the activity becomes harder and more difficult as students improve and get to other higher level.

Card games: "These are extremely versatile and can be used in many games" (Whitebread, 1996), and they can be used in a variety of activities. One good idea is to get to children to make their own cards and also it saves time to teacher.

Who has....? Activities: In this activity, students and teacher can make use of the set of cards done previously. It is a good way to recall some new items that have been taught for example to ask children who has a sweater. They will look for to their own card and look for the person who has it.

Show me activities: Ask to them to show some card with specific item for example show me a pair of shoes.

Bingo: It is also a good way to check the vocabulary children have learnt in the class or in the course, it is fun and it does not take too much time to be applied.

Memory: Almost all students are familiarized with this activity, if not, teacher can explain what this is about, and children can keep each pair they found by repeating the name of the object they have just found.

Grids: Something similar to Bingo, children listen to the objects and they place the correct card in the place it belongs.

Mnemonics: One of the ways of improving the learning of new words is by using mnemonics, which is the association of particular mental images, for example the image of a dog; children understand what the meaning of the image is. It has been suggested by Cohen and Apeh (1979, cited in Cohen, 1990, p.25) that using mnemonic is an effective way of vocabulary learning than simple rote memory. However, the use of mnemonics has been the subject of criticism. The main criticism to mnemonics is that the learners learn just one meaning of the target language word and to match only that meaning with its translation equivalent in the native language. For that reason, some educators suggest that learning target language words by association to a picture is better than to give the native language word translated (Cohen, 1990).

Flash cards: The use of flash cards is always a trusty means of learning vocabulary. Cohen (1990) describes how the flash cards are in the following way: the vocabulary words are prepared on small cards usually made out of sturdy paper or cardboard. On one side of the card the target word and possibly related forms are written and the other side a definition of the word is provided in the target language. On the other hand, Nation (1990) stresses that learning is more efficient if the target language word is associated with a word in the native language rather than a target language synonym or definition. The learner may also wish to include on the card a minimal amount of context in which the word was heard or read.

Games: The regular use of these activities into the classroom will help teachers to increase vocabulary in children and the development of the target language will improve too.

Therefore, these activities can be used by the teacher in the next grades having a successful lesson.

2.6 Definition and types of game

When children play, they interact, and during this interaction they learn and develop language skills. As Khan said “Games provide contexts for play, reasons for playing and routines for playing”. In fact, games are an important tool that teachers can use in the process of teaching and learning in young children because games make an interaction in which they can reproduce the language. However, it is important to take into account that not all games are suitable to use in the classroom since games need to have pedagogical content and a meaningful context for language development (Khan, 1991). As Khan said (ibid) “games are activities governed by rules which set up clearly defined goals”. This means that games should have a specific role or purpose in the children’s learning to help children to acquire language in a natural way; also they are motivated to learn because they are enjoying themselves.

Furthermore; there are different types of games. According to Cross (1995), the principal two main types of language games are control or accuracy focused games and communication or fluency focused games. In the first one, accuracy focused games “the principal aim is to score more points than others and there is often a clear winner” this kind of games focuses on comprehension (listening / reading) and production (speaking/writing). The second is fluency which focuses on games that are referring to move from language control to communication, these types of games tend to focus on developing fluency and

collaboration with others. These games are an important part of the communicative activity-based approaches and it is usually done in pairs or groups of four. As seen, these kinds of games focus on developing fluency and accuracy through games. Another author who classified language games types is Byrne (1986); his classification is: accuracy games can provide students language structures or vocabulary to be practiced or consolidate. Thus the role of the teacher will be mainly as guidance and monitor. Games can be played in team or the group divided in two. The kinds of games that can be played to develop accuracy are: *guessing games, simon says, true or false, elimination games, card games and memory games*. In fluency games, students must use the target language as requirement. These kinds of games are collaborative, they can be played in small groups or in pairs and the role of the teacher is a guide or monitor, the roles of students is mainly central. The kinds of games suggested by Byrne to develop fluency are: *describe and draw, find the difference and complete it*.

2.6.1 Reasons why games are important in the process of teaching English at the Primary school level.

There are many reasons why games are important at the primary level. The first is that games can help teachers to lead children toward a successful cognitive development because games are activities where intellectual development also implies physical development (Reilly & Ward, 1997). The second reason is that games can be an important tool as they provide variation in the English class. As a result of this fact, children find a stimulus to use the target language. This variation gives children a motivational factor to

hold their interest to learn a new language (Khan, 1991). He considers the third reason is that games encourage children to speak in the target language in a simple and natural way since the experiences children remember the most, are those which they enjoy most vividly. He discusses that games are not the only way in which children can learn English; they can also learn English as they learn their mother tongue in a natural way without stress or pressure. Games are strong tools for children's social development as well as language development because during a game, players need communication to take part, cooperate or argue in the game (ibid).

As a conclusion, games are useful to children because they enjoy the activities, but at the same time they also give them the tools to understand better the new language.

2.6.2 Moments in the class when the games can be used in the classroom.

Teachers can use games at the beginning of a class, in this case as a warm-up. It helps children to be in contact with the environment as well as games give students a clear idea about the topic in a fun way if the game is applied correctly (Khan, 1991). Another moment in the class when games can be used is at the end of the lesson as a review or an evaluation of the target teaching point (Khan, ibid). It means that the teacher can use a game where they involve the topic previously taught. For example, if the topic was about learning the names of fruits, the teacher could develop an activity where the students review vocabulary about fruits. Furthermore, games can also be used as a means of practice of the target teaching point of the class. The game must be designed in a way that children have to recall the vocabulary or subject that they are learning in the class (Khan, 1991).

Finally, games especially for children can be used as a means for controlling the class since children are very restless and need interesting activities in order to not get distracted in a class. Therefore, it might be appropriate to say that when children get out of control and bored the solution could be a game.

2.6.3 Different reasons to use games in class.

Teachers need to analyze which games are the most appropriate for their students and they also need to take into account what the objective or purpose of the game will be. According to Khan (1991), “children may wish to play games for fun; teachers, however, need more convincing reasons”. Some reasons to use games in class are: first, the teacher needs to check if all the children have the same level as they have skills and need to develop others. If games are of a difficult level which is too advanced, children do not understand them, and games could be self-defeating to the objective (Khan, 1991). Second, the teacher needs to take into account the way games are organized, specifically in pairs, in groups, in teams or may be with the whole class. It means that in some cases the children’s participation in pairs is more reliable because both participate in the activities; however, in groups the children’s participation is lesser. Third, the teacher must provide relevant activities which are appropriate to the current topic of study, since the goal of games is to provide a medium for children to learn something related to a second language development, and not only to waste a bit of time. Finally, games must be linked with the program’s framework of activities so that both work with a certain coherence to benefit the children’s learning (Khan, 1991).

