# Jordanian English Female Teachers' Utilization of Instructional Games and Attitudes towards these Games

**Ruba Bataineh and Maram Jaradat***

*Abstract: This study investigates the extent to which Jordanian female English teachers use games in their classes and their attitudes towards them. The sample consists of all 150 first through fourth grade female public school English teachers in Irbid First Directorate of Education. Out of the 138 subjects who responded to the questionnaire, 47 subjects (31% of the sample) were randomly selected to be observed in their classrooms and interviewed two weeks after they had responded to the questionnaire to determine whether or not there is a relationship between the teachers' attitudes towards instructional games, as revealed by their responses to the questionnaire, and their actual use of these games in their teaching. The findings reveal that there is no linear relationship between the teachers' attitudes towards using instructional games and their actual classroom practice. In spite of the fact that the vast majority of the subjects tended to agree concerning the significance of using games in teaching English, they did not always use them in their own classrooms.(Key words: Instructional Games, EFL Teachers, Attitudes).*

استخدام معلمات اللغة الإنجليزية الأردنيات للألعاب التعليمية
واتجاهاتهن نحوها

ربا بطاينة و مرام جرادات، كلية التربية، جامعة اليرموك.

ملخـص: هـدفت هـذه الدراسـة إلى تقصي مـدى استخدام معلمات اللغة الإنجليزية للألعاب التعليمية في تدريسهن واتجاهاتهن نحو هذه الألعاب. وقد تكون مجتمع الدراسة وعينتها من جميع معلمات اللغة الإنجليزية للصفوف الأربعة الأساسية الأولى في مدارس مديرية التربية والتعليم لمنطقة اربد الأولى. وقد قامت الباحثتان باختيار 47 معلمة (31% من العينة) بالطريقة العشوائية لغايات المشاهدة الصفية، وكذلك للمقابلة الشخصية بعد أسبوعين من أجابة 138 معلمة على الاستبانة؛ للتحقق من وجود علاقة بين اتجاهات المعلمات نحو استخدام الألعاب ومدى استخدامهن الفعلي لها. وقد أظهرت النتائج عدم وجود علاقة بين اتجاهات المعلمات نحو استخدام الألعاب التعليمية وبين استخدامهن الفعلي لهذه الألعاب؛ فعلى الرغم من إجماع غالبية أفراد العينة على أهمية استخدام الألعاب التعليمية في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية، لوحظ عدم استخدامهن لهذه الألعاب في التدريس. (الكلمات المفتاحية: الالعاب التعلمية ، معلمات اللغة الانجليزية، اتجاهات)

**Introduction**: Games have been played for the sake of entertainment for many years. However, their application in teaching and learning is a fairly recent development (Ellington et al, 1980). Despite the controversy that surrounds their effectiveness in teaching and learning, instructional games (henceforth, IGs) are believed to be especially useful for reinforcing and assessing learning (Williams, 1985). Furthermore, IGs are said to achieve social objectives, improve the students' self-concept, develop their verbal ability, help them express their feelings and thoughts, promote reasoning, and add challenge and excitement to the learning task (Cratty, 1969; Roberts, 1980; Williams, 1985). Maidment and Bronstein (1973) add that IGs create a favorable learning environment in the classroom and a new non-authoritarian role for the language teacher, make the representation of learning experiences more realistic and relevant, and increase the students' motivation and interest.

Moreover, Lewis (1999) claims that the use of IGs in the English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom is beneficial because students often learn in an unconscious, stress-free atmosphere. IGs increase motivation and add variety to the lesson as well as bring the target language to life and make it immediately useful to the learner who is allowed to experiment, discover and interact with his/her environment.

In the past three years, the Jordanian Ministry of Education (henceforth, JMOE) has adopted Action Pack, a 6-level English course for young learners beginning at age five or six. This series, which is based on the communicative approach, aims to enable the children to enjoy learning English, make it relevant to their interests, encourage co-operative learning and lay firm foundations for later language study (Brown, 1999).

Action Pack is designed so that most of its activities are in the context of IGs, which is based on the premise that playing is not only the chief occupation of children but also the child's natural way of learning. This may enable the students to play and learn simultaneously as IGs help them learn through creating situations in which learning mixes with fun and excitement.

**Problem, Purpose, and Significance of the Study:**

Although the use of IGs in EFL classes is still a relatively young field, an enormous body of literature on using IGs has been published outside Jordan. However, very limited attempts have been made to investigate teachers' attitudes towards using IGs. In fact, the choice of the topic of this study has come out of an interest in the facilities and resources that IGs offer to the instructional environment coupled with the apparently limited current use of IGs in the Jordanian classroom. Personal communications with teachers have initially revealed that most Jordanian teachers do not pay attention to IGs, some believe that they have a

* Faculty of Education, Yarmouk University.

secondary role in teaching and, thus, use them to fill the last few minutes of the lesson, while others do not use them at all.

