An-Najah National University
Faculty of Graduate Studies

THE EFFECT OF EDUCATIONAL GAMES ON IMPROVING STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILLS IN THE SIXTH GRADE AT NABLUS DISTRICT

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Dedication

It is my pleasure to dedicate this work to my husband, Muaawyah who has been the true supporter during my study. A special dedication is given to my dearest parents Hussein and Ann who always provide me with their advice and encouragement me to fulfil my ambitions and dreams.

I also dedicate this work to my father-in-law, Muhammed and my mother-in -law, Wafaa whom I respect and appreciate for their continuous support.

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Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that I submitted the thesis entitled:

THE EFFECT OF EDUCATIONAL GAMES ON IMPROVING STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILLS IN THE SIXTH GRADE AT NABLUS DISTRICT

I declare that the work provided in this thesis, unless otherwise referenced, is the researcher's own work, and has not been submitted elsewhere for any other degree or qualification.

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Date: 00/00/2022

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Abstract

The current study aimed to investigate the effect of using educational games on improving the speaking skills of 6th grade students at Al-Majd private school in Tell village. To achieve this objective, the quasi-experimental design was used. The sample consists of (40) students who were divided into two groups: experimental and control. The experimental group studied unit 13th of the Sixth grade textbook English for Palestine "Where does rain come from?" through using six educational games while the control group studied the same material using the traditional method of teaching without using these games. To answer the study questions and test the hypotheses, three instruments that include quantitative and qualitative data were used: a pre-test, a posttest and a classroom observation checklist. The statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 21 was used to analyze the quantitative data while the thematic analysis approach was used to analyze the qualitative data collected through the classroom observation.

Among the results of the study, the experimental group performed better in the posttest than the control group, namely statistically significant differences. This indicates that teaching students using educational games is effective in improving their speaking skills. Furthermore, the thematic analysis showed that most students used their oral language to ask and answer questions, role-play certain texts, and repeat words correctly in addition to using their voice quality with a great deal of self-confidence. Students in the experimental group were also highly motivated to participate in conversation with their teacher and their peers while performing better pronunciation when they were asked to answer oral questions or to ask about specific thoughts.

Keyword: Educational Games, Speaking Skills, Sixth Grade.

Chapter One
Introduction and background

1.1 Introduction

The first chapter in this study presents the theoretical background of using educational games with their various definitions, advantages and potentials. The chapter also presents the context of teaching English as a foreign language in Palestine while briefly introducing the Palestinian curriculum English for Palestine. Chapter one, furthermore, introduces objectives of the study, statement of the problem, the study significance, questions and hypotheses of the study, its limitations and the operational definitions of the terms used throughout the study.

1.2 Context

Since the dawn of history, the human language has played significant roles in the evolution of nations and civilizations. In particular, the ability to produce verbal languages enabled people to communicate with others, to share ideas and thoughts and to build great civilizations. In this respect, the English language is recently recognized as the first major international language either as native speakers and second /foreign language speakers. This prominent status of English motivates people around the globe to learn this language hoping to be able to communicate with others skillfully, appropriately, and effectively. Hence, people around the world are becoming more interested in learning English while protecting their native languages Kumaravadivelu (2012). Nevertheless, language learning does not exist in a vacuum as it necessitates a great deal of commitment, planning, preparation, effort and time. In addition, the success of language learning relies heavily on many influential factors including teachers' competences, curriculum, materials, resources, methods of teaching, and so forth.

With reference to the concept of teaching methods, educators have always stressed the importance of using varied methods of teaching as a means to attract students' attention on the one hand, and on the other hand to take into consideration some classroom variables. In a recent study, Khalil & Semono (2020) found that 73% of Saudi EFL teachers prefer to use the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), claimed that choosing an appropriate teaching method is the most challenging task in teaching English.

Such claim undoubtedly confirms the significant effect of the teaching methodology on students' learning and achievement and also agrees with Aburezeq (2006) who maintained that the teaching method is fundamental to any language teaching process. Such importance might be due to the fact that the choice of teaching methods should take into account the needs of school-aged learners and also include major aspects of school learning such daily lessons with multiple activities, materials design and supplementation that draw on learner background knowledge and other school learning Rilling & Miller (2020).

In the Palestinian context where English is taught as a foreign language from the first grade (6 years old), a national curriculum titled English for Palestine (E4P) has been used for more than two decades. One basic feature of this new curriculum is reflected in emphasizing the use of the communicative approach to language teaching and learning Lazaraton (2016). According to a document issued in 2015 by the General Administration of Curricula (GAC) in the Palestinian Ministry of Education, the major principles of E4P are derived from a variety of models which are consistent with learner-centered approaches to learning, the thematic/topical model and the communicative approach to language teaching and learning. Accordingly, one basic aim of E4P curriculum is to promote students' positive attitudes towards English through learning songs, poems, proverbs, games and other cultural activities (GAC, 2015, p.22).

According to Rilling & Miller (2020), elementary school level need kinesthetic activity (movement) where they physically change spaces within the classroom even in simple ways like forming work groups, collaborating with a partner, playing competitive games, or engaging in simple drama and role-playing activities to keep them fresh and help in learning through action. Such activities and others are meant to provide the target groups with more opportunities to practice the English language since learners are expected to listen to some instructions given by the teacher, ask and answer questions, and they might be asked to write something or read something silently or orally to perform a task within a specific activity or a game. For example, when teachers introduce new vocabulary, they can be better practiced in games rather than using worksheets Wright et al (2006).

One aspect of practicing English language is through speaking which is considered a fundamental productive skill in second language (L2) learning in the communicative

approaches to language teaching Lazaraton (2014). This skill is an essential element of the communicative competence that involves both the linguistic forms as well as the basic knowledge of when and how to use these linguistic forms correctly and appropriately. The importance of practicing speaking in the classroom is not only emphasized as a communication skill, but also as a means to facilitate the acquisition of the target language and master an academic content. In the case of teaching English as foreign language (EFL) to young learners, speaking is seen as the most important skill because the new language is largely introduced, understood, practiced and automatized orally Nazara (2011).

One objective of learning EFL is to improve students' ability to communicate in English which covers the four major skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Believing in the crucial role of the speaking skill, EFL teachers have used various methods and techniques to improve students' ability to speak English at least inside the classroom. Meanwhile, when the speaking skills are somehow emphasized or at least given some attention in EFL classrooms, a problem emerged when it comes to testing oral skills, since teachers frequently use inadequate oral tests or even fail to test them at all Kumaravadivelu (1992). Besides, when it comes to the stage of preparing a speaking test, it becomes the most challenging to prepare, administer, and score Madsen (1983). However, in response to some problems faced by EFL students, teachers are advised to opt for interesting activities and tasks in order to attract students' interest to speak English such as puzzles, role-play, dramatization, chanting and games.

Practicing English language through games is expected to enhance students' proficiency which supports the chance for more interaction inside the classroom environment. Games have the potential to enhance learners' interest to work harder towards their best capacities, and also help learners adopt roles and engage story lines previously inaccessible to them Jackson &McNamara (2017). Najar (2014). highlighted the importance of using the educational games to improve language learning through practicing as practice makes perfect especially when the students are given equal opportunities to learn and practice the English language. Jackson &McNamara (2017) argued that educational games offer the unique potential to capture learners' interest, compel them to persist with targeted tasks, and can result in improved mastery of educational content and skills. However, games do not take their importance from their

content but form their potential for doing, making decisions, solving problems and interacting Steinkuehler et al (2012).

Learning is more effective when the environment involves fun and suits students' learning styles, as it includes important components such as curiosity, adventure, imagination, role-playing, challenge, visualization, problem solving, discovery, and creativity Yıldız (2021). Nevertheless, games are more than fun, since they can support meaningful learning Steinkuehler et al (2012).

By the same token, Quinn &Liza (2011) stated that games enable students to focus more and more on the situation, while good games allow students to become more active in the learning process and help them discover new concepts and ideas. It is found that games have the power to provide students with more opportunities to practice the speaking skill Iaremenko (2017) while helping learners in using the language more appropriately instead of thinking about language Amato (1996). Moreover, using educational games can help students to practice language in many kinds of communication Ersoz(2000). This view agrees with Jackson &McNamara (2017) who highlighted the benefits of educational games as a means to engage learners with content and tasks, to help learners acquire new knowledge where the game requires repeated application of the relevant knowledge across a variety of contexts. This idea goes in line with games' ability to build in their design a variety of language, exposition and explanation to help the players to get new knowledge from playing the game Steinkuehler et al (2012).

Nguyen & Pham (2018) maintained that games should be used in the speaking classroom to enhance the ability of students to communicate. Thus, when using games to teach students how to play games, learners may not feel that they practice the language so that they can naturally practice it. Secondly, one of the ways to get students interested in conversation is to use games since shy students will have the opportunity to engage in the learning process to develop their English.

In reality, one reason that hinders students from speaking in the target language is that they are influenced by affective factors such as anxiety and lack of motivation Christine & Burn (2012). In this respect, it was found that students' motivation is a critical factor in second language learning Kumaravadivelu (2012). However, foreign language learners lack the exposure to use English for communication or interaction because they are

usually given limited opportunities to use English outside the classroom Damayanti (2010).