As a conclusion the activities should be interesting and relevant as well as motivating for children to participate in the game.

2.6.4 Games as a tool to learn English at Primary level.

The years at primary school are important in children's intellectual, physical, emotional and social development. This is because children are in a stage where they learn by playing and also because they have social interaction. According to Philips (1995), "play is entirely misleading in the context of young children's learning, for much of the evidence suggests that play is when children do their real learning". For this reason, it is important that teachers take into account that play should be included in their programs in the teaching-learning process to very young children. As Philips (1995) mentioned, young learners respond to language according to what it does or what they can do with it, rather than treating it as an intellectual game or abstract system. It means that students respond to the activities and they do not worry about grammatical points; they just enjoy the activities that the teacher has prepared for them. For this reason, it is easy to maintain a high degree of motivation and to make the English class an enjoyable and stimulating experience for the children (Philips, 1995). There are activities that work well, such as games and songs with actions, Total Physical Response (TPR) activities and tasks that involve colouring, cutting and sticking, etc.

2.6.5 Using Total Physical Response (TPR) method in teaching English vocabulary at the primary level.

In a mixed method, the TPR is significant. According to Asher (cited in Larsen-Freeman, 1986), TPR is based on the premise that the human brain has a biological program for acquiring any natural language on earth including the sign language of the deaf. The process is visible when we observe how infants internalize their first language. It is similar to the way that children learn their native language. Communication between parents and their children combines both verbal and physical aspects. The child responds physically to the speech of their parents. The responses of the child are in turn positively reinforced by the speech of the parents. With TPR the language teacher tries to mimic this process or use commands in class, for example: “Stand up”, “Sit down”, “Turn around”, “Stop”, “Walk”, “Jump”. It is important that the teacher represents these commands in front of the students because it is easier for them to understand the meaning of the word. . For example, if a teacher chooses 4 volunteers and he/she said: “Stand up”, they stand up and the four volunteers to rise with her. They all stand up. “Sit down”, she says and they all sit. The teacher and the students stand up and sit down together several times according to the teacher’s command; the students say nothing (Larsen-Freeman, 1986). Equally important is the fact that she or he gives the students commands they have not heard before. As a conclusion, students can learn by observing actions as well as by performing the actions themselves; some commands can be fun for the students but at the same time they enjoy learning another language. This means the language learning is more effective when it is a fun activity.

To sum up, I want to say that the literature I rewired for this chapter provided me theoretical bases to explore and understand that the application of these games for teaching English vocabulary could be an excellent tool. Children have a lot of energy, creativity, enthusiasm, interest to learn but the most important is that they have the predisposition to do anything without felling ridiculous in front their classmates. As mention before, children love to act, sing, mimic, imitate, dance, make gesture, jump etc. These characteristics are included in the learning process of the children at the same time this makes to be fun in the process. In fact, it is important for the children to learn in a fun way, because they are in that stage where they prefer to play but at the same time they learn through games and the help of teachers, the class is not monotonous. Hence, teachers need to take into consideration that most of the time children want to discover new things and they are always active learners. So it is a good option to teach English with games.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides information about the methodology used in order to carry out this case study where mixed method approach was used. First, I describe the participants' characteristics such as age, gender, number of participants and language level. Second, I describe the instruments used in order to collect the data. The final section offers a clear explanation about the procedures followed to collect the information required for this investigation whereas the final results of this study are shown in Chapter 4.

3.1 Subjects

The study was carried out in the public elementary school “Juan Crisostomo Bonilla” in Puebla, with 4th grade elementary school children. Their ages ranged from ten to eleven years old at the time of the study. The size of the group was 32 students, out of which 20 were boys and 12 were girls.

3.2 Research Instruments

The instruments used in this research were developed to show the helpfulness of using successful games for teaching English to elementary children. For this research, the information was collected from 6 well-liked games applied to the participants; each game was described in a different lesson plan.

A second instrument was a checklist to assess the process of children development through games. These instruments were described as follows.

3.2.1 Lesson Plans

There were 6 lesson plans presented in the following stages: warm-up, lead-in, elicitation, accurate reproduction and immediate creativity, developed through language games. Language games were applied and were adapted and some games were taken from Spanish and applied in English (these lesson plans can be seen in appendixes one to six). The materials used in this research were flashcards, memory game, picture cards and bingo cards, as tools to present new vocabulary, a list of these materials were included in each lesson plan.

3.2.2 Checklist

The lesson plans were evaluated with a checklist of language game. The language game checklist was adapted from Herrera 2005(cited in Liliana Paredes 2007) in order to fulfill how teaching English through games is performed. This formative evaluation checklist was divided into four sections: participation, interaction, discipline and game objectives, measured by grade scale with the next options: 1, 2, 3 to obtain the information of how useful games are, if it works or not and if it accomplishes the objective, if they participate in the games, if there are interaction among themselves during the game and the discipline showed during the game.

3.3 Procedure

First of all, the lesson plans were applied to thirty-two students, so these lessons were divided in: warm-up, lead-in, elicitation, accurate reproduction and immediate creativity. Throughout each lesson the games process was evaluated with the checklist previously described. Then all information was classified, the data was processed and analyzed into excel. Thus, results will be presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