The present researchers attempt to study the extent to which Jordanian female first through fourth grade EFL teachers utilize IGs and their attitudes towards them. They further investigate whether or not a linear relationship exists between these teachers' attitudes towards and actual use of IGs in the classroom. More specifically, the present researchers attempt to answer the following research questions:

1. What are Jordanian female EFL teachers' attitudes towards using IGs in their classrooms?
2. To what extent do these teachers utilize IGs in teaching English?
3. Is there a linear relationship between these teachers' attitudes and their use of IGs in their classrooms?

The present researchers believe that teaching aids have a great effect on the learners' contact with educational materials and their achievement of more knowledge. As many EFL teachers tend to shy away from utilizing IGs in their classes, this research is hoped to help them gain a thorough insight into the importance of using IGs in teaching English in the first four grades. The findings of the study are further hoped to help teachers gain a new perspective about the effectiveness of IGs and to draw their attention to the importance of using them in facilitating the teaching/learning process. Moreover, the present researchers believe that this study could be a good addition to the existing theoretical literature on the topic.

**Previous Studies:** The role of IGs in the classroom has been a matter of controversy. The review of related literature has revealed the existence of two camps of researchers: those who enthusiastically vouch for the effectiveness of IGs (cf., for example, Littlewood, 1981; Lee, 1987; Turner, 1987; Wright and Buckby, 1989; Kim, 1995; Lewis, 1999) and those who do not advocate using them (cf., for example, Wesoloswski, 1980; O'Nell, 1980; Moore, 1981; Palm, 1983; Mustafa and Suleiman, 1987) both in EFL and other subject matter classrooms.

Unlike the latter group, the former claim that the use of IGs is a powerful and enjoyable learning technique for both children and adults. Proponents of using IGs have discussed the advantages of using IGs in foreign language classrooms. Not only do IGs make the material more interesting and promote better recall, but they also increase the learners' self-confidence and fluency (Lee, 1987). Moreover, IGs play a crucial role in acquiring the target language because learners become intellectually, emotionally and physically involved, for IGs help them see the beauty of the foreign language and not just problems associated with its acquisition (Nunan, 1991). Kim (1995) claims that IGs not only make learning a language possible but also allow the learners to enjoy themselves as they do that. She claims that IGs are often a welcome break from classroom tedious routines, not to mention their role in providing language practice in the various language skills, encouraging students to interact and communicate and creating meaningful contexts for language use.

Several researchers have shown that IGs are not just time–filling activities but ones with a great pedagogical value. Lee (1987:30), for example, states that a game "should not be regarded as a marginal activity filling in odd moments when the teacher and the class have nothing to do" but rather as a central component of any foreign language teaching attempt. Most IGs shift the learners' focus from the linguistic form to meaning and authentic language use.

Dickerson (1975) investigated the effect of using an innovative games approach on the recognition of sight vocabulary words by 264 American first grade pupils. She concluded that IGs are an extremely viable aid for reinforcing sight vocabulary words in children who have had limited success with more traditional methods of instruction.

Keen (1983) studied the effects of game-playing on the spelling performance of third through fifth grade elementary pupils as opposed to an equivalent group following a typical textbook format. He concluded that an initial formal exposure to spelling skills is necessary, beyond which the textbook approach is no more or less effective. Keen reported that the final word counts across the grade levels for the game groups and the comparison of the word counts for both groups suggest that the game approach is superior over time.

Alobaidi (1993) studied the effect of IGs on the reading achievement of 52 Iraqi second grade pupils. She found that using IGs positively affected these pupils' reading achievement. However, sex was found to have no effect on the sample's achievement in reading.

Miller (1992) conducted a longitudinal study to investigate whether optimal L2 acquisition occurs through the playing of games. The effect of using IGs, among other methods of instruction, was investigated in three Japanese language classes taught to American university students over a two-year period. Although IGs were found to have no significant effect on American college students' overall achievement in Japanese, the classes taught through IGs outperformed the control class on all tests by the fourth semester. Besides, the transfer of L1 cognitive/academic language proficiency (CALP) to L2 acquisition was found to be greater in traditional language classes than in game classes, which suggests that students with less L1 CALP can be more successful in game classes by relying on their basic interpersonal communication skills. Her findings further revealed significant differences when combined mean scores for all three classes were compared by semester.

Alfaqih (1995) investigated the effectiveness of using IGs, as opposed to the traditional method, in teaching Jordanian EFL seventh grade students. The

results revealed that there is a statistically significant difference in the students' achievement due to utilizing IGs. However, he found no significant difference in achievement which can be attributed to sex although significant differences resulted from the interaction between method of instruction and sex.

Uberman (1998) compared the use of traditional techniques such as the visual technique, verbal explanation and use of dictionaries with the use of language IGs for vocabulary presentation and revision. Her results suggest that the use of IGs for the presentation of new vocabulary is highly effective, enjoyable, and useful in adding variety to presentational techniques.