Accordingly, EFL teachers are advised to expose students to more and more English in the classroom through interesting activities in order to involve them within something valuable rather than just sitting on their desks to passively listen to the teacher "talk and chalk". When teachers aim to inspire students to communicate, they need to use the communicative approach that avoids concentrating on grammar and vocabulary, but stresses the importance of language functions Harmer (2001). Using games in this regard is hoped to help students express themselves and build self-esteem Plamner (2008).

1.3 Statement of problem

In the Palestinian context, all students learn English as a foreign language from the first grade (6 years old). A relatively new curriculum titled English for Palestine has been used for about 20 years. This first English language curriculum for Palestinian schools aims to help the Palestinian students to communicate with others skillfully, appropriately,and effectively and prepare them for all language learners. within these basic objectives, the curriculum is built on the principles of the communicative approach of teaching English where the speaking skill is emphasized and EFL teachers are encouraged to employ various methods and techniques to improve students ability to speak English inside and outside the classroom.

One of these problems is the use of traditional methods of teaching sauch as the Grammar –Translation Method (GTM) where teachers and students are allowed to use Arabic in many cases. Students, as a result, find it difficult to express themselves in English. Therefore, this study aims to explore the effect of educational games on improving students speaking skill in the sixth grade at Nablus district.

1.4 Objectives of the study

The current study aims to investigate the effect of using educational games on improving the speaking skills of 6th grade students in Tell private school. Moreover, the study attempts to offer a routine- breaking strategy that may add some fun to EFL teaching contexts through using educational games.

1.5 Questions of the study

To achieve the objective of the study, four questions were posed as follows:

1. What is the effect of educational games on improving students' speaking skills in the sixth grade at Nablus district?

2. Are there any statistically significant differences at ($\alpha = 0.05$) in students' speaking skills in the pretest between the experimental group and control group?

3. Are there any statistically significant differences at ($\alpha = 0.05$) in the effect of educational games on improving students' speaking skills in the posttest between the experimental group and the control group?

4. Are there any statistically significant differences at ($\alpha = 0.05$) in the effect of educational games on improving students' speaking skills in the pretest and posttest in both groups (experimental and control)?

1.6 Hypotheses of the study

In light of the study questions, the following hypotheses are formulated:

1. There are no statistically significant differences at ($\alpha = 0.05$) in students' speaking skills in the pretest between the experimental group and control group.

2. There are no statistically significant differences at ($\alpha = 0.05$) in the effect of educational games on improving students' speaking skills in the posttest between the experimental group and the control group.

3. There are no statistically significant differences at ($\alpha = 0.05$) in the effect of educational games on improving students' speaking skills in the pretest and posttest in both groups (experimental and control).

1.7 Significance of the study

Based on the various advantages of using educational games in the context of EFL learning, this study is hoped to provide EFL teachers with some useful resources and materials that can help them update their methods of teaching. Such resources are hoped to add some fun to the learning-teaching process and motivate the students to interact and learn in a more flexible environment. Teacher of English in Palestine might benefit from this study and its procedures to plan for more motivating activities and exploiting the

various benefits of using games as mentioned in many places in the theoretical background and the literature review. This research endeavor might direct the teachers' attention towards the importance of using educational games in developing the speaking skill of their students by expanding the opportunities for students' interaction and engagement. Such aim is hoped to give some voice to the students to better express themselves in a more enjoyable atmosphere.

The outcomes of this study are also hoped to provide curriculum designers with a framework to infuse the EFL textbooks with educational games that help teachers in updating their methods of teaching to meet students' interests and needs. Furthermore, the results might encourage EFL supervisors to hold training courses on the possible benefits of using educational games in EFL teaching context. These gains are hoped to benefit the students to improve their speaking skills on one hand, and to come closer to more student- centered approaches of teaching where students play active roles in the classroom. All in all, investigating the possible effects of using educational games might motivate other researchers to conduct experimental or quasi- experimental studies that tackle the effect of educational games on students' achievement and their skills.

1.8 Study limitations

The current study involves some limitations which might hinder the generalization of the results to other groups:

1. **Locative limitation**: the study was conducted in only private school because during spread of covid-19 pandemic I can't reach at Nablus.

2. **Temporal limitation**: this study was carried out in the second semester of the scholastic year 2021-2022 during spread of covid-19 pandemic.

3. **Human limitation**: the population of the study comprised sixth grade students.

4. **Topical limitation**: the study examined the effect of educational games on improving sixth graders' speaking skill in Nablus district.

1.9 Operational Definitions of terms

Educational games:

Meaningful activities used by the teacher in the classroom to achieve educational objectives with some fun and engagement. In this study they included *Draw Swords, Puzzle, Pictionary, Talking Tokens, Spot the Difference, and Telephone.*

Speaking skill:

The ability of the students to express themselves orally using English.

coherence:

Refers to the students' ability to produce connected meaningful ideas using oral skills.

1.10 Summary

This chapter started by pointing out the importance of using educational games on improving students speaking skill. It also included objectives of the study, statement of problem, questions of the study, hypotheses of the study, significance of the study, limitations of the study. Finally, the chapter ended with definitions. The following chapter will introduce some theoretical concepts and the related studies to the present study.

Chapter Two
Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical background

Nowadays teaching is viewed as a profession that involves science and art. It is a field that needs constant development and continuous updating in methods, materials and tools to align with the needs of learners and their changing interests. In this regard, Rilling & Miller (2020) maintained that a competent teacher should be knowledgeable on the subject matter (English language systems), flexible enough, collaborative, and skillful in performing the teaching and learning tasks. Accordingly, English language teaching in particular necessitates using various approaches and techniques to attract students' attention and enhance their active participation in the learning process. Educational games have been introduced in the context of teaching English as a foreign language by the majority of teachers all over the world. Literature in this field is abundant with various definitions, classifications and advantages of educations games.

2.2 Educational games: definitions and advantages

The word game is defined by Merriam Webster Dictionary as a physical or mental competition conducted according to rules with the participants in direct opposition to each other and mostly involves an activity engaged in for diversion or amusement. However, educational games are games used for the purpose of education (Jackson 2006). Educational games enable students to unify and repeat information in a flexible environment Asan &Sezgin (2020). Thus, they are often preferred at the elementary school level where students take an active role and develop their stimulate thinking in the educational process Kapidere (2021). It is important to mention that the well-designed games are good for learning, not poorly designed ones Steinkuehler et.al. (2012).

In this respect, Mubaslat (2012) believes that games should not be considered as marginal activities filling in odd moments when the teacher and class have nothing better to do. Games need to be at the center of teaching at all stages of the lesson, provided that they are suitable and carefully chosen. Games, moreover, can be used to revise the material and help students to recall the content in an entertaining form. Nevertheless, some teachers may claim that games are time- consuming only practiced for fun and enjoyment.

To confront the claims of teachers who disbelieve in the usefulness of educational games, Mubaslat (2012) provided several features and merits of using games in the classroom such as their potentials to: break the routine of the language, motivate and challenge students, help students to practice the four skills, encourage students to interact and communicate, create a meaningful context for language use and aid students to continue their learning. By the same token, well-designed games can increase students' active participation, provide motivation, attract students' attention, reduce disciplinary problems, facilitate recalling, develop cognitive and affective skills, promote self-confidence, problem solving, critical thinking, and creativity Yıldız (2021). Petri; Amp and Wangenheim (2016) maintained that educational games are used to increase concepts or to evaluate students about understanding of the topics, When the educational games are well- chosen and well-designed, they can help students to learn the language easily while providing fun and entertainment McCallum (1980).

In the field of teaching English, games play significant roles in the classroom since they can provide students with ample opportunities to practice the speaking, encourage some kind of competition among students, increase a cooperative environment, reduce anxiety, increase students' self-confidence and add flexibility and fun to the educational process Ibrahim (2017).

2.3 The speaking skill: nature and components

Languages are known to be used by native and non-native speakers. English is widespread international language that is spoken by enormous populations across the world. This language consists of four basic skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Speaking is considered a productive skill that requires the user to produce something orally. However, the ability to speak the English language is related to several components including pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, accuracy, and fluency in addition to some affective factors such as anxiety, self-confidence and interest Brown (2000). With regard to pronunciation, it refers to the classic or regular speech of words and the way for learners to clearly produce utterances or words when they speak Kline (2001). English pronunciation does not only mean mastery of sounds or isolated phrases, rather it involves knowing and practicing the explicit way of making it easy to understand a speaker's thoughts Gilbert (2008).

The second component is vocabulary which is very important for successful communication. Without vocabulary, one is unable to achieve successful communication although some non-verbal elements might help. Besides, certain words help us convey our concepts, ideas and emotions whether orally or in a written form Turk (2003).

Fluency is defined as the ability to speak fluently and precisely with ease. It usually refers to the flow and efficiency with which one expresses ideas, particularly when speaking, without interruption. Accuracy, on the other hand, involves the ability to use the necessary vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation correctly. These components and factors represent great challenges for those who learn English as a foreign language since the spoken language tends to be challenging, and often frustrating Bradshaw (2020) to the extent that is considered to be the most challenging and difficult of all human mental operations Taylor (2011).

According to Brown (2000), the utmost challenge faced by learners when trying to master the speaking skill is not only related to the nature of sounds, words, phrases, and discourse forms that characterize any language, but rather the interactive nature of communication which is relevant to how and when to say something. Meanwhile, knowing how we learned speaking ourselves can help us to form ideas about how we should teach speaking Rilling & Miller (2020).