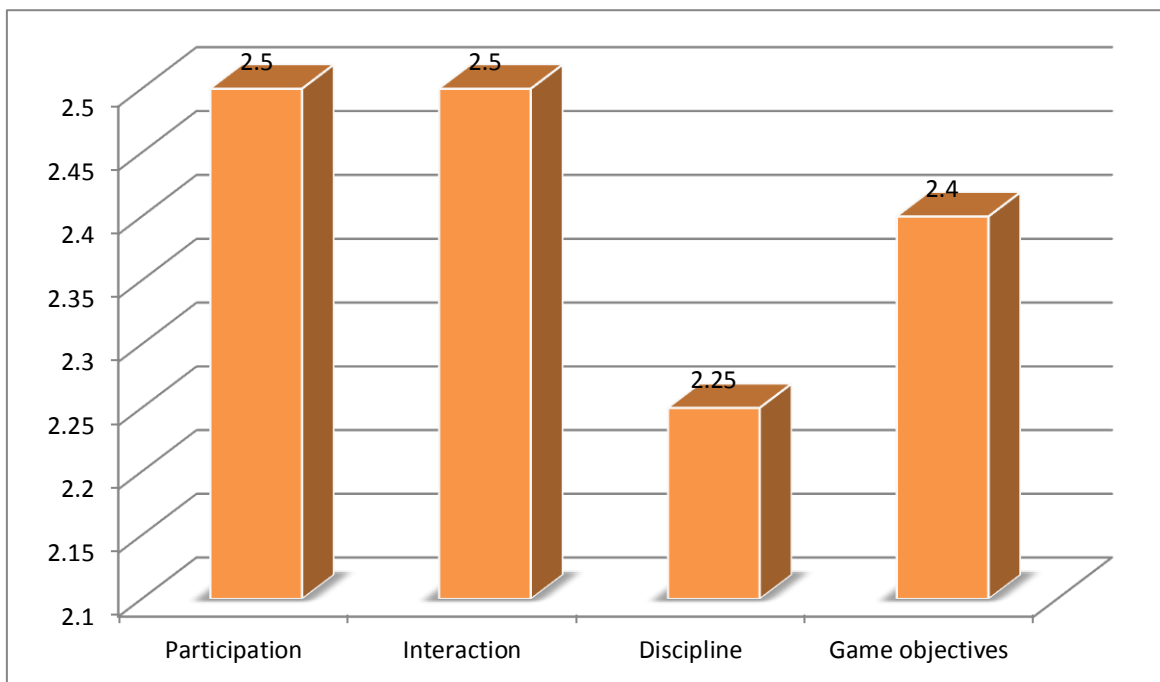
In this chapter, the results of the games administered to students of Unidad Educativa Juan Crisostomo Bonilla are presented and explained. Specific conclusions are drawn and classified at the end of each language lesson game from the collected data at the end of each class. Thus, the results obtained are presented according to each given lesson plan. The results are developed in two sections: the first one is the description of the classes presented, whereas the second is a graph that shows the results obtained from it.

4.1 Lesson one: Alphabet race game.

In the first lesson, the objective is that students would be able to identify the letters of the alphabet in English. The class started when the teacher asked the students what words in English they know, this was a diagnosis and warm up activity. Then, the teacher introduced the alphabet using a popular song (abc... and so forth) singing along with students. After this, the teacher chose one student and asked him to start the alphabet and then everybody repeated the alphabet twice. As accurate reproduction was a game called "Alphabet race". This consisted in dividing the class into two teams and she numbered the children in each team and explained that this was the order in which they should come to the board. The objective of the game were for each team to write a word on the board for each letter of the alphabet in order as fast as they can and the teams were not allowed to write the same words for any letter. It means if one team has already written the word apple for A, then the other team must think of another word, e.g., animal. If student representing his team cannot think of a word for a letter, writes 'Pass'.

Teacher started the game by saying team number one or two. Are you ready? Go! And the game finishes as soon as one team member gets to the end of the alphabet. (See Appendix 1) The game was presented to thirty-two students. Furthermore, at the end of the class the game was analyzed with the observation sheet and the points were evaluated: participation, interaction, discipline, and game objectives. The major value is 3= yes, which determines that the game's goal was reached successfully, 2= a little result was obtained and 1= a negative result. Thus, the results obtained for the first game was participation and interaction that gave a 2.5; in discipline with 2.25 and game objectives which obtained 2.4. Figure 1 shows these results.

Figure 1: Alphabet race game



As the figure shows, the highest score was 2.5 in the aspect of participation and interaction, so it reflects that children were interested in the topic or students provided a good development of it and shows a productive manner of work. This supports the efficiency of

working with games when children play, interact. During this interaction, students learn not only letters, but also they develop language and social skills. In the case of the game objectives, it shows 2.4 means that children enjoyed the game because they were jumping all the time. As Khan said “Games provide contexts, reasons, and routines for playing”. In fact, games are an important tool in the process of teaching and learning for young children, in which they can reproduce and practice the language. Discipline shows 2.25 which mean that the teacher can work with games in children classes because before starting the game we (both students and teacher) established the rules and some of them respect them.

4.2 Lesson two: Abracadabra

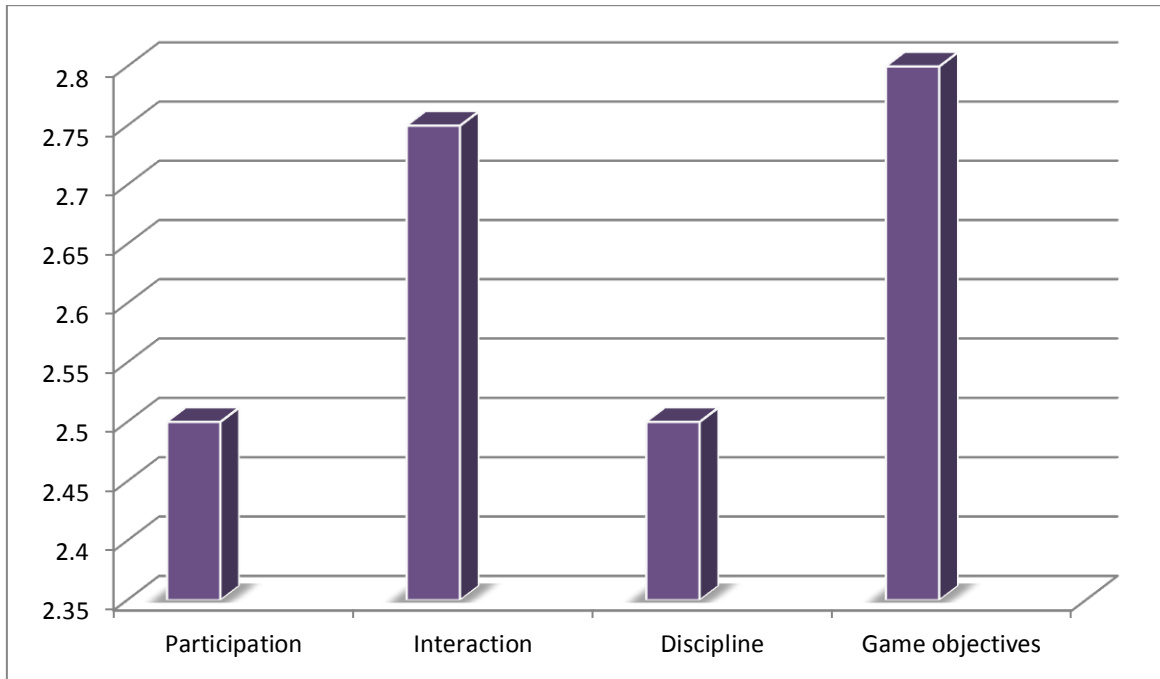
In the second lesson, the objective is that students would be able to recognize the names of the animals in English. The class started with an activity in which the students had to spell some words that the teacher indicate, the activity was as a warm-up, then the teacher introduced the topic using different sounds of animals and using the question what animal is it? And Is a...?. The next step was that the teacher organized teams and she gave pictures of different animals and they practiced using the question what animal is? This activity was as elicitation. As accurate reproduction the students played the game “Abracadabra” in this game the teacher is a witch and she mentioned some animals using the magic words for example: Abracadabra! Listen to me!