Despite the favorable views of IGs in the above studies, a number of researchers argue against the use of IGs on the grounds that they fail to make a worthwhile contribution to students' achievement not only in the language classroom but also in other subject matters. Lewis (1975) investigated the effect of using IGs, among other methods of instruction, on 138 American eighth grade students' language usage skills. His findings revealed that no significant differences were observed in the students' punctuation and capitalization skills as a result of the teaching method.

Wesolowski (1980) compared the effects of traditional and simulation games curricula on the composition skills of American gifted tenth grade students. He found that neither the Watson-Glaser critical thinking pretest and posttest scores nor the writing skills of either group changed significantly during the period of the study, which suggests that simulation games did not significantly improve the students' critical thinking or writing skills.

O'Neill (1980) investigated the effect of using Teams-Games-Tournaments (TGT) on American high school students' achievement in social studies. He found that using IGs failed to produce significant differences in the students' achievement in social studies. In other words, using IGs neither increased nor decreased academic achievement when used with a TGT reward structure. However, when compared with the control classes, TGT classes were found to improve peer tutoring and students' involvement in learning tasks, considerably diminish discipline problems, and increase students' interest in the subject matter and willingness to learn more.

Moore (1981) used two mathematical computer games to test if the use of IGs as learning aids increased 143 American university students' achievement and improved their attitude toward mathematics in a university entry-level intermediate algebra course. The results indicated that using IGs did not significantly improve students' achievement in mathematics or their attitudes towards it.

Palm (1983) investigated the effects of the introduction of reading activities and games into the home by trained parents on achievement in and attitudes toward reading by 60 American second, third, and fourth grade private school pupils. She found that while there was no significant difference in the pupils' reading achievement which can be attributed to the method of instruction, the pupils who participated in the reading games showed a significant difference in their attitude toward reading. Being a member of the IGs group had a significant effect on the pupils who showed a more negative attitude toward reading after the experience.

Mustafa and Suleiman (1987) examined the effectiveness of using IGs in teaching mathematics by Bahraini student-teachers. They found that using IGs did not make any significant contribution to students' mastery of mathematics.

The studies above appear to provide empirical evidence that using IGs does not significantly contribute to students' achievement in the EFL as well as in other subject matter classrooms. However, these views may not apply to the context of this research, for using IGs is not left for the discretion of the teacher but rather prescribed by the author of the series (Brown, 1999) as an integral part of the philosophy of the Action Pack series itself. IGs are strongly related to the first aim of the series (viz., enabling the pupils to enjoy learning English and communicate in it). Most of Action Pack activities are presented in the context of games so as to allow the pupils to learn in a relaxed, non-threatening atmosphere where learning mixes with fun and excitement.

Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the apparently conflicting findings of previous research may be attributed to variations in the conditions and design of that research. Evident were variations in sample size, subjects' age, duration of treatment, research instruments and statistical analyses. The different nature of the curricula, courses and students' learning styles may also have contributed to the controversial reports of findings.

The review of previous research revealed a dearth of local and Arab studies on the use of IGs in the foreign language classroom. To the best of the present researchers' knowledge, the present study is the first in and outside Jordan to investigate the relationship between teachers' attitudes toward IGs and their actual use of these IGs in their teaching. An extensive review of previous research failed to reveal any studies which had embarked on a similar investigation. Although the findings of the reviewed foreign research may not be particularly applicable to the Jordanian context, they were instrumental for the researcher's construction of the data collection instruments. A good number of the items of the questionnaire and the other instruments were drawn out from or built according to the previous research reviewed in this section.

**Instrumentation, Sampling, and Procedure:**

A variety of quantitative and qualitative research instruments (viz., an attitudinal questionnaire, classroom observations and interviews) have been used to collect the data. The 52-item questionnaire, based on previous literature (cf., for example, Lee, 1987; Kim,

1995; Lewis, 1999) and the present researchers' collective experience, probes the teachers' attitudes towards utilizing IGs in their classrooms. The observation checklist investigates the teachers' actual classroom use of IGs, or lack thereof. The interview reinforces the validity of the teachers' responses to the questionnaire and the data obtained by the observation checklist. Both the observation checklist and the interview are derived from the content of the questionnaire itself.

To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, it was rated by a jury of experts in the field of Education and English at the Faculty of Education at Yarmouk University. This jury's suggestions were used to modify the questionnaire by omitting, adding, or rephrasing items bringing the number of items from 85 to 52. Neither the interview form nor the observation checklist was validated since their items were extracted from the previously validated questionnaire. Furthermore, the reliability of the questionnaire and the observation checklist was computed using Cronbach Alpha. The reliability coefficients for the questionnaire and the observation checklist amounted to 0.799 and 0.968, respectively, which indicates that they are appropriate for the purpose of the present study.

The population and sample consisted of all 150 first through fourth grade female EFL teachers from the 54 public schools of Irbid First Directorate of Education. One hundred and thirty eight subjects (92% of the sample) responded to the questionnaire. Out of these respondents, 47 (31% of the sample) from 25 public schools were randomly selected to be observed in their classrooms and interviewed two weeks after they had responded to the questionnaire.