2.4 Types of speaking

Brown (2001) listed six types of oral production that students are expected to carry out in the classroom: imitative, intensive, responsive, transactional, interpersonal, and extensive.

1. Imitative speaking is type of speaking performance in which the student imitates or repeats. a word, phrase, or sentence. The purpose of imitation is to focus on some particular elements of language form without the effort to understand the meaning.

2. Intensive speaking requires the students to produce stretches of language designed to practice some phonological or grammatical aspect of language.

3. Responsive speaking involves brief interaction with someone in short conversations, simple requests, comments, and greetings.

4. Transactional dialogues: the aim of this types is to exchange or convey specific

information for the purpose of maintaining social relationships.

5. Extensive speaking involves complex stretches of discourse with the least interaction, so this speaking is called monologue speaking because the listener cannot respond.

2.5 Types of classroom speaking performance

The classroom is considered a fertile environment for practicing the speaking skills. Sometimes, especially in EFL context, it is somewhat the only environment available for learners since English is not used outside the classroom for daily use. In many countries, there might be little or no flexibility to address speaking and pronunciation, which are typically not nearly as high a priority as grammar and reading which turn to be the center of language instruction Murcia et al., (2010).

Such situation should encourage EFL teachers to employ different approaches and a variety of activities and resources to help the students practice the speaking skill, at least in the classroom. With regard to teaching speaking, Thornbury (2012) listed the following approaches:

1. The situational approach that highlights specific situations with vocabulary and structures taught and practiced for oral proficiency within the situation such as buying a train ticket, ordering tea or a meal, or making purchases.

2. The speech act approach which stresses specific functions such as saying thanks, giving apologies, expressing regret or sorrow, making or accepting an invitation, offering advice or condolences, etc.

3. The strategic approach that focuses on strategies such as using lexical phrases for greetings and leave takings (e.g., 'how's it going?,' 'see you next … week/month/Saturday'), paraphrase, and circumlocution (i.e., talking around a word you don't know).

4. The genre approach that focuses on social purposes and goals like narration and presentations.

With reference to the activities, Rilling & Miller (2020) argued that using whole class activities and collaborative interactions with peers enable students to get a sense of control over language and classroom routines are the first activity that can begin each lesson and take only a few minutes at most. Nunan (2003) suggests using role-plays where students

are given specific roles to practice speaking in the target language. According to Scott & Ytreberg (1990) role-playing involves students posing as someone else, such as the teacher, shop assistant, or a parent. During the lesson, the teacher informs students about the situation and their expected roles to carry out the role-play. A good example of using classroom activities to enhance speaking is through simulation. Role play and simulation are almost similar, but simulation is much harder especially when a real-world environment is provided in which students can simulate real-life encounters as if they were going through them in real- life situations such as business meeting, an encounter in an airplane cabin, or an interview (Harmer, 2007).

2.6 Previous studies

Researchers around the world have conducted a great deal of research to explore the effect of using educational games on learning and achievement. To this end, Yıldız (2021) examined how educational games influenced the achievement of 7th grade students with different learning styles.

A total of 120 secondary school students from Erzurum's central and rural areas were included in the study. The Kolb Learning Style Inventory and the researcher's accomplishment exam were used to collect data. The educational game strategy significantly increased student achievement, with no statistically significant differences in achievement between students with different learning styles.

The goal of GENYÜREK (2021) was to investigate the impact of intelligence games on the language development of preschool children aged 5 to 6. There were 52 youngsters in the study, 25 in the experimental group and 27 in the control group. Data were collected using a Personal Information Form and the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test. The experimental group was given intelligence games for 8 weeks and 32 activity hours during the study's experimental portion.

Results demonstrated a substantial difference in the experimental and control group children's language development scores in favor of the posttest. Furthermore, the experimental group' post-test scores were shown to be significantly higher than the control group children.

The language development scores showed a substantial difference in favor of the posttest.

Moburaki (2020) explored the effect of using educational games on teaching vocabulary and grammar among fifth grade pupils. For this purpose, two groups were selected and assigned in an experimental group and a control one. The communicative approach and educational games to teach vocabulary and grammar were used with the experimental group, whereas the control group received regular instruction by using the communicative approach only. Pupils in both groups were pre- tested using the vocabulary and grammar test. Finally, the same vocabulary and grammar test was post- tested on both groups. Findings indicated that the experimental group exceeded the control group in vocabulary and grammar posttest. Thus, the educational games proved to have effectiveness in pupils' vocabulary and grammar.

Asan & Sezgin (2020) aimed to investigate the effect of educational games on fourth-grade students' impromptu speaking skills and speaking anxiety. The sample involved 28 students in a public school in the first semester of 2018-2019. In the experimental group, Turkish lessons were taught and supported by educational games for six weeks. In the control group, it was processed in accordance with the basic teaching-learning approaches in the Turkish Curriculum. Findings revealed that educational games positively affected the three-dimensional speaking order and style of speech, including the use of voice, which are composed of audibility and meaningfulness dimensions, topic and thought transfer, refinement, and use of time. Findings also showed that educational games did not affect students' speaking anxiety.

Kayan & Aydın (2020) examined the effect of computer-assisted educational games on grammar academic achievement and attitudes toward grammar. The study adopted the quasi-experimental design based on a quantitative study with a pretest-posttest nonequivalent group. The sample comprised two classes of 6th grade students studying at a middle school. The experiment lasted for 12 weeks. Findings revealed that students' achievement in grammar made a significant difference on achievement and attitude of students in favor of the experimental group.

Fanfarelli (2020) aimed to explore the effect a game that teaches students about brain structure and function using narrative and badges. The sample consisted of 80 students who were assigned into four groups. The first group played a base version of the game, the second group played the base version plus fantasy-based narrative, the third played

the base version plus digital badges and the fourth played the base version and both fantasy-based narrative and digital badges. Results showed that using the game had no significant effect on students' learning and engagement.

In Al- Karak Directorate of Education, Al Kafawin (2018) investigated the impact of educational games on fourth-grade students' achievement and motivation in public and private schools. To obtain data, the researcher employed an accomplishment exam and a questionnaire. The study instruments (pre-test-post-test, questionnaire) were checked for validity and reliability. The study's sample included (160) male and female students. After implementing the educational games technique, the results revealed a statistically significant difference (a0.05). The findings revealed that the games strategy has a positive impact on student achievement. Furthermore, the results demonstrated that the experimental group's attitudes were more favorable than the control group's, with mean scores of (3.27 and 2.39).

Üstünda & zcan (2018) investigated the impact of instructional games on the self-concept levels of inclusive secondary school pupils. The study used a semi-experimental design with a control group for the pretest and posttest. The experimental group consisted of 12 students (4 girls and 8 boys), while the control group consisted of 12 students (6 girls and 6 boys). The educational games program lasted 11 weeks, with two courses every week. The control group received the program that did not include educational games. The research used the Self-concept Scale (SCS) to collect data. In terms of physical competence, physical appearance, peer relationships, and general self-concept aspects, the results demonstrated a significant difference in favor of the students in the experimental group.

Giannakos and Chorianopoulos (2017) aimed to identify how different types of serious games affected the learning performance and attitudes of eighty 13-year-old middle school pupils in the first grade. The participants were divided into four groups of 20 pupils, each of whom practiced a game in three different ways. The first group played a storytelling game, the second group played a game with no story, and the third group played and modified a video game. Minor changes in learning performance were discovered, but large differences in students' attitudes toward learning through the game were discovered.

Varan (2017) analyzed the effects of the educational games on the expansion of the fourth-grade elementary school students' lexical development and found that vocabulary teaching through educational games improves their mental lexicons. Dewi et al (2017) examined the effects of the communicative games on speaking skills of junior high students in Jakarta, Indonesia. They concluded that such games have positive effects on the fluency of students' speaking.

Iten & Petko (2016) sought to examine the effect of serious games on students' enjoyment and willingness to play in addition to the relationship between game enjoyment, self-reported cognitive and motivational learning gains and test results. To achieve these objectives, seventy-four elementary school students participated in the study. Results indicated only a minor part in students' willingness to learn with serious games. Of greater importance was the students' expectation that the learning game would be easy and instructive. The level of actual enjoyment of the game also had a smaller influence than expected.

Samhouri (2016) examined the role of educational games in developing the foreign language skills from the teachers' perspectives who teach Way Ahead textbooks for the students of the basic grades (1-6) in Amman Private Schools. The sample comprised (205) teachers (190 males and 15 females) who taught English as a foreign language. Findings revealed that educational games have a major role in developing the foreign language skills as well as the learning environment.

Al Khwaiter (2015) investigated the effect of using educational games on teaching English vocabulary to primary stage pupils. The sample consisted of forty 6th grade female pupils at The First Primary School in Onizah. They were divided into two equivalent groups: a control group and an experimental group. Educational games were used in teaching the experimental group, while the traditional method was used with the control one. The study lasted for four weeks in the second term of the academic year. An achievement test with (25) items was used as a pre- and post-test. Results revealed that there were statistically significant differences between the two groups, favoring the experimental group. Pupils who used educational games were more successful than their counterparts in English vocabulary achievement.

Ferrer (2015) carried out a study to explore the impact of using educational games on vocabulary acquisition and perceived learning gains, as compared with a non-gaming tool. Findings revealed that students' enjoyment with the game had no significant impact on students' learning outcomes.