You're a.... (frog/cat/duck)!

One! Two! Three!

And the students had to mime the animal for example if the teacher said frog, the students had to jump as a frog etc. this game was usefully because the students could recognize the different animals. As a final activity, the teacher gave a photocopy in where they had to put in order the name of the animals (See Appendix 2). The game was presented to thirty-two students. Furthermore, at the end of the class the game was analyzed with the observation sheet and the points evaluated were: participation, interaction, discipline and game objectives. The major value is 3= yes, which determines that the game's goal was reached successfully, 2= a little result was obtained and 1= a negative result. Thus, the results obtained for this game was participation and discipline that obtained 2.5; interaction with 2.75 and game objective which obtained 2.8. Figure 2 shows these results.

Figure 2: Abracadabra game

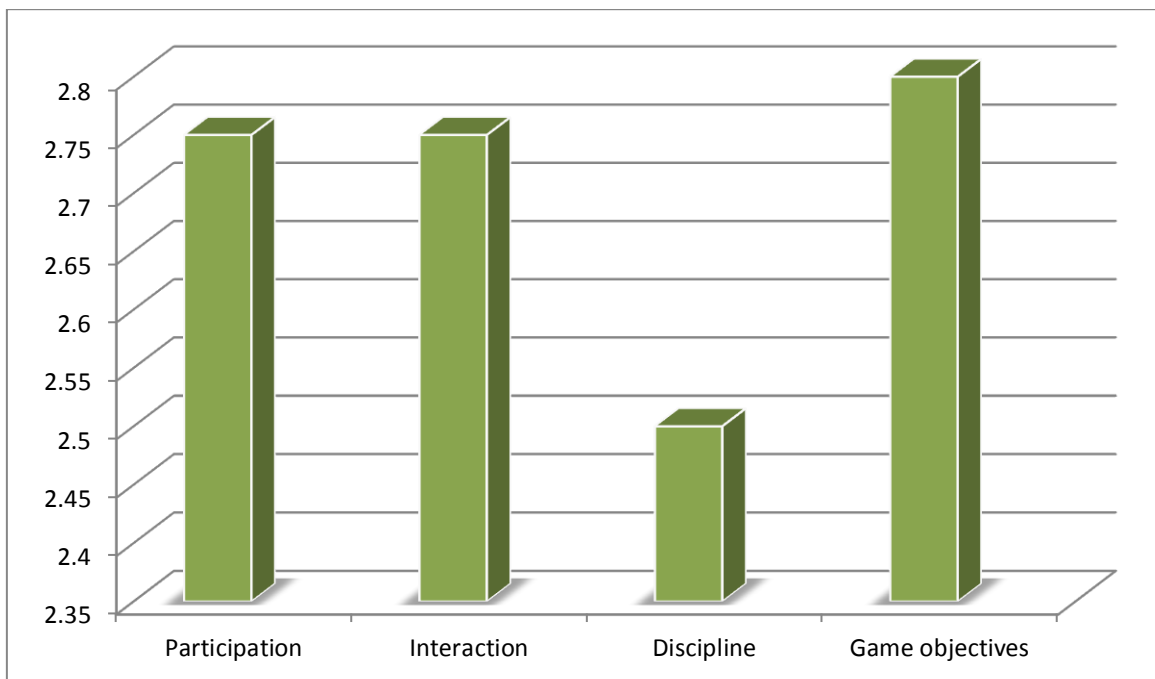


As the figure shows, the score was 2.5 in participation and discipline, so it reflects that the children were interested in the topic but the discipline was a little disruptive, in this case the teacher has to explain the rules and the possible punishment if they interrupt the game. As Khan said (1991) “games are activities governed by rules which set up clearly defined goals”. This means that games should have a specific role or purpose in the children’s learning to help children to acquire language in a natural way; also they are motivated to learn because they are enjoying themselves. The interaction shows 2.75 it means that the students enjoyed mime different animals and in the case of the game objectives; it shows 2.8 mean that the children enjoyed the game.

4.3 Lesson three: Simon says

In the third lesson, the objective is that students would be able to recognize the parts of the body in English. The class started with a warm-up using the sounds of different animals and they had to identify what animal was. As lead-in the teacher introduced the topic parts of the body using flashcards, as elicitation teacher chose a student and asked to identify some parts of the body. After, teacher used a game as accurate reproduction. The game was “Simon says”, the objective of it was that students had to touch the part of the body that the teacher said, for example “Simon says, touch your nose” and everybody touches their nose. This game was useful because the students learned the parts of the body in English and also they could identify the parts of the body. As a finally activity the teacher gave a photocopy where students had to match the image with the correct name (See Appendix 3). The game was presented to thirty-two students. Furthermore, at the end of the class the game was analyzed with the observation sheet and the points evaluated were: participation, interaction, discipline and game objectives. The major value is 3= yes, which determines that the game’s goal was reached successfully, 2= a little result was obtained and 1= a negative result. Thus, the results obtained for this game was participation and interaction that had 2.75; discipline with 2.5 and game objective which obtained 2.8. Figure 3 shows these results.