This study was conducted using the descriptive survey research design. All three instruments were administered and collected by the researchers, one or both of whom were available during the administration of the questionnaire to answer questions and offer explanations. Both researchers conducted a good number of the interviews and the observations, a process after which they met and discussed their notes to minimize any differences in approach or coding. The remainder of the interviews and the observations were divided equally between the two researchers.

The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) to provide answers to the questions of the study. To establish the extent to which EFL teachers utilize IGs in teaching English and their attitudes toward them, means and standard deviations for each item of the questionnaire and the classroom observation checklist were computed, Pearson's Correlation Coefficient was used to describe the relationship between the teachers' attitudes and their real classroom practice and a t-test was used to find out if there is a significant difference at the 0.05 level of significance between the mean for the teachers' attitudes as measured by the questionnaire and the means for their actual practice as measured by the

observation checklist. The data collected in the interviews were analyzed qualitatively.

**Findings and Discussion**:The questionnaire was used to probe the teachers' attitudes toward using IGs in the EFL classroom. Table 1 shows the means and standard deviations for individual items as well as the whole attitudes scale.

**Table (1):** Means and Standard Deviations of the Teachers' Attitudes towards Utilizing IGs

| No. | Item | Rank | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 18 | IGs are fun, and learners like to play them. | 1 | 4.49 | 0.60 |
| 5 | IGs create a relaxed atmosphere that breaks the ice and introduces new ideas. | 2 | 4.45 | 0.60 |
| 4 | IGs add variety to the regular classroom activities. | 3 | 4.34 | 0.70 |
| 52 | IGs engage learners emotionally, physically and mentally in the information, concepts and skills they need. | 4 | 4.32 | 0.50 |
| 3 | IGs allow shy students to express their opinions and feelings. | 5 | 4.31 | 0.70 |
| 35 | IGs bring teachers and learners into a more agreeable and intimate relationship. | 6 | 4.30 | 0.70 |
| 2 | IGs enable learners to acquire new experiences within a foreign language, which is not always possible during a traditional lesson. | 6 | 4.30 | 0.60 |
| 31 | IGs allow learners to share their experiences and learn from each other. | 7 | 4.21 | 0.50 |
| 7 | IGs help learners recall materials in a pleasant, enthusiastic manner. | 7 | 4.21 | 0.70 |
| 14 | IGs give learners the freedom to search, discover and learn. | 8 | 4.17 | 0.70 |
| 23 | Through IGs, learners experiment, discover and interact with their environment. | 8 | 4.17 | 0.60 |
| 17 | IGs encourage learners to interact and communicate and, thus, serve as orientation for future social integration. | 8 | 4.17 | 0.60 |
| 25 | IGs help learners see the beauty of the target language. | 9 | 4.15 | 0.50 |
| 34 | IGs help provide feedback on the learners' correct and erroneous language use. | 9 | 4.15 | 0.60 |
| 1 | IGs increase learners' anxiety and fear of learning. | 10 | 4.12 | 0.90 |
| 20 | IGs encourage co-operative interaction among the learners. | 11 | 4.11 | 0.60 |
| 12 | IGs help the teacher create contexts in which the target language is useful and | 11 | 4.11 | 0.60 |

| No. | Item | Rank | Mean | SD |
|-----|------|------|------|-----|
| | meaningful. | | | |
| 50 | IGs direct learners' energy towards learning. | 11 | 4.11 | 0.60 |
| 43 | IGs promote positive social attitudes among the learners. | 11 | 4.11 | 0.60 |
| 27 | Through IGs, learners develop their fluency in the target language. | 12 | 4.09 | 0.60 |
| 33 | IGs encourage the learner to be reflective upon his/her progress. | 13 | 4.06 | 0.50 |
| 48 | IGs offer act-and-react-activities which demand creativity and active participation. | 13 | 4.06 | 0.50 |
| 41 | IGs involve the use of social skills which are directly relevant to the world outside the classroom. | 13 | 4.06 | 0.60 |
| 36 | IGs banish boredom and increase the learners' willingness to learn. | 14 | 4.02 | 0.70 |
| 16 | IGs promote the learners' desire to participate in meaningful language use. | 14 | 4.02 | 0.50 |
| 8 | IGs are more effective than other classroom techniques. | 15 | 4.00 | 0.90 |
| 39 | IGs show the learners' readiness and ability to make decisions. | 16 | 3.98 | 0.60 |
| 42 | IGs do not work well with sensitive learners. | 16 | 3.98 | 0.70 |
| 15 | IGs help learners use the target language spontaneously. | 16 | 3.98 | 0.60 |
| 51 | IGs should only be played at the end of a lesson. | 16 | 3.98 | 0.70 |
| 40 | IGs represent an informal approach to the understanding of a situation. | 16 | 3.98 | 0.60 |
| 49 | IGs are incompatible with serious education. | 17 | 3.94 | 0.90 |
| 22 | Most IGs involve the whole class no matter how large it is. | 17 | 3.94 | 0.60 |
| 13 | IGs stabilize instruction and present concepts faster to the learners. | 17 | 3.94 | 0.60 |
| 37 | IGs are valuable in revealing learners' difficulties in language learning. | 18 | 3.91 | 0.60 |
| 11 | IGs provide foreign language learners with intensive practice. | 18 | 3.91 | 0.70 |
| 38 | IGs enable learners to explore the linguistic and conceptual aspects of the target language without concentrating on the language form. | 19 | 3.89 | 0.70 |
| 28 | IGs present concrete problems in a simplified, amusing and | 19 | 3.89 | 0.80 |