Mubaslat (2012) who investigated the impact of educational games on foreign language acquisition among Jordanian elementary school students found that the experimental group's post-test results were better than the control group indicating that games have a positive impact on primary school achievement and create an interactive environment. Likewise, Üstünda (2012) who investigated the impact of educational games on 6th grade students' basic language skills, concluding that educational games are far more functional than existing teaching techniques in terms of long-term learning and developing basic language skills.

In a Colombian public school, Leó and Cely (2010) investigated the impact of playing games on students' speaking skills. The study included forty students, 20 males and 20 females. The data was gathered using video recordings, instructor notebooks, and surveys. Students felt more confident when they performed oral tasks, especially when using gaming activities, according to the findings.

The impact of playing language games to improve speaking abilities in English courses at a primary school in Singapore was explored by Rama et al. (2007). Seventy-eight students made up the sample. One group was taught by communicative means, while the other was taught through games. Games helped more than half of the students improve their communication in the second language, according to the findings. Students in the experimental group agreed that they could communicate more effectively in English.

2.7 Comments on the previous studies

The aforementioned literature review conducted in the field of using educational games reveals significant results in many disciplines and various aspects. With regard to the impact of using educational games on students' achievement, several studies confirmed the positive impact of these games Yıldız (2021), Al Kafawin (2018), Mubaslat (2012). Other studies showed the positive effect of different types of educational games on the development of language skills including, listening, speaking, reading, writing,

vocabulary and grammar among various groups of students GENİŞYÜREK (2021), Moburaki (2020), Asan & Sezgin (2020), Kayan & Aydın (2020), Varan (2017), Samhouri (2016), Al Khwaiter (2015), Gedik (2012), Leó & Cely (2010), Rama et al. (2007).A third group of researchers found positive attitudes towards using educational games among teachers and students and students motivation to learn Kayan & Aydın (2020), Al Kafawin (2018), Üstündağ & Özcan (2018).

The overall results indicated that using educational games yielded positive results in the field of teaching English as a foreign language. These results represent a driving force for other researchers to investigate the effect of educational games on other areas among other groups of learners in different geographical areas.

However, the current study was implemented during the spread of COVID-19 pandemic all over the world. The implementation was carried out using a quasi-experimental approach among a purposeful sample of 6th grade students in a private school in Nablus district. As a result of the ongoing pandemic and its disastrous effects on the educational sector on Palestine, the current study is hoped to achieve some positive impact on students' motivation as well as their learning outcomes since using games has revealed several benefits on the part of the students in many countries all over the world. The Palestinian students badly need more motivating methods and approaches of teaching English since they learn English as a foreign language with very limited opportunities to practice it outside the classroom walls. Furthermore, they have passed through many decades of occupation which has left negative impact on their well-being and their education when they are sometimes deprived of their right to play or even to move. Hence, using games in this current study can add something to the Palestinian education with its specific characteristics and conditions.

Chapter Three

Methodology and Procedures

3.1 Introduction

Chapter two presents the methodology and procedures used in this study. Thus, it is divided into several sections that aim to cover the following components: study design, population and sample, the study variables, instrumentation, description of educational games employed throughout the current study. Finally, it introduces the statistical treatment used to analyze the collected data.

3.2 Study design

To investigate the effect of using educational games on improving the speaking skills of sixth grade students at Nablus District, the quasi-experimental design was used with two groups of students. The first group was the experimental group which studied the teaching material through the educational games. The second group comprised the students who studied the same teaching material through the traditional method and without using the educational games. Besides, classroom observations were administered to enrich the collected data.

3.3 Population

The population of the study comprised 6th grade students in Nablus District whose mother language is Arabic. English is considered as a foreign language for all the participants. The participants who have similar educational and cultural background, have been learning English through the Palestinian curriculum English for Palestine since first grade.

3.4 Sample of the study

The sample of the study consisted of 40 sixth graders (male and female) who were distributed into two experimental and control groups. Table 1 displays the number of students in each group.

Table (1)

Distribution of the Sample According to gender

Group	Gender	Number	Total
Experimental group	Male	16	20
	Female	4	
Control group	Male	12	20
	Female	8	
Total			**40**

3.5 Instruments of the study

To achieve the study objectives, three instruments that involved quantitative and qualitative data were used: a pre-test, a posttest and a classroom observation checklist. The pretest was administered to detect the students' proficiency in vocabulary and pronunciation. The posttest was administered after the intervention to examine the impact of educational games on student's speaking skills.

1. The Pre-test:

To make sure that the participants of the experimental and control groups have equivalent competence and to evaluate their pronunciation and vocabulary proficiency knowledge, the pretest was administered. Thus, students were asked to read some words they know or hear, and answer the pre-test (See Appendix A).

2. Pre-test description:

To make sure that the two groups of students are equivalent, the pretest was administered to both the control and experiment group. The means, the standard deviation, and the T-value are displayed in Table (2).

Table (2)

Results of t-test for the Pre-Test between the Experimental and Control Groups

Group	No.	Mean	Std. Dev.	T	P-value
Experimental	20	9	4.8	1.009	0.076
Control	20	21	10.5		

Table (2) shows that both groups (the control and the experimental) almost have the same competence in the pretest. The table shows that there is no statistically significant difference since the P-value is $0.076 \geq 0.05$ indicating that the two groups possess an equal linguistic proficiency.

3. The Post Test

The aim of the posttest is to measure the effect of educational games on improving students' speaking skill in English language. To prepare the posttest, the researcher relied on "English for Palestine 6" textbook. Furthermore, the researcher consulted five EFL teachers who have good experience in teaching English for Palestine curriculum.

The items of the test were distributed into three sections. The first section includes two main questions to measure language integrity and correctness, the second section includes one question to measure language coherence, and the final section includes one question to measure the integrity of the content. The test consisted of twenty sub-questions, with 50 points. During the entire experiment, the researcher tested the students' ability to pronounce certain words correctly, as well as the extent of their talk during implementation.

In the first part of section one, the teacher gave the students a piece of paper containing a short paragraph. The teacher used the tape recorder and asked students to listen to the paragraph. Later, the students were asked to present a short oral summary of the paragraph. The teacher then asked students some questions related to the paragraph including true or false and word opposites. In the second part of section one, the teacher showed the students some cards. Each card contained one word to be repeated and spelled by the students. Students were asked to provide the meaning of these words and to use them to fill spaces in the given sentences.

In section two, the teacher used flash cards with new words. Again, the students were asked to repeat these words and give new words related to them. For example, the word "clinic". Then, the teacher divided the students into groups, and gave every group two cards that contained "since" and "for". After that the teacher gave them, some sentences that require either "since" or "for" to give the answer orally. The teacher, then, explained the wh-questions by using picture description technique. For example, the teacher gave the students some pictures and asked them to describe the pictures by using wh- questions. Such as, what did Rania do? Who went with Fatima?

In section three, the teacher showed the students new words and explained them. The students were asked to role- play an activity. The students were asked to use the story

telling activity to repeat sentences in the correct order. In addition, Using the vocabulary of the content, the post-test table of specifications was designed. Test questions were categorized based on their Bloom Taxonomy level for knowledge. Additionally, the table included the percentages and marks assigned to each question. Based on the number of questions divided by the number of test items, a percentage is calculated for each question. The components of the table of specifications are shown in Table (3) below.

Table (3)

Table of Specifications for the Post-Test

Section No.	Knowledge	Comprehension	Application	Marks	%
Section 1	3 items	2 items	1 item	20	40 %
Section 2	4 items	1 item	2 items	18	36 %
Section 3	3 items	2 items	1 item	12	24 %
Total	10	5	4	50	100

Table (3) shows that the posttest is divided into three levels (Knowledge- Comprehension - Application). The following steps were followed to determine how many questions to include at each level in the test: The relative weight for the knowledge level = (Number of the items in the level÷ the total number of the test) (10 ÷20=50%). The relative weight for the comprehension level is (5 ÷20=25%). The relative weight for the application level is (5 ÷20=25%).

Validity and Reliability of the posttest

 The posttest was given to a jury of experts to verify its validity. Their recommendations were taken into consideration when the final version of the test was prepared. In this regard, the experts recommended that the posttest should be supplemented by some oral tasks and activities that help in assessing the extent of the speaking skill improvement. Upon these recommendations, some tasks were included such as:

1. Imitative speaking tasks to evaluate students' ability to repeat words, phrases, or sentences. This kind of tasks focuses on prosodic (e.g., stress patterns), lexical (e.g., correct pronunciation of words), or grammatical (e.g., the pronunciation of grammatical suffixes such as -ed, -ing) features of English Hatipoğlu (2021). In this regard, Ayas et al.(2020) argued that students who are asked to repeat a new word, part of a song several times are likely to find them enjoyable and useful.

2. Intensive assessment tasks where attention is paid to some phonological and lexical-

semantic facets of the target language such as in read-aloud, direct response tasks, sentence and dialogue completion, and limited picture-cued tasks Hatipoğlu (2021).

3. Responsive Assessment Tasks: these tasks are based on short interactions and assess comprehension which means that the conversations are limited and short and include asking simple questions, brief apologies/requests, standard greetings. With reference to ask/answer techniques, it is flexible enough to assess one student at a time, a pair or a group of students.

4. Interactive Assessment Tasks: such tasks require relatively longer stretches of interactive discourse (games, role-plays, discussions).

On the other hand, Cronbach Alpha was used to test the reliability of the posttest as shown on Table 4.