Figure 3: Simon says



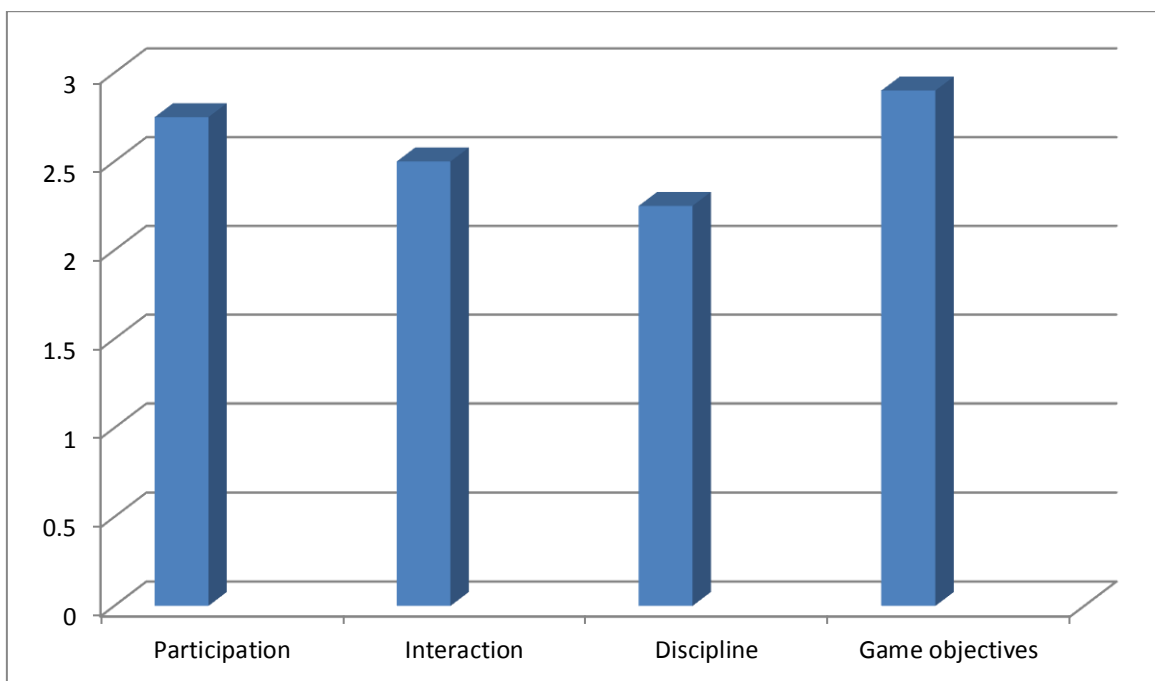
As the figure shows, the highest score was 2.8 in the game objective, so it reflects that children liked the game because if one student touched another part of the body they started to laugh or it can be said that children love performing action or playing at the same time that they are learning. It means that games are useful tools for teachers to lead children toward a successful cognitive development, because games are activities where intellectual development also implies physical development (Reilly & Ward, 1997). Another reason is that games can be important resources as they provide variation in the English class. As a result of this fact, children find a stimulus to use the target language. In the case of participation and interaction that had 2.75, these reflect that children were interested in the topic and showed a productive manner of work. Discipline shows 2.5 that means that the teacher can work with games in children's classes because the rules were established at the

beginning; in this case, the rules are part of the routines. Routines are established patterns of behavior in which everyone knows what is expected of them and what they should do.

4.4 Lesson four: Bingo clothes

In the fourth lesson, the objective is that students would be able to describe the clothes that they wear. The class started with a warm-up, the teacher asked some students to identify some parts of the body, the teacher introduced the topic showing images of clothes and she started to mention; I wear black shoes and then the teacher organized an activity in chain drill giving an image of clothes and they used “I wear” plus the image that they had, this was elicitation. As accurate reproduction, students in pairs, described how they were dressed, then they played bingo clothes, the objective of the game was that students identified the name of clothes in English. In the last activity, the teacher gave photocopies where students had to match the name with the correct image (See Appendix 4). The game was presented to thirty-two students. Furthermore, at the end of the class the game was analyzed with the observation sheet and the points evaluated were: participation, interaction, discipline, and game objective. The major value is 3= yes, which determines that the game’s goal was reached successfully, 2= a little result was obtained and 1= a negative result. Thus, the results obtained for this game was participation 2.75, interaction that had 2.50; discipline with 2.25 and game objective which obtained 2.9. Figure 4 shows these results.

Figure 4: Bingo clothes



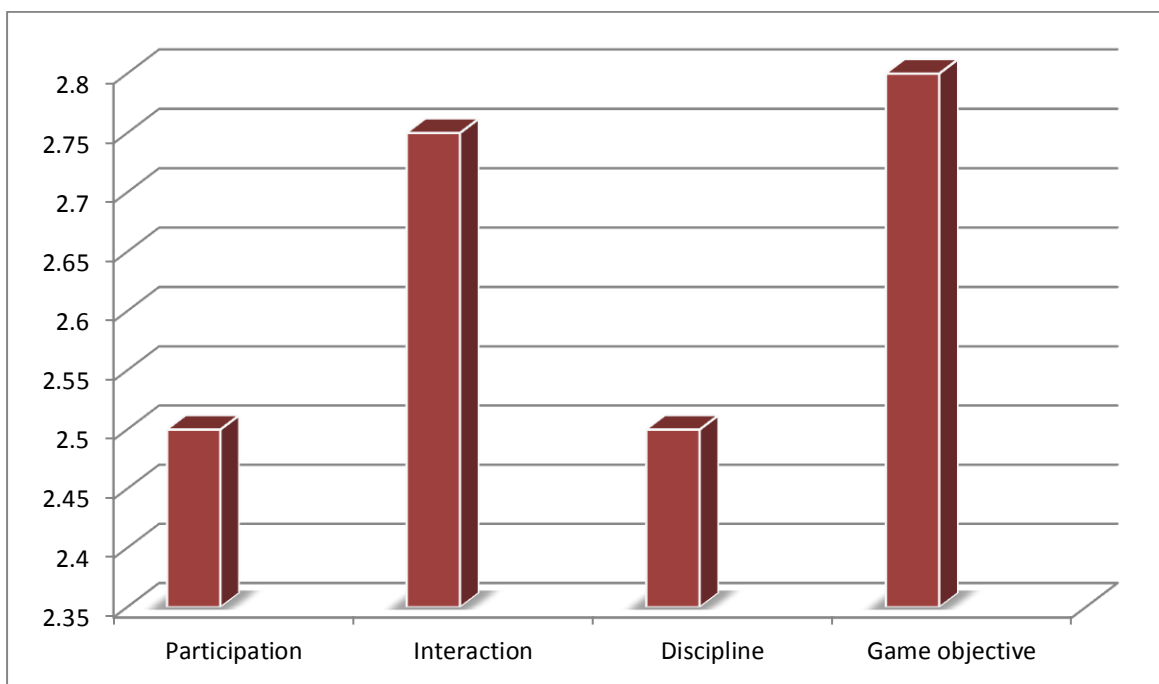
As the figure shows, the highest score was game objective that had 2.9, so it reflects that children liked the game because there was a competition among partners and they were motivated to win. According to Cross (1995), this kind of game is called accuracy games “the principal aim is to score more points than others and there is often a clear winner”. This kind of game focuses on comprehension (listening / reading) and production (speaking/writing). In the case of participation that had 2.75, it reflects that children were interested in the topic; interaction had 2.5 and shows a productive manner of work. Discipline shows 2.5 which means that the teacher can work with games in children classes.