| No. | Item | Rank | Mean | SD |
|-----|------|------|------|-----|
| 32 | IGs create in learners a respect for rules. | 20 | 3.87 | 0.70 |
| 45 | IGs are useless and time-demanding. | 21 | 3.85 | 0.90 |
| 19 | Teachers often perceive IGs as mere time fillers. | 21 | 3.85 | 0.90 |
| 29 | IGs cause chaos and disorganization. | 21 | 3.85 | 0.80 |
| 44 | IGs give learners false feelings since they depend on pretending. | 22 | 3.83 | 0.90 |
| 10 | IGs weaken the teacher's personality. | 23 | 3.74 | 1.10 |
| 9 | IGs are useful only for pair or group work. | 24 | 3.70 | 1.00 |
| 46 | IGs are viewed negatively not only by learners but also by teachers and parents. | 25 | 3.57 | 0.90 |
| 24 | IGs' preparation is tedious and time-consuming. | 25 | 3.57 | 0.90 |
| 26 | IGs need considerable effort by the teacher. | 26 | 3.55 | 1.00 |
| 6 | IGs should be treated as secondary rather than central to foreign language teaching. | 27 | 3.53 | 0.90 |
| 30 | Teachers are never enthusiastic about using IGs as a teaching tool. | 28 | 3.40 | 1.10 |
| 21 | IGs are short and, thus, appropriate for the relatively short language class period. | 29 | 3.38 | 1.10 |
| 47 | IGs require large rooms and moveable desks. | 30 | 2.38 | 1.20 |

Table 1 shows that the items ranking between 1 and 27 have gained means ranging between 3.53 and 4.49, all falling within the *agree* category. These items constitute 94.3% of the items of the questionnaire. Items 21 and 30 have gained means ranging between 3.38 and 3.40 falling within the *undecided* category. These items constitute 3.8% of the total items of the questionnaire. Only item 47 has gained a mean of 2.38 falling within the *disagree* category. Table 1 further shows that the vast majority of the respondents have an overall favorable attitude towards utilizing IGs in their classrooms. Teachers tended to agree that IGs are highly motivating, competitive and enjoyable. They believe that IGs facilitate the learning/teaching process, and that learners like to play them. These opinions are consistent with the findings of Kim (1995), Gardner (1998) and Lewis (1999) who all found that most teachers show positive attitudes towards utilizing IGs in their classrooms.

To determine the truth of the findings of the questionnaire, the observation checklist was used to investigate the respondents' actual use of IGs in their classrooms. Table 2 shows the means and standard

deviations for individual items as well as the whole classroom observation checklist.

**Table (2):** Means and Standard Deviations for the Items Related to the Observation Checklist

| No. | Item | Mean | SD |
|-----|------|------|-----|
| 3 | IGs bring the teacher and the learners into a more agreeable and intimate relationship. | 2.31 | 1.00 |
| 4 | The teacher seems to use IGs to banish boredom and increase the learners' willingness to learn. | 2.31 | 1.00 |
| 1 | The teacher seems to view IGs as mere time fillers. | 2.17 | 1.00 |
| 5 | The teacher seems to perceive IGs as useless and time-demanding. | 2.12 | 0.94 |
| 7 | The teacher seems to believe that IGs could only be played at the end of the lesson. | 2.10 | 0.80 |
| 2 | The teacher seems to view IGs as causes for chaos and disorganization. | 2.08 | 0.80 |
| 6 | The teacher is unable to involve an adequate number of the students in the game. | 2.04 | 0.90 |
| 8 | The students are obviously relaxed and naturally engaged in the learning process. | 2.00 | 1.00 |

Table 2 shows that the eight items of the observation checklist have gained means ranging between 2.00 and 2.31, all falling within the *poor* category. The Table further shows that the subjects' overall classroom use of IGs is poor. The vast majority of the teachers did not use IGs in their classrooms, and those who did were not able to involve an adequate number of students in the game. The observations reveal that the majority of the respondents assume the role of the traditional teacher in their classrooms, which is based on the premise that the teacher is the "expert" who imparts knowledge to a class full of unknowing students.