Table (4)

Reliability coefficient of the posttest

Aspect	Marks	Reliability coefficient
Language	20	0.799
Cohesive	18	0.851
Content	12	0.831
Total mark	50	0.811

Table (4) above indicates that the range of reliability were between (0.799- 0.851) which is suitable for conducting the study.

4. Classroom observation

In order to get more data about students' performance in the classroom as a result of using the educational games, the classroom observation technique was administered by a peer teacher to investigate the impact of using educational games on students' speaking skills. The basic aim of this classroom observation is to provide the study with valuable data while the teaching stage is taking place. Thus, a checklist was constructed to identify the domains that need to be observed (See Appendix B). The observation checklist included 10 items that represent specific observation categories that pay more attention to the student talk rather than teacher talk. The criteria were measured using a four- level scale ranging from excellent, good, acceptable, unsatisfactory. To get the most accurate data,

the peer teacher who was supposed to play the role of the observer was trained by the researcher.

To get more reliable data, the researcher relied on the review of literature to find out several suggestions for evaluating the speaking skill. Some of these suggestions are given by Al-Kailani & Muqattash (2008) as follows:

1. Students are asked to repeat sentences, recite a passage or a dialogue.

2. Students can be asked to play-roles in a dialogue or a situation.

3. Students are asked to answer questions orally. to make a request, or to read part of the passage, or even to form oral questions based on a given text.

4. Students are asked to describe what they see in a picture or a diagram.

5. Students can be asked to give a summary of something read.

6. Students are asked to improvise a short story,

7. They can be asked to talk about charts, drawings, tables and the like.

8. They can be asked to give explanations, descriptions, make reports …etc.

9- Students are to be encouraged to engage in real conversations/debates…etc.

The Educational Games

To conduct the study, the researcher studied the unit "Where does rain come from? "for the sixth grade in English for Palestine curriculum to decide where to use educational games. The educational games were selected purposefully to meet students' age, culture and English language proficiency. These games included the following:

1. Draw Swords:

To play this competitive game, students were split into small groups. Then, one student was chosen from each group to start the game by placing the dictionary or textbook under their arms. The teacher, then needed to say a word or image which the students must then race to find in their books (like drawing a sword from under their arm!). The first student to find the word/image is the winner and the game continues with different words/images until every student has had a turn.

2. Puzzle:

The teacher divided the students into small groups. Each group was given a paper that contained different letters and some words. The teacher role was to ask the students to put a circle on the suitable word after collected it. The students were asked to spell these words.

3. Pictionary:

In this game, the teacher paired up the students and gave each student a picture, placing it face down so partners cannot see each other's cards. The students were asked to describe the picture for their partner using some words.

4. Talking tokens:

In this game, a ball or some other object is moved from one student to another indicating turns at talk either with the whole class or in small groups. One student might be asked to describe something, to repeat a word….etc.

5-Spot the difference:

During this game, the teacher used to show two similar pictures but with some minor changes in one (such as color or size of objects, etc.). The teacher displayed one picture and then showed the second picture for only a few seconds. Students then were asked to tell what differences they noticed using English. These pictures were taken from the unit *"Where does rain come from?"*.

6. Telephone:

This game involved the teacher preparing a sentence and whisper it into the ear of one student. That student turns to the next student and whispers in his/her ear, trying hard to say exactly what the teacher said. This goes on around the classroom until the last student has to say out the sentence that he/she heard. Thus, it is considered a fun listening and speaking game that can enhance students' listening, speaking, pronunciation and vocabulary. It is worth mentioning here that both listening and speaking are strongly interrelated in a form that produces a comprehensive system of oral activities in EFL classroom.

Five experts in the field, including professors, English teachers and supervisors, reviewed these educational games to ensure their appropriateness. Some recommendations were given by the experts focusing on the best implementation procedure to use them effectively such as when to use them (in the beginning, in the middle, in the end), and for what purpose (warmer, presentation, evaluation). Furthermore, the researcher benefited from the literature review to find out some recommended suggestions offered by educators in the filed of educational aids and games. For instance, Kilani (2007) listed the following suggestions to create interest and secure success with the chosen game:

1. Choose a suitable game that enables the majority of students to participate in one or another. Such game needs to be age-appropriate and language-dependent.

2. Create interest n the game while asking the students if they like to play a game.

3. Give the students clear instructions with concrete examples with some Arabic to clarify the rules, roles and type of participation. Do not forget to encourage the students to participate.

4. Add some fun to the game to secure interest and interaction.

5. If you find that students get bored of the game, do not hesitate to stop playing it.

The teaching material:

To achieve the objectives of the current study, the 13th unit in English for Palestine for 6th graders was chosen purposefully. This unit is entitled "Where does rain come from? ". The unit has the following objectives:

- Say the new words correctly

- Answer concept questions

- Recognise the new words

- Read aloud

- Read for information

- Use the new words in context

Ask and answer questions

- Practise the structure (present simple for facts)

- Talk about the water cycle

- Listen for comprehension

- Do a crossword Reorder words

- Practise handwriting

- Write new words correctly

- Make a cartoon strip.

3.6 Data collection and Procedures

To achieve the objectives of the study, and over the second semester of the academic year 2020-2021, six educational games were used with the experimental group. Games varied in terms of their topics, time, organization, instructional aids, resources, objectives, targeted vocabularies, and presentation format. After that, the students were given he post-test (See Appendix B). During the teaching stage, a peer teacher from the same school who teach English was asked to carry out the observation after being trained by the researcher. Observation covered eight periods (classes). The observer was informed to use the observation checklist as well as writing down extra details related to the objective of observation such as students' speaking skill, vocabulary use, interconnected sentences, students' interaction and the like.

3.7 Data Collection

The required data were collected through the pretest, the posttest and the classroom observation that was administered the help of a peer teacher.

3.8 Data analysis

The statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 21 was used to analyze the quantitative data collected though the posttest. The means, frequencies, standard deviation, and independent sample t-test were used. To analyze the qualitative data collected through the observation checklist, the researcher with the help of another teacher (the observer) did the analysis manually as the number of the lessons observed was limited to eight periods.

3.9 Summary

This chapter described how the study was conducted. It included the study design, population of the study, sample of the study, instruments of the study, validity, reliability, methods used for collecting and analyzing data. The following chapter will include the results of the study.

Chapter Four

Results of the Study

4.1 Introduction

The current study aimed to investigate the effect of using educational games on improving the speaking skills of a sample of 6th grade students in a private school in Nablus District. Based on this objective, chapter three presents the results of the study in terms of quantitative and qualitative data. The chapter basically incorporates a narrative, numerical, and tabular presentation of the results since the data were collected through qualitative and quantitative instruments. Results will be presented in relation to the study questions and hypotheses at the same time using descriptive statistics and narrative descriptions.

4.2 Results of the Study Questions and its hypotheses

As mentioned previously, four questions guided this quasi-experimental study. To achieve the study objectives, the proposed questions will be answered in accordance with the descriptive statistics used for data analysis as follows:

4.3 Results Related to the First Question and the First Hypothesis

The first question: Are there any statistically significant differences at ($\alpha = 0.05$) in students' speaking skills in the pretest between the experimental group and control group?

The first hypothesis: There are no statistically significant differences at ($\alpha = 0.05$) in students' speaking skills in the pretest between the experimental group and control group.

Based on the results of the pretest, the mean scores between the experimental group and control group were compared using means, standard deviations, percentages, and independent samples t-tests to answer the first question and test the first hypothesis. Table (5) below displays the results.

Table (5)

Means, Standard Deviations and Independent Samples T- test of the differences in the mean scores of the students on the pre-test between the experimental group and the control group

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	P-value
Control group	20	9	4.8	1.009	0.076
Experimental Group	20	21	10.5		

Table (5) shows that the mean score of the control group was 9 whereas the mean score of the experimental group was 21. Besides, the table shows that the P-value (0.076) is less than t -value (1.009). Accordingly, the pretest scores for both the experimental and control groups did not show any statistically significant differences as (P-value= 0.076 > 0.05). This means that the null hypothesis is accepted. This result tends to disagree with Al Khwaiter (2015) who found that there were statistically significant differences between the control group and the experimental group, favoring the experimental group and also disagrees with Mubaslat (2012) who found that the gains of the experimental group was better than the controlled one. The result is also not in line with Rama et al. (2007) whose study revealed that the students in the experimental group agreed that they could speak better using English.

4.4 Results Related to the Second Question and the Second Hypothesis

The second question: Are there any statistically significant differences at ($\alpha = 0.05$) in the effect of educational games on improving students' speaking skills in the posttest between the experimental group and the control group?

The second hypothesis: There are no statistically significant differences at ($\alpha = 0.05$) in the effect of educational games on improving students' speaking skills in the posttest between the experimental and the control groups.

To answer the second question and test the second hypothesis, the means, standard deviations, percentages, and T- test for Independent Samples were used to test the differences in the mean scores between the experimental group and the control group in the posttest. The results are shown in Table (6) below.

Table (6)

Means, Standard Deviations and Independent Samples T test results of differences in the mean scores in the posttest between the experimental group and the control group.

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	P-value
Control group	20	23.9	10.1	1.014	0.086
Experimental Group	20	44.7	5.42		

Table (6) shows that the mean score of the control group was 23.9 while the mean score of the experimental group was 44.7. Besides, the table shows that the P-value (0.086) is less than t -value (1.014) but more than (α = 0.05). These figures reveal that the posttest mean scores of the experimental group and the control group did not differ significantly from each other as (P-value= 0.087 > 0.05). This means that the null hypothesis is accepted.