4.5 Lesson five: Fruit salad

In the fifth lesson, the objective is that students would be able to use *how many* to find out the existence of objects. The class started with a warm-up from last class review, where teacher had to choose and asked one student to describe their classmates what he/she was wearing. The teacher introduced the topic showing images of fruits and asking: how many apples are there in the bowl? This was as lead-in. As elicitation, teacher organized teams and gave images of fruits and students had to ask for example: how many oranges are there in the bowl? And answering there are 3 oranges in the bowl. Then, students played “Fruit salad” the objective of the game was that students identified the name of the fruits in English and this consisted in arranging the chairs in a circle and asking the children to sit down and the teacher made sure that there were no spare chairs. Then, the teacher stood in the middle of the circle and assigned a fruit to each child that was going round the circle, for example: Apple, Banana, Strawberry, Peach/ Apple, Banana, Strawberry, Peach and then the teacher got the children to join in repeating the words. After this, the teacher checked that children knew the fruit they had been assigned before, then teacher explained and demonstrated that when the teacher said for example: Strawberries! All the children assigned that word should immediately change chairs. When the teacher said Fruit salad! Everyone should change chairs. The teacher sat on one of the chairs in the circle and the child who did not have a chair then took over as leader and the game started again. The game was an accurate reproduction. As a final activity students had to complete the questions using how many and the name of the fruits, this was immediate creativity (See Appendix 5). The game was presented to thirty-two students. Furthermore, at the end of the class the game was analyzed with the observation sheet and the points evaluated were:

participation, interaction, discipline, and game objective. The major value is 3= yes, which determines that the game's goal was reached successfully, 2= a little result was obtained and 1= a negative result. Thus, the results obtained for this game was participation and discipline that had 2.5; interaction with 2.75 and game objective which obtained 2.8. Figure 5 shows these results.

Figure 5: Fruit salad



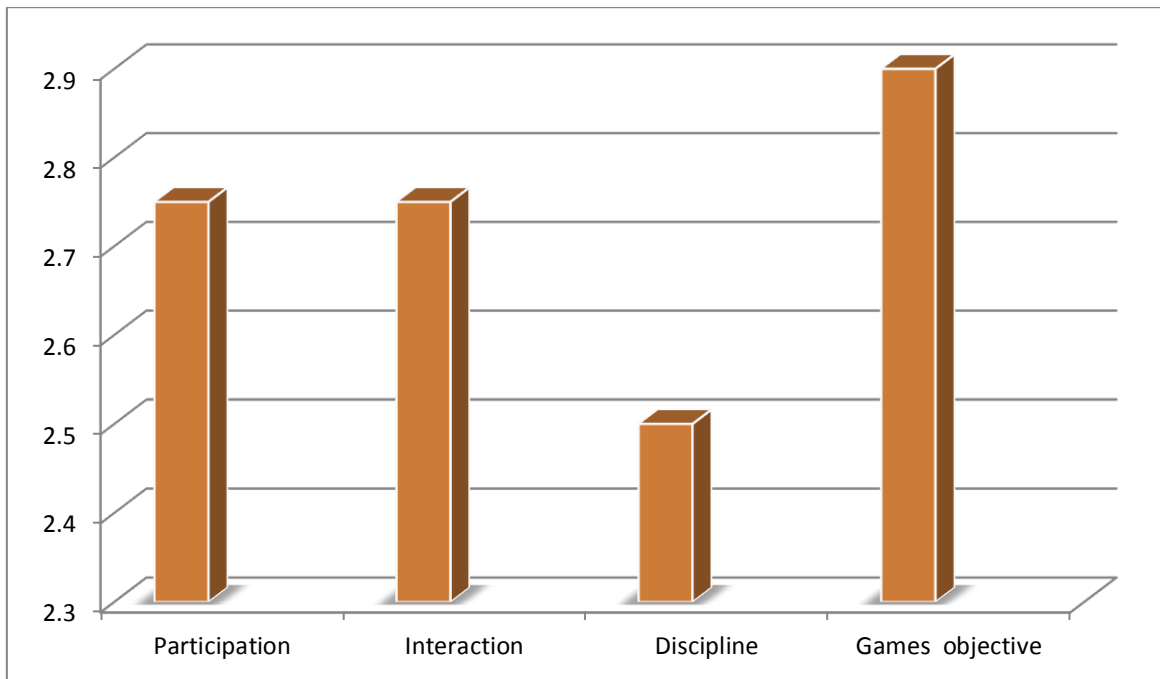
As the figure shows, the highest score was game objective that had 2.8, so it reflects that children liked the game because they were competitive between classmates and they were motivated to win. As Philips (1995) mentioned, young learners respond to language according to what it does or what they can do with it, rather than treating it as an intellectual game or abstract system. It means that students respond to the activities and they do not worry about grammatical points; they just enjoy the activities that the teacher has prepared for them. For this reason, it is easy to maintain a high degree of motivation

and to make the English class an enjoyable and stimulating experience for the children. In the case of participation and discipline that had 2.5, so it reflects that children were interested in the topic, interaction had 2.75 and shows a productive manner of work.

4.6 Lesson six: Memory game

In the last lesson, the objective is that students would be able to describe their routines in a normal day. The class started when the teacher chose one student and asked what he/she was wearing; this activity was as a warm-up. As lead-in the teacher introduced the topic saying what activities she does during the day and showing images of each activity and then the teacher asked one student what he did in the morning. After this, the teacher organized pairs and asked the students to express what they do in the morning, afternoon and night, using the question what did you do in the...? This activity was the elicitation. As accurate reproduction, students played “memory game”, the teacher stuck the image of the different activities on the board and organized 2 teams. The game started with team 1 and one student passed in front to choose one image and needed to find another one, if he/she found the correct image, he/she had to say for example: I take a shower in the morning, it depended of the image and the team; one of them won one point, and the game started with team 2 and one student was chosen, then the game started again (See Appendix 6). The game was presented to thirty-two students. Furthermore, at the end of the class the game was analyzed with the observation sheet and the points evaluated were: participation, interaction, discipline and game. The major value is 3= yes, which determines that the game’s goal was reached successfully, 2= a little result was obtained and 1= a negative result. Thus, the results obtained for this game objective was participation and interaction that had 2.75; discipline with 2.5 and the game which obtained 2.9. Figure 6 shows these results.