The findings further show that the majority of the participants shy away from utilizing IGs in their teaching, for most teachers were observed lecturing their students while those listened carefully in their desks. Those who used IGs were not able to involve the whole class or even an adequate number of students in the game. Few of the teachers could not choose the appropriate game when there was a large number of students, round tables or small classrooms. Two teachers in the fourth grade changed the game into a grammar lesson. They discussed the grammar of the sentences of the game on the board, and the students wrote them in their notebooks. Moreover, some teachers performed poorly during their actual use of IGs, because they did not know how to manage and stimulate their students.

The findings of the t-test further revealed that the correlation between the items of the questionnaire and the observation checklist is 0.11, which means that no statistically significant linear relationship exists (at $\propto$ =0.05) between the teachers' attitudes towards using IGs and their actual classroom use of these IGs. The researchers found no evidence that these teachers, who reportedly have highly positive attitudes towards using IGs, actually utilize them in their teaching.

The qualitative analysis of 47 interviews has revealed practically the same findings, which lends considerable support to the findings revealed by the attitudinal questionnaire and the observation checklist. This, the researchers believe, is instrumental for the validity of the conclusions drawn from this research.

When teachers attempted to use IGs, most reportedly found it difficult to organize and control their classes, for the use of IGs often implies a change not only in technique but also in the classroom environment. Through engaging in the game, students become highly motivated and often shout their answers to win. A large number of the respondents considered disorganization the major factor which hampers the successful use of IGs in their classrooms. Nevertheless, the literature shows that a certain amount of noise should be tolerated as long as learning is taking place (Lee, 1987). In this respect, Jarvis (1991:4) states that

*The children may be excited during the first practical activities, so the teacher must distinguish between misbehavior and fairly noisy enthusiastic interest which is on task. Fun does not mean disorganization. On the contrary, good fun is always highly organized.*

Although the respondents reportedly view IGs as a valuable tool in banishing boredom and increasing the learners' willingness to learn, most did not use IGs, which they further attributed to the lack of resources and proper facilities. A large number of the respondents have been found to think that the lack of classroom resources and furniture such as movable desks, small rooms, and necessary resource materials all hamper their use of IGs. However, the literature shows that large rooms or small numbers of students in the classroom are not necessarily prerequisites for the successful use of IGs. Teachers need to be both flexible and able to manage with the available classroom setting, furniture and other facilities, since the problem of classroom resources is faced by virtually all Jordanian public school teachers. The present researchers often reminded the respondents that there are numerous IGs in Action Pack itself (e.g. memory, spelling and card IGs) that can be played without too much noise or need for special equipment and facilities.

Several of the respondents were found to lack experience with IGs and, thus, shy away from using them. They were found to need to know more about the nature, management and successful use of IGs, which may be alleviated by attending training courses or short workshops on the effective use of IGs. The present

researchers' survey of the four Action Pack books shows that about half of their IGs do not need more than 5-10 minutes, which affirms the teachers' unfamiliarity with and lack of knowledge about the IGs in the books of the series.

The apparent contradiction between the teachers' positive attitudes towards IGs and their actual practice in EFL classes may be further minimized if teachers are persuaded that using IGs is an invaluable means to facilitate learning and reinforce retention. Vilmi (2001) eloquently quotes the old Chinese proverb *"Tell me and I will forget, teach me and I will remember, involve me and I will learn."*

Besides, the use of IGs in the classroom may be unfamiliar not only to students but also to the teachers and parents. The respondents revealed through the interviews that the initial use of IGs may pose problems of operation and general acceptance especially from parents. At first sight, and unless forewarned, some parents may find it difficult to accept the relevance of or attention to using IGs. A teacher in one of the participating schools reported being reprimanded by a parent for using IGs. Teachers may need to make parents aware of the need for IGs through meetings or pre-arranged classroom visits.

### Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations

In essence, using IGs in language teaching holds great promise for becoming a powerful instructional tool that increases students' engagement in learning, enhances their comprehension, and improves their language skills. Using IGs can help teachers vary the pace of instruction, review and reinforce learning, teach and address specific skills, and enhance motivation, which is most likely to enhance students' engagement in learning. Having said that, it must be recognized that IGs are not meant to categorically replace traditional teaching methods, but rather supplement and enhance classroom instruction. Well-designed, well-thought IGs can allow students to apply what they learn in meaningful activities that stimulate their interest and increase their motivation. IGs can be developed and integrated into activities that go beyond simple busy tasks to which students often respond negatively, for IGs have the potential to actively engage students in the teaching/ learning process because of their capabilities to meet their varying needs and interests.

Given what is currently known about the teaching/learning process, it is important that IGs be designed and used according to this knowledge. First, it is essential to recognize that before IGs are used in the EFL classroom, the teacher should have clearly identified objectives for his/her class, for IGs designed or chosen for classroom use will surely depend on the overall purpose. Second, teachers must also be aware that there are many different types of IGs out there, ranging from those which are excellent to those which are less stimulating and devoid of instructional potential. When selecting IGs, teachers should diligently peruse the existing literature and consult experts to obtain information in this area, for it is not the use of IGs itself that matters but rather the potential gain it affords the teaching/learning process and the degree to which it facilitates language teaching/learning.