4.5 Results Related to the Third Question and the Third Hypothesis

The third question: Are there any statistically significant differences at (α = 0.05) in the effect of educational games on improving students' speaking skills in the pretest and posttest in both groups (experimental and control)?

The third hypotheses: There are no statistically significant differences at (α = 0.05) in the effect of educational games on improving students' speaking skills in the pretest and posttest in both groups (experimental and control).

To answer the third question and test the third hypothesis, the means, standard deviations, percentages, and T- test for Independent Samples were used to test the differences in the mean scores of the pretest and posttest between the experimental group and the control group. Table (7) below includes the results.

Table (7)

Means, Standard Deviations and Independent Samples T- test results of differences in the mean scores of pretest and post-test in both groups (the experimental and the control)

Test	Group	N	Mean	SD	T	P-value
Pre-test	Control group	20	9	4.8	0.454	0.722
	Experimental Group	20	21	10.5		
Post-test	Control group	20	23.9	10.1	-2.101	0.001
	Experimental Group	20	44.7	5.42		

Table (7) shows that the mean score of the experimental group is (21/44.7) which is greater than the mean score of the control group (9/21). Furthermore, the (P- value = 0.001 < 0.05) which means that the null hypothesis is rejected indicating that there are statistically significant differences in the mean scores of students' performance in the posttest between the experimental group and the control group in favor of the experimental group. Additionally, there was no statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups in terms of the average scores since (P - value = 0.722 > 0.05).

3.6.Results related to the Fourth Question

The fourth question: What is the effect of educational games on improving students' speaking skills in the sixth grade at Nablus district?

The tables above show that using educational games had a positive impact on the speaking skills of the experimental group (44.7) compared with the controlled group which scored (23.9).

4.7 Results of classroom observation

To collect more data about students' performance in the classroom as a result of using the educational games, a classroom observation checklist was used and covered eight lessons. A peer teacher who was trained by the teacher (the researcher) administered the observation. The data collected through the observation checklist were analyzed and categorized manually using the thematic analysis approach. Using this approach enabled the researcher to approach the collected data to identify common themes that help to achieve the study objectives. Accordingly, three main themes emerged as follows:

1. Most students used their oral language to ask and answer questions, role-play certain texts, and repeat words correctly.

2. The majority of students were able to use their voice appropriately with a great deal of self-confidence.

3. Students were highly motivated to participate in conversation with their teacher and their peers.

4. Most students showed better pronunciation when they were asked to answer oral questions or to ask about specific thoughts.

4.8.Comments on results

Chapter four presented the results related to the questions and hypotheses of the study. It also contained some tables to illustrate the results of the four questions of the study which can be summarized by saying that there was a great obvious effect of using educational games on improving students' speaking skills.

Chapter Five

Discussion of the Results, Conclusion, and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

The major objective of this study was to examine the effect of using educational games on improving students speaking skill of the sixth grade. Four questions and three hypotheses were formulated to achieve these objectives. This chapter presents the discussion of the results followed by a conclusion and some recommendations.

5.2 Discussion of the Study Results

5.3 Discussion of the Results of the First Question and the First Hypothesis

The results of the pretest when comparing the experimental group and the control group did not show any statistically significant differences. These results indicate that the control group and the experimental group nearly had the same linguistic proficiency with regard to vocabulary, coherence and grammar. Such results might be due to the fact the students in both groups study English at the same private school using the same curriculum English for Palestine. This national curriculum tends to focus on vocabulary, grammar and content knowledge like the lesson about "Where does rain come from". Within this unit in particular, students are given the opportunity to repeat new vocabulary related to the unit, answer questions orally, repeat certain extracts of the text, read the passage aloud, read sentences in some activities aloud, read aloud certain bubbles in a form of role-play, reorder jumbled words to form structurally correct and meaningful sentences, work in pairs to ask and answer sentences relevant to the unit basic themes, listen and repeat a summary of the text and so on.

The aforementioned result seems to agree with Barzilai & Blau (2014) who found that using simulation games had no significant gains in problem-solving following the intervention. The result also agrees with Fanfarelli (2020) who found that using the game had no significant effect on students' learning and engagement and also disagrees with Giannakos & Chorianopoulos (2017) and Iten & Petko (2016)whose study revealed minor differences in learning performance as well as a minor part in students' willingness to learn with serious games. Moreover, the result agrees with **Ferrer (2015) who revealed that students' enjoyment with the game had no significant impact on students'**

learning outcomes.

5.4 Discussion of the Results of the Second question and the Second Hypothesis

According to the results of question two, the experimental group and the control group did not reveal significantly different mean scores on the posttest since (P-value= 0.087 > 0.05). Such values indicated the acceptance of the null hypothesis which means that using educational games resulted in no statistically significant effect on the speaking skill of the experimental group compared with the control group. This result might be ascribed to the use of simple educational games with a scientific text that discusses the water cycle. Furthermore, the result might be due to the limited time and scope of implementation as the study covered only one unit for two weeks only and also implemented during the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Such result is in consistent with Yıldız (2021) who found that the educational game method had no statistically significant differences among the achievements of students with different learning styles. However, the result of the current study disagrees with the result of GENİŞYÜREK (2021) who revealed a significant difference in the language development scores of the experimental and control group children in favor of the posttest when the post-test scores of the experimental group children were found to be significantly higher than the control group children. Furthermore, the result tends to disagree with Moburaki (2020) who found that the experimental group exceeded the control group in vocabulary and grammar posttest indicating the educational games proved to have effectiveness in pupils' vocabulary and grammar. The result also disagrees with Asan &Sezgin (2020) who found that educational games positively affected the three-dimensional speaking order and style of speech, including the use of voice, which are composed of audibility and meaningfulness dimensions, topic and thought transfer, refinement, and use of time.

5.5 Discussion of the Results of the Third question and the Third Hypothesis

The analysis of the posttest performance of students in the experimental and control groups showed statistically significant differences in the mean scores. The experimental group performed significantly better on the test than the control group. This result indicates that the experimental group benefited from using the six educational games which in turn left a positive impact on their speaking and achievement score. This result

can be ascribed to the various advantages of using educational games as revealed by Kapidere (2021), Wangenheim (2016), Ibrahim (2017), to name a few. During the classroom observation which lasted for two weeks showed that the chosen educational games created enjoyable contexts where the students found several opportunities to use the language meaningfully and to communicate naturally. It was also obvious that the teacher was able to use these games as a means to change the classroom daily routine into a more enjoyable atmosphere withing language-dependent frame that takes into account students' linguistic level and their age characteristics.

This result partly goes in line with Yıldız (2021) who revealed that the educational game method significantly enhanced students' achievement. The result also agrees with Asan & Sezgin (2020) who found that educational games positively affected the three-dimensional speaking order and style of speech, including the use of voice, which are composed of audibility and meaningfulness dimensions, topic and thought transfer, refinement, and use of time. The result also is in line with Al Kafawin (2018) who showed that games strategy has a good effect on improving the achievement of students and the attitudes of the experimental group were more positive than their counterparts in the control group.

5.6 Discussion of the Results of the Fourth question

Results of the fourth question showed that using educational games in EFL classrooms had positive effect on students' speaking skills. This result might be due the various advantages of educational games as discussed by Kapidere (2021), Wangenheim (2016), Ibrahim (2017), to name a few. Hence, the result seems to agree with many researchers such as Yıldız (2021), Moburaki (2020), Asan &Sezgin (2020), Al Kafawin (2018), Üstündağ & Özcan (2018).

5.7 Discussion of the results of the classroom observation

Using the thematic analysis approach to analyze the data collected through the classroom observation checklist revealed that the majority of students in the experimental group succeeded to use their oral language skills four different functions such as asking and answering questions, participating in role-plays, participating in repetition tasks and activities, reading certain extracts and exercises aloud. Furthermore, most students were able to use their voice appropriately with a great deal of self-confidence. They were also

highly motivated to participate in conversation with their teacher and their peers. Additionally, most students showed better pronunciation when they were asked to answer oral questions or to ask about specific thoughts. Such results can be ascribed to a variety of advantages of educational games that enabled the students to actively participate in the classroom and to make use of the opportunities provided by the teacher to practice the speaking skill in many situations and in different stages of the lesson for two weeks. During the implementation stage, the teacher dedicated the best efforts to use educational games that have the potential to attract student's attention through focusing on fun and interesting games that suit students' age, interests and their linguistic proficiency. What makes these games useful is that the teacher used a variety of techniques for presenting the teaching material through using the educational games in addition to asking the students to work in groups and pairs to practice the speaking skill for many functions within the objectives of the unit.