Figure 6: Memory game

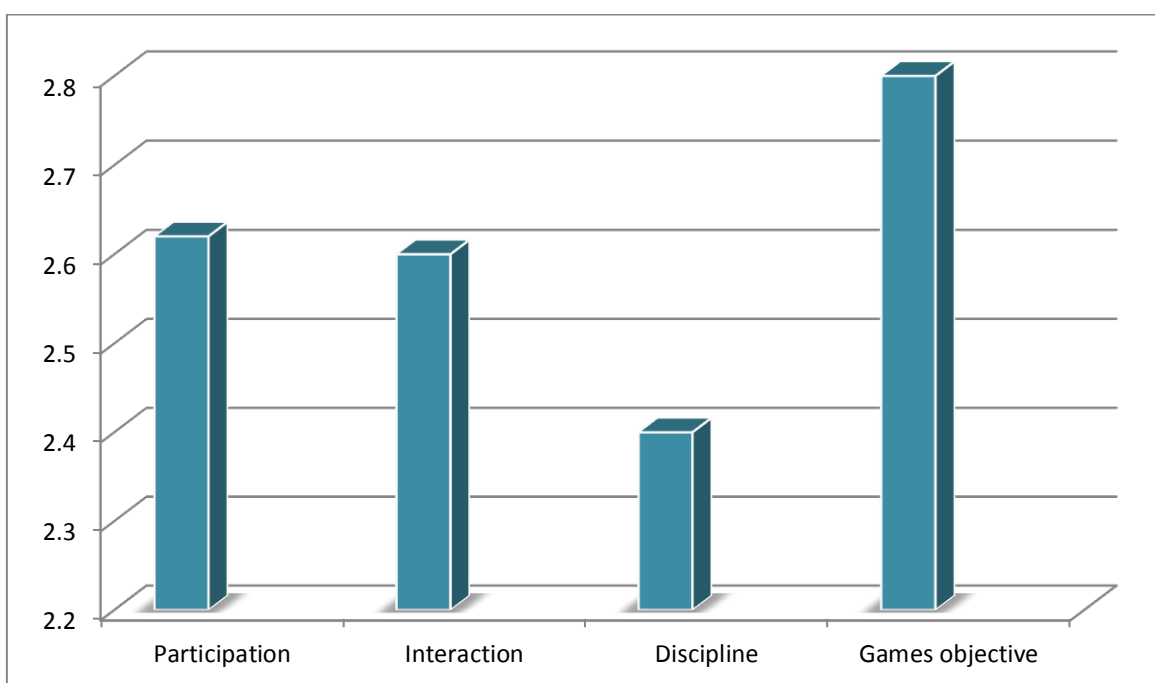


As the figure shows, the highest score was games objective, it was 2.9, so it reflects that children liked the game because they were competing between classmates and they were motivated to win. In the case of participation and interaction that was 2.75, so it reflects that children were interested in the topic, discipline that was 2.5 that means that the teacher can work with games which promote competitiveness in children classes.

4.7 Games analysis

In the next lines the total results obtained from the six games are analyzed in general form, all the averages showed before are involved to get a mean of each one of the categories. Hence, participation had a total 2.62; interaction got 2.6; discipline 2.4 and games objective 2.8. Figure 7 shows this information.

Figure 7: General Results



In sum, this figure reflects how the lessons were analyzed, and it shows that children are always predisposed to collaborate in each activity performed in the class. Thus, games objective is the highest average in this figure with 2.8, participation is also the most representative among children as it is important for students to have a good relation to develop any kind of activity. Another factor that is involved is interaction with 2.6; it shows that teacher can apply different activities or games in which students can have interaction,

and finally discipline with 2.4 students showed good discipline when the teacher guided the game. Hence, game functions work very well, but it is necessary to have class control with them. It always depends on the aims, procedure and the steps to follow to apply the game, but with a good organization and planning they work quite well in the language teaching and learning process.

The purpose of the present paper was to provide effective, motivating games for successful cognitive children development when teaching vocabulary in English in a Public Elementary School. The results analysis explains findings, indicating that language games activities supported the lessons to reach their teaching objective. It was seen that the relationship between the use of language games during the class and the children's learning process in primary level was: the participation, interest, and meaningful language production, where sometimes they correct their mistakes, collaborate with each other in order to win the game. In fact, the interaction between students-students was the cooperation and sometimes it was controlled by the teacher. The teacher's role was to control, evaluate, correct and to be a referee during the game. Hence, games help to increase the vocabulary learning, and also are useful to practice the language and providing opportunities to practice the new language by playing the games. In the case of language production, the students memorized the vocabulary in a fast and easy manner. During the games, students were relaxed and had fun, likewise it can be seen that games helped to improve children's learning process, getting successful target language learning.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, a significant summary of the results, contextual reflections and implications in this new task of teaching English in basic education are presented. In addition, the information and understanding of this study provide basis to be explored in the classroom for any other teacher. I will provide some conclusions, limitations, and some directions for further research.

5.1 Conclusions and Implications

The results analysis explains findings and indicates that language game activities support the lessons to reach their teaching objective. They explain the relationship between language games during the class and the children's learning process in primary level. In addition, they illustrate participation, interest, and meaningful language productions, where they correct their mistakes, collaborate with each other in order to win the game. In fact, they promote independence learning abilities.

The use of the language games in a class especially at elementary level will encourage students to practice and acquire the language in an accurate and a fluent manner. One of the main implication in this study is to raise teacher's awareness of the importance his/her role has to guide, to evaluate, to correct and to be a referee during the game.

5.2 Limitations of the study

This project only provides the basis of deeper research in the area of teaching especially primary children, results are from a case study; therefore, they cannot be considered general.

The LEMO program did not include a Teaching Children practice component as currently SEP does.

The application of instruments was done three years ago when children were less exposed to English language technology. This situation has somehow changed, because the PNIEB program has provided some schools with technology equipment, teaching materials. Another limitation was the furniture arrangement because the classroom size was not big enough, and the class time available.

5.3 Directions for further research

This case study can be used for further research on different contexts. For instance, teaching vocabulary in English language in different levels perhaps applying games with adults or students from primary, secondary and high school. Games can also be applicable for reading, listening, grammar and speaking skills and from this, different research projects could emerge.

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Appendix 1

Lesson Plan: 1
students: 32

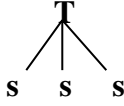
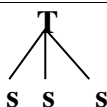
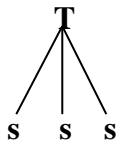


Student's language level: Basic

No. of

Topic: The alphabet

Objective: At the end of the lesson students will be able to identify the letters of the alphabet in English.