Furthermore, regardless of which type of IGs (e.g. drill-and-practice or problem-solving games and simulations) the teacher employs, variety is important so that students do not lose interest and motivation. Older or more advanced-level students may be unmotivated by IGs that are too easy for them, for example. A variety of IGs should be tied to classroom content in order for them to take place within a meaningful context. Teachers must also ensure that the IGs used are of an optimal difficulty level and are neither too easy nor too difficult for their students.

The present researchers call on the JMOE to rectify the problems which may limit basic stage EFL teachers' ability, or even inclination, to use IGs in their classrooms, which, in turn, would limit their effectiveness as teachers of a curriculum series whose author claims to have built it exclusively on IGs. The researchers recommend that the JMOE produce guidebooks for using IGs and distribute them among the teachers in its schools. Furthermore, the JMOE is urged to hold seminars, workshops, and short training courses for its teachers on the use of IGs in light of the facilities and resources available in its schools.

The present researchers strongly agree with Miller's (1992) conclusions that while IGs are popular, they need to be carefully designed and employed to enable an entire EFL curriculum to successfully evolve around them, which is basically the claim made by the author of the Action Pack series (Brown, 1999). Teachers should be given the expertise to be able to use and adjust the IGs put forth in the series to their best potential for the effective delivery and facilitation of learning.

The JMOE could also organize a periodic contest in which teachers are offered incentives for the design, modification, or creative utilization of IGs. They may be offered monetary or nonmonetary rewards such as recognition or promotion for their successful initiatives in this regard, all of which could be made public to benefit fellow teachers and make them better able to cope with the demands of a curriculum series which is reportedly based on the premise that optimal language learning occurs through the playing of games.

### References

Alfaqih, A. (1995). *The Effect of Using Games in English Language Teaching on the Seventh Graders' Achievement in Jordan.* Unpublished MA Thesis, Yarmouk University, Irbid, Jordan.

Brown, D. (1999). *Action Pack 1A and 1B (First Grade): Student's Book.* Second Edition. Cairo: Egyptian International Publishing Company-Longman

Brown, D. (1999). *Action Pack 1A and 1B (First Grade): Teacher's Book.* Second Edition. Cairo:

Egyptian International Publishing Company-Longman

Brown, D. (1999). *Action Pack 2A and 2B (Second Grade): Student's Book*. Second Edition. Cairo: Egyptian International Publishing Company-Longman

Brown, D. (1999). *Action Pack 2A and 2B (Second Grade): Teacher's Book*. Second Edition. Cairo: Egyptian International Publishing Company-Longman

Brown, D. (1999). *Action Pack 3A and 3B (Third Grade): Student's Book*. Second Edition. Cairo: Egyptian International Publishing Company-Longman

Brown, D. (1999). *Action Pack 3A and 3B (Third Grade): Teacher's Book*. Second Edition. Cairo: Egyptian International Publishing Company-Longman

Brown, D. (1999). *Action Pack 4A and 4B (Fourth Grade): Student's Book*. Second Edition. Cairo: Egyptian International Publishing Company-Longman

Brown, D. (1999). *Action Pack 4A and 4B (Fourth Grade): Teacher's Book*. Second Edition.. Cairo: Egyptian International Publishing Company-Longman

Cratty, B.J. (1969). *Developmental Games for Physically Handicapped Children*. Palo Alto, California: T. H. Peek Publishings.

Dickerson, D.P (1975). *A Comparison of the Use of the Active Games Learning Medium with Passive Games and Traditional Activities as a Means of Reinforcing Recognition of Selected Sight Vocabulary Words with Mid-Year First-Grade Children with Limited Sight Vocabularies*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation. University of Maryland College Park, U.S.A.

Ellington, H., E. Addinall and F. Percival (1980). *Games and Simulations in Science Education*. London: Nicholas Publishing Company.

Gardner, D. (1998). Communication Games: Do we Know what we are Talking about? *ELT Journal, 41* (1), 19-24.

Jarvis, T. (1991). *Children and Primary Science (Children Teachers and Learning)*. London: Continuum.

Keen, J.E. (1983). *A Study of the Effects of a Games Approach for Spelling Instruction*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation. Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, U.S.A.

Kim, L.S. (1995). Creative Games for the Language Class. *English Teaching Forum 33* (1), 35-42.

Lee, W.R. (1987). *Language Teaching Games and Contents*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lewis, J.R. (1975). *The Effectiveness of Certain Nonsimulation Academic Games in Teaching Language Usage Skills to Junior High School Students*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation. University of Maryland College Park, U.S.A.

Lewis, J. (1999). Using Games in an EFL Class for Children. *English Teaching Forum 29* (3), 30-31.

Littlewood, W. (1981). *Communicative Language Teaching: An Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Maidment, R. and R.H. Bronstein (1973). *Simulation Games: Design and Implementation*. Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company.

Miller, M.C. (1992). *Two Experimental Studies of the Effectiveness of Interactive Game-Playing in the Acquisition of Japanese by Americans. (Volumes I And II)*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation. University of Delaware, U.S.A.