5.8 Conclusion

The current study aimed at investigating the effect of educational games on improving the speaking skill of the sixth grade at Nablus district. The results of this quasi-experimental study revealed that the students in the experimental group benefited from the educational games to improve their speaking skills more than the students in the control group who were taught with traditional teaching methods. In other words, the students in the experimental group scored significant improvement as a result of implementing a variety of educational games when learning the unit "Where does rain come from. The overall results highlight the importance of using educational games in EFL classrooms since they have the potential to motivate students to interact with their teacher and their peers as well. Using classroom observation also confirmed that these educational games enabled the teacher to use different methods of teaching that emphasize the active role of students who found more opportunities to practice the English language in an enjoyable atmosphere. During the eight weeks of classroom observation, it was clear that the sixth-grade students revealed feelings of enjoyment, engagement and satisfaction which positively contributed to their speaking skills. These feelings are considered to be a natural output of paying games which were appropriate for their age development and their linguistic level. However, one difficulty faced by the teacher was in finding and selecting educational games that suit students' age and level

especially in terms of vocabulary, pronunciation, implementation and topic. Thus, EFL teachers should take into account which games to employ, when to use them, for what purpose, and how to link them with the teaching material. This means that using educational games should be an integral part of the lesson plan if the aim is to use them for enabling students to practice a variety of linguistic elements such as vocabulary, spelling, pronunciation, structure in addition to the basic four skills.

All in all, although the results of the current study seem to disagree with many studies conducted in different countries including developed and developing countries, the present study used classroom observation as a tool to observe students' performance while participating in the classroom tasks and activities. These tasks and activities were performed with the help of simple games that did not require any complicated technology or internet applications which might be unattainable in some marginalized areas third-world countries including Palestine. Furthermore, the use of these games was strongly connected with the new curriculum in Palestine entitled English for Palestine with its clear emphasis on using the communicative approach of teaching English. These factors may limit the results to this specific target group of students and thus, open the floor for future research to address similar issues in Palestine and outside.

5.9 Recommendations

Based on the study results, the following recommendations are offered:

5.9.1 Recommendations to EFL teachers

- Teachers are recommended to employ different types of educational games that take into account students' proficiency, level, and interests. Such as, Pictionary, telephone and puzzle were more fun and interest.

- Teachers are recommended to vary their methods of teaching English in order to meet students' learning styles by focusing on telephone and puzzle game.

- Teachers are recommended to think of new ideas to create appropriate games that can enhance the speaking skill.

- Teachers need to consider students' individual differences, needs, interests and learning styles in selecting the activities for discussion.

5.9.2 Recommendations to the Ministry of Education (MoE)

- The Ministry of Education is recommended to provide the schools with the required materials and resources to create and innovate new educational games.Such as, video game.

- EFL supervisors at (MoE) are recommended to organize training courses and workshops to train teachers on how to apply such techniques of speaking while teaching speaking English.

- Curriculum designers are recommended to enrich the English for Palestine curriculum with more educational games that related to the speaking skill.

- Decision makers are recommended to increase the number of weekly classes given for English in order to pave the way for more classroom tasks and activities.

5.9.3 Recommendations for further research

- Researchers are recommended to examine digital games to assess and foster for all language learner and their impact on speaking skill.

- Researchers are recommended to conduct more research about the effect of games in public schools and private schools

- Researchers are recommended to examine the role of gender in using educational games.

- Researchers are recommended to explore teachers' and students' perspectives of using educational games.

- Other further research studies are due to examine the effect of the so-called gamification on students' speaking skills as a means to cope with the new generation of students.

- Researchers are recommended to study the effect of educational games on students' achievement in general and on specific language skills in particular.

- Researchers are recommended to conduct studies that aim to find out the effect of educational games on students' motivation and their critical thinking.

5.10 summary

Chapter five involved the discussion of the results, conclusion and recommendations to EFL teachers, the Ministry of Education and recommendations for further research.

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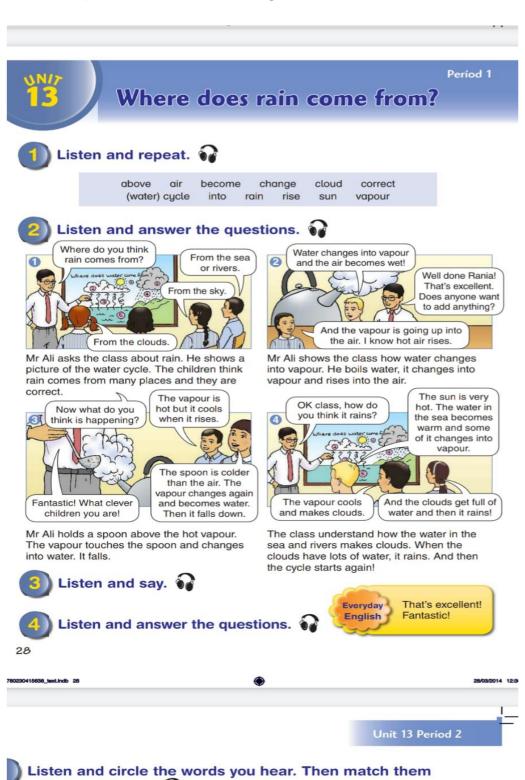
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Appendices

Appendix A
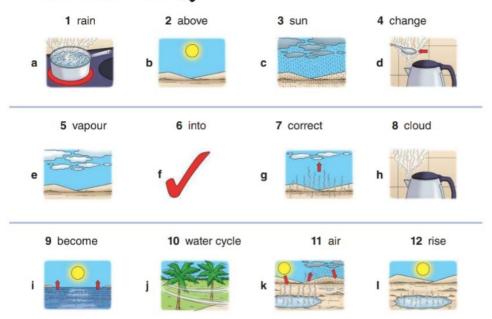
Unit 13 in English for Palestine -Sixth grade "Where does rain come from?"

1 Listen and circle the words you hear. Then match them with the pictures. 🎧

1 rain   **2** above   **3** sun   **4** change

a   b   c   d

5 vapour   **6** into   **7** correct   **8** cloud

e   f   g   h

9 become   **10** water cycle   **11** air   **12** rise

i   j   k   l

2 Listen and repeat the passage on page 28. 🎧

3 Work in groups of four or five. Read the passage on page 28 aloud.

4 Read. Then work in pairs and circle the correct words.

1 The sun is high up in the sky below / above us.
2 The rain makes the air / cloud wet.
3 The rain is in the wind / clouds.
4 The water changes into snow / vapour when it is hot.
5 The hot air / rain rises and changes into clouds.
6 It rains when there is a lot of water in the clouds / snow.
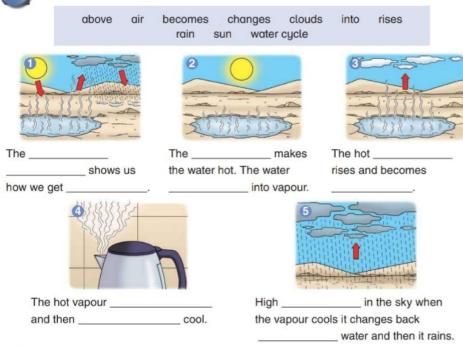
29

1 Listen. Say *Boo*. Say *Hurray*. 🎧

2 Read. Then tick ✔ the correct sentences.

48

1 Listen. Say *Boo*. Say *Hurray*. 🎧

2 Read. Then tick ✔ the correct sentences.

1 Water vapour changes into clouds. ☐

2 The clouds become heavy with water and it rains. ☐

3 Vapour is air with water in it. It feels dry. ☐

4 The sun and clouds are high above us. ☐

5 The water cycle tells us how we get food. ☐

6 Rain comes from the plants. ☐

3 Read and complete the sentences.

1 The _____ makes the water get hot.

2 The hot water changes into _____ .

3 The hot vapour _____ .

4 The _____ cools the vapour.

5 Then the vapour _____ into clouds.

6 The clouds get heavy and it _____ .

4 Read page 28. Then write answers to the questions.

1 What makes the water get hot? _____

2 What happens to the hot water? _____

3 Why does hot water rise? _____

4 How does hot water become clouds? _____

5 When does it rain? _____

6 What does it mean when your teacher puts a tick ✔ on your work?

_____

30

9780230415638_text.indb 30   ◉   28/03/20

1 Look and complete the sentences with the correct words.

above   air   becomes   changes   clouds   into   rises

1 **Look and complete the sentences with the correct words.**

| above | air | becomes | changes | clouds | into | rises |
| rain | sun | water cycle |

The _____ _____ shows us how we get _____.

The _____ makes the water hot. The water _____ into vapour.

The hot _____ rises and becomes _____.

The hot vapour _____ and then _____ cool.

High _____ in the sky when the vapour cools it changes back _____ water and then it rains.

2 **Work in pairs. Read the sentences in activity 1 aloud.**

3 **Read and circle the correct words.**

1 The water cycle tell / tells us how we get rain.
2 First the sun makes / make the water hot.
3 Then the water change / changes into vapour.
4 The hot vapour rise / rises into the air.
5 Next the vapour becomes / become a cloud.
6 In the end it rain / rains because the cloud is very heavy with water.

4 **Read aloud. Then answer the questions.**

Where does rain come from?
It comes from …

What makes the air rise?
The air rises because …

1 **Read and think. Complete the sentences with correct words.**

1 **Read and think. Complete the sentences with correct words.**

1 Rain _____ (come) from the clouds.

2 Water _____ (change) into vapour when it is hot.

3 Hot air _____ (rise).

4 Hot air _____ (cool) and _____ (become) clouds.

2 **Think and write the correct questions and answers.**

How does rain happen?

1 How / water / become / hot? _____
   Answer: The / sun / make / the / water / hot. _____
   _____

2 What / hot water / change / into? _____
   Answer: hot water / change into / vapour / and / rise / up. _____
   _____

3 How / vapour / change / into / clouds? _____
   Answer: vapour / rise / in the sky / and / cool. _____
   _____

4 Why / it / rain? _____
   Answer: clouds / get / heavy / and / rain / fall / down. _____
   _____

3 **Work in pairs. Ask and answer questions about the water cycle.**

What is the water cycle?