Relevant recent work:

Stage	Activity	Interaction	Time
Warm-up	Teacher asks students if they know words in English		5 minutes
Lead-in	Teacher introduces the alphabet using a song		10 minutes
Elicitation	Teacher choose one student and he/she starts the alphabet		15 minutes
Accurate reproduction	Students play "Alphabet race"		15 minutes
Immediate creativity	Teacher ask students write the letter that they hear		10-15 minutes

Appendix 2

Lesson Plan: 2
students: 32

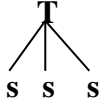
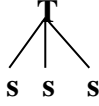
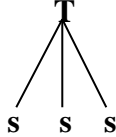
Student's language level: Basic

No. of

Topic: Animals

Objective: At the end of the lesson students will know the name of the animals in English.

Relevant recent work: The alphabet

Stage	Activity	Interaction	Time
Warm-up	Students spell the words that the teacher indicate		5 minutes
Lead-in	Teacher introduces the topic, using different sounds of animals: what animal is it? It is a..... Teacher write on the board the name of animals		10 minutes
Elicitation	Teacher organizes teams and she gives pictures of animals and they practice: what animal is it? This is a.....		15 minutes
Accurate reproduction	Students play Abracadabra!	<p>s s</p> <p>s s</p> <p>s s</p>	15 minutes
Immediate creativity	Teacher give a photocopy where students have to put in order the words	<p>s s s s</p>	10-15 minutes

Appendix 3

Lesson Plan: 3
students: 32

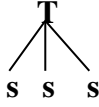
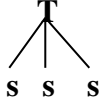
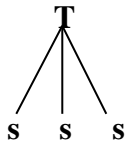

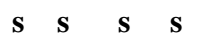
Student's language level: Basic

No. of

Topic: The parts of the body

Objective: At the end of the lesson students will recognize the parts of the body in English.

Relevant recent work: Animals

Stage	Activity	Interaction	Time
Warm-up	Students identify what animals are using "It is a..."		5 minutes
Lead-in	Teacher introduces the topic, using flashcards of the parts of the body		10 minutes
Elicitation	Teacher chooses one student and she asks to identify the parts the body		15 minutes
Accurate reproduction	Students play "Simon says"		15 minutes
Immediate creativity	Teacher give a photocopy where students have to match the image with the correct name		10-15 minutes

Appendix 4

Lesson Plan: 4
students: 32

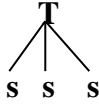
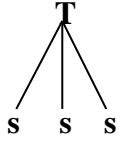
Student's language level: Basic

No. of

Topic: Daily Clothes

Objective: At the end of the lesson students will be able to describe the clothes that they wear.

Relevant recent work: Parts of the body.

Stage	Activity	Interaction	Time
Warm-up	Students identify some parts of the body		5 minutes
Lead-in	Teacher introduces the topic, showing image of clothes and using I wear black shoes etc. Teacher organize an activity in chain drill	<p>T ▶ a → a ▶ a ▶ a → a ▶</p> <p>▶ a ▶ a ▶ a ▶</p>	10 minutes
Elicitation	In pairs, the students describe their wear using "I wear red t-shirt etc.		15 minutes
Accurate reproduction	Students play "Bingo clothes"	<p>s s</p> <p>s s</p> <p>s s</p>	15 minutes
Immediate creativity	Students have to match the image with the correct name	<p>s s s s</p>	10-15 minutes

Appendix 5

Lesson Plan: 5
students: 32

Student's language level: Basic

No. of

Topic: How many...? And fruits

Objective: At the end of the lesson students will be able to use how many, for to know the existence of objects.

Relevant recent work: Daily clothes

Stage	Activity	Interaction	Time
Warm-up	Teacher chooses one student and asks he/she tell us how he/she is wearing	<pre> T / \ s s / \ s s </pre>	5 minutes
Lead-in	Teacher introduces the topic "How many..? Using fruits and asks the students "How many apples are there? there is or there are.	<pre> T / \ s s / \ s s </pre>	10 minutes
Elicitation	Teacher organizes teams and gives image of fruits and students have to ask how many are there? And answer there is /are	<pre> T / \ s s / \ s s </pre>	15 minutes
Accurate reproduction	Students play "Fruit salad"	<pre> s s s s s s </pre>	15 minutes
Immediate creativity	Students have to complete the questions using how many and the name of the fruits	<pre> s s s s </pre>	10-15 minutes

Appendix 6

Lesson Plan: 6
students: 32

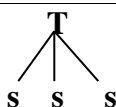
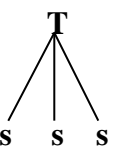
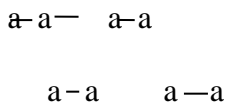


Student's language level: Basic

No. of

Topic: Daily activities

Objective: At the end of the lesson students will be able to describe their routines in a normal day.

Relevant recent work: How many...? And fruits

Stage	Activity	Interaction	Time
Warm-up	Teacher chooses one student and asks he/she tell us how he/she is wearing		5 minutes
Lead-in	Teacher introduces the topic saying what the teacher does during the day, for example: in the morning I take a shower, I do my homework etc. showing image of each activity and then teacher asks one student What do you do in the morning?		10 minutes
Elicitation	Teacher organizes pair and asks the students express what they do in the morning, afternoon and night.		15 minutes
Accurate reproduction	Students play “ ”		15 minutes
Immediate creativity	Students have to match the sentences with the correct image.		10-15 minutes

APPENDIX CHECKLIST

In this observation sheet the functionality of each language game activity will be analyzed and grade in this grading scale: This will be as the following:

1- No 2- A little 3- Yes

Participation

Grade

- English language was practiced during the game 1 2 3
- Students' participation was increased during the game 1 2 3
- Input language was enough in order that student's language production (output) was successful during the game 1 2 3
- Game got that the students felt self-confidence in order to participate without being ridiculized by their classmates 1 2 3

Interaction

- During the game there was maximum interaction between students-students 1 2 3
- During the game there was maximum interaction between teacher-students 1 2 3
- Interaction was disruptive between students during the lesson 1 2 3
- Student's interaction was most of the time focus on the game 1 2 3

Discipline

- Student's discipline was most of the time disruptive during the lesson 1 2 3
- Student's disruptive discipline was modified in order to get good results in the game
- Student's discipline showed interest 1 2 3
- Students were highly motivated by the game so they had to change their bad attitude in order to be an active participation in the game 1 2 3

Game

- Game helped children to memorize vocabulary in a fast manner in order to participate in the game 1 2 3
- During the game students tried to use any strategy such as (memorize vocabulary) in order to win the game 1 2 3
- Game got student's interest during the class 1 2 3
- Game got that students were afraid to lose their turn to play in the game 1 2 3
- Game got that student's was afraid to lose their turns in the game and as result of that their classmates were angry with him/her 1 2 3