Moore, M.L. (1980). *Effects of Selected Mathematical Computer Games on Achievement and Attitude toward Mathematics in University Entry-Level Algebra*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation. Oregon State University, U.S.A.

Nunan, D. (1991). *Language Teaching Methodology: A Text for Teachers*. New York: Prentice-Hall.

O'Neill, J.S. (1980*). The Effects of a Teams-Games-Tournaments Reward Structure on the Self-Esteem and Academic Achievement of Ninth Grade Social Studies Students*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation. University of Georgia, U.S.A.

Palm, C.K. (1983). *The Effects on Children's Achievement in Reading and Attitude toward Reading Resulting from the Introduction of Reading Games into the Home by Trained Parents* . Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation. University of Cincinnati, U.S.A.

Roberts, L. (1980). *Out to Play:The Middle Years of Childhood*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Turner, M. (1987). Communication Games, Are they Really Effective? *ERIC Document Reproduction Service: ED 272408*.

Uberman, A. (1998). The Use of Games for Vocabulary and Revision Presentation. *English Teaching Forum, 36* (1), 20-28.

Vilmi, R. (2001). Learning to Play, Playing to Learn: Using Games as Educational Tools. *Modern English Teacher, 10* (2), 32-39.

Wesolowski, R.J. (1980). *A Study Comparing a Simulation-Game Curriculum with a Traditional Curriculum in Teaching Composition to Tenth Grade Gifted Students*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation. University of Michigan, U.S.A.

Williams, M. (1985). *40 Thinking Games to Make and Play*. Cheltenham, U.K. Nelson Thornes (Publishers) Ltd.

Wright, A. and M. Buckby (1989). *Games for Language Learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

العبيدي، رقية عبد الآغه. (1993)**. أثر استخدام الألعاب التعليمية على التحصيل القرائي لتلاميذ الصف الثاني الابتدائي.** رسالة ماجستير غير منشورة، جامعة بغداد، العراق.

مصطفى، محمد محمود وسليمان، محمد ممدوح. (1987). أثر استخدام الألعاب التعليمية في فهم المفاهيم الرياضية لدى الطالب المعلم واتجاهاته نحو تدريس الرياضيات بالمرحلة الأولى بدولة البحرين**. المجلة العربية لبحوث التعليم العالي 6،** 103-128.

| | |
|---|---|
| Name: ……………………………………………… :الاسم<br>Speciality: …………………………………… :الاختصاص<br>Address: ……………………………………… :العنوان<br>P.O. Box:. ……………………………………… :ص.ب<br>City & Postal Code:…………… :المدينة والرمز البريدي<br>Country:……………………………………… :الدولة<br>Phone:……………………………………… :هاتف<br>Fax: ……………………………………… :فاكس<br>E-mail: …………………………… :البريد الإلكتروني<br>No. of Copies:……………………… :عدد النسخ<br>Payment: ………………………… :طريقة الدفع<br>Signature: ……………………………… :التوقيع | I would like to subscribe to the Journal أرغب الاشتراك بالمجلة الأردنية في العلوم التربوية<br>**For** لمدة<br>🔲 One Year     سنة واحدة 🔲<br>🔲 Two Years     سنتان 🔲<br>🔲 Three Years     ثلاث سنوات 🔲 |

| One Year Subscription Rates<br>أسعار الاشتراك السنوي | One Issue Price<br>سعر النسخة الواحدة (دينار أردني) |
|---|---|
| خارج الأردن   داخل الأردن<br>Outside Jordan   Inside Jordan | |
| 35 دولار أمريكي   7 دنانير   الأفراد<br>US $ 35   JD 7.00   Individuals | Standard Price JD 1.750 دينار   سعر البيع العادي 1.750<br>Students JD 1.00   سعر البيع للطلبة دينار واحد |
| 35 دولار أمريكي   10 دنانير   المؤسسات<br>US $ 35   JD 10   Institutions | خصم 40% للمكتبات وموزعي ومراكز البيع<br>40% Discount for Bookshops |

ترسل الشيكات المصرفية مدفوعة لصالح "عمادة البحث العلمي والدراسات العليا- جامعة اليرموك"
Cheques should be paid to Deanship of Research and Graduate Studies - Yarmouk University.

| **Correspondence** | **المراسلات** |
|---|---|

| | |
|---|---|
| **Subscriptions and Sales:**<br>Deanship of Research and Graduate Studies<br>Yarmouk University<br>Irbid – Jordan<br>**Telephone**: 00 962 2 711111 Ext. 3735<br>**Fax**: 00 962 2 7211121 | مراسلات البيع والاشتراكات:<br>عميد البحث العلمي والدراسات العليا<br>عمادة البحث العلمي والدراسات العليا – جامعة اليرموك<br>اربد – الادرن<br>هاتف 711111 2 962 00   فرعي 3735<br>فاكس 7211121 2 962 00 |