What happens first in the water cycle?

How does it happen?

How does it rain?

What rises?

32

1 **Listen and answer the questions.**

We talked about the water cycle.

1 **Listen and answer the questions.** 🎧

We talked about the water cycle.

Did you know that rain comes from the sea?

2 **Read. Then listen and circle the correct words.** 🎧
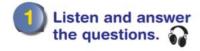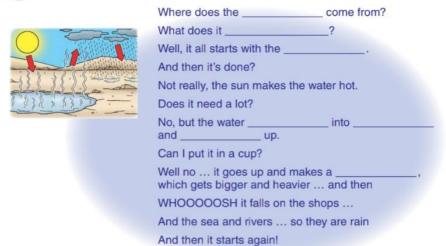
1 Rania and Omar learn about the food / water cycle.
2 Rania says that rain comes from the sea / sun.
3 Omar thinks that water changes into vapour / clouds.
4 Omar tells his mum that hot air rises / cools and makes snow / clouds.
5 Rania adds that clouds get more and more water / air.

3 **Listen and complete. Listen and repeat.** 🎧

Where does the _____ come from?
What does it _____?
Well, it all starts with the _____ .
And then it's done?
Not really, the sun makes the water hot.
Does it need a lot?
No, but the water _____ into _____ and _____ up.
Can I put it in a cup?
Well no … it goes up and makes a _____, which gets bigger and heavier … and then
WHOOOOOSH it falls on the shops …
And the sea and rivers … so they are rain
And then it starts again!

4 **Work in pairs. Ask and answer questions.**

What makes the rain?   Where does it come from?

Why does it fall?   Why does it rise?

33

Unit 13 Period 7

1 **Read the clues and complete the crossword.**

Across →

52

1 Read the clues and complete the crossword.

Across →
3 The hot, wet _____ goes up.
5 Another word for 'up'.
6 100% in a test means that everything is …
8 We understand about the rain from the water …
9 Another word for 'high'.
10 What makes the water hot?

Down ↓
1 What does the water change into?
2 The water that falls down is …
4 Another word for 'change'.
7 The rain falls from the …

2 Write correct sentences. Put the words in the correct order.

Remember, use a CAPITAL letter at the start of a sentence. Use a full stop at the end of a sentence.

1 makes First the sun get water hot the

_____

2 vapour hot Then the rises

_____

3 cools when becomes Next it clouds vapour

_____

4 In the end get heavy rain and the clouds falls down

_____

3 Work in groups of four. Write sentences about your weather pictures.

4 Write the words. Practise your handwriting.

above	air	become	change	cloud	correct
into	rain	rise	sun	water cycle	vapour

34

---

1 Read and complete the sentences. Check your spelling.

1 When the _____ is _____ us it

1 **Read and complete the sentences. Check your spelling.**

1 When the _____ is _____ us it feels hot.

2 It makes water _____ into _____.

3 The _____ and water _____ hot.

4 The vapour _____ and makes _____.

5 When there is too much water, the cloud changes _____ water again and it _____.

6 When Mr Ali talks about the _____ _____ he tells the pupils they are all _____.

Excellent!

2 **Work in groups of three or four. Make a cartoon strip showing the weather and how you think it happens.**

First the sun makes the water hot.

Then the sea water changes into vapour.

Next the vapour rises. Then the vapour cools and makes big black clouds.

The wind moves the clouds.

The rain falls.

The trees get water.

Appendix B

Observation Checklist

Teacher : Ms. Mais Shtayah   **Observer** :

School: Al- Majd Modern Private School   **Class** : 6th Grade

No.	Item	Excellent	Good	Acceptable	Unsatisfactory
1	The student uses voice loudly and clearly.				
2	The student uses English to express personal thoughts orally.				
3	The student is able to pronounce the words correctly.				
4	The student answers the questions orally.				
5	The student is able to ask oral questions fluently.				
6	The student can speak using full sentences.				
7	The student feels free to say what he/she wants.				
8	The student uses words and phrases orally.				
9	The student can role- play certain texts effectively.				
10	The student uses accurate language while speaking.				

Thanks a lot

Appendix C

The achievement test (Posttest)

Mr Ali asks the class about rain. He shows a picture of the water cycle. The children think rain comes from many places and they are correct. The rain comes from the sea, rivers, the sky, and the clouds.

Mr Ali shows the class how water changes into vapour. He boils water; it changes into vapour and rises into the air. Water changes into vapour and the air becomes wet. The vapour goes up into the air. The hot air rises.

Mr Ali holds a spoon above the hot vapour. The vapour touches the spoon and changes into water. Water falls. The vapour is hot but it cools when it rises.The vapour changes again and becomes water. Then it falls down.

The class understand how the water in the sea and rivers makes clouds. When the clouds have lots of water it rains. And then the water cycle starts again! The sun is very hot. The water in the sea becomes warm and some of it changes into vapour.The vapour cools and makes clouds. The clouds get full of water and then it rains!

_____

1. **Read and mark the statements true (✓) or false (✗):**

    b. Water vapour changes into clouds. ( )

    c. Vapour is air with water in it. It feels dry. ( )

2. **Read and write answers to these questions.**

    a. What makes the water get hot? ………………………………………….

    b. How does hot water become clouds? ……………………………………

3. **Read and complete the sentences.**

    1. The hot water changes into ……………………….

    2. The clouds get heavy and it ……………………..

4. Get from the passage:

    c. **Opposite:** cold…….…............…..… below …………………

    d. **Meaning:** change ……...........…...…. go up …………….............

5. Circle the correct words.

    1. The rain is in the **wind** / **clouds**.

    2. The **hot air** / **rain** rises and changes into clouds.

A- SECOND QUSTION

Complete the sentences with the correct words.

sneezed	goggles	water cycle	desert

1. Jerboas and gazelles are.................................... animals.

2. Mr Ali talks about the..

3. Ben has a..................................... lot since yesterday.

4. He has used.................................. to see under the water.

Circle the correct words.

1. Have you ever **floated** / **float** in the Dead Sea?

2. First the sun **makes** / **make** the water hot.

3. Rania and Amy have **ride** / **ridden** camels and horses.

4. Ben **have** / **has** had a backache, too.

Complete the sentences with correct words.

1. Hot air....................................... (**rise**).

2. Ben and Amy have............................ (**go**) to see the doctor this morning.

3. Hassan has.......................................(**see**) a beautiful sunset.

4. Have they ever...................................(**win**) a running race?

Write correct sentences /questions.

1. neverin the street skated ive...

2. How / water / become / hot?..
   The / sun / make / the / water / hot...

3. vapour hot Then the rises...

4. good morning how long have you been sick ....

5. used goggles and flippers? Has ever Omar ……..

Write the correct answers using *for*/ *since*.

1. How long has Ben been tired? 5 o'clock

   ....

2. How long have the children been at the park? two hours

   ....

Correct the underlined mistakes:

1. Ali **play** tennis every day.....................................

2. He **have** been sick for a week..................................

3. I have been a teacher **since** 10 years.................................

4. Have you (ever – never – since) sailed in a boat.

Complete the following sentences with words from the box below

coughing	sunrise	skin	hedgehog	oasis	clinic

1. We can see the ……………………….. in the morning.

2. The …………………………… is a desert animal.

3. Amy was …………. all night, so her mother took her to the ………………

4. You can see palm trees in the ……………………………

Correct the verbs between brackets using (present perfect).

……………………you ever ……………… under stars?(sleep)

Ben ……………… never ……………….in a boat. (sail)

The children ……………………..sick since yesterday.(be)

Choose the correct answer:

1. I have been tired {**for - since**} a week.

2. She has been at this school {**for – since**}2006.

3. My friend has been in Egypt {**for – since**} three months.

4. The water cycle **tell** / **tells** us how we get rain.

5. Omar **has** / **have** had an earache and a toothache since last night.

6. Bilal has **watched** / **watch** bats flying out of a cave.

Think and write the correct question and answer.

1- How / water / become / hot ....?

2- The / sun / make / the / water / hot ....

Write correct sentences.

1. Rania did ? What do

   …………………………………………………………………

2. did go ? Who Fatima with

   ……………………………………………………………………

3. Amy / in the river / what / doing / was / ?

   ……………………………………………………………………

Complete the following dialogue:

(sick – Thank – wrong – medicine – earache – since)

Doctor : What's _____ with you, Omar ?

Omar : I have an _____.

Doctor : How long have you been _____ ?

Omar : I've been sick _____ last night.

Doctor : Take this _____.

Omar : _____ you.

Put the following sentences in order:

1. Then the hot water changes into vapour. ( )

2. First the sun makes the water hot. ( )

3. In the end it rains because the cloud is very heavy with the water .( )

4. The hot vapour rises into the air. ( )

5. Next the vapour becomes a cloud. ( )

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Circle the correct words.

1. The girl was **pushing** / **speaking** her friend.

2. Let's go to the cinema **together** / **other**.

3. Omar's dad **were** / **was** driving to the farm yesterday evening.

4. Ben and his family **was** / **were** riding horses yesterday evening.

Join the sentences. Use "*when*" and "*while*".

The dog watched. The cat was chasing the mouse.

1. …………………………………………………………………………………………

2. …………………………………………………………………………………………

THANK YOU

جامعة النجاح الوطنية

كلية الدراسات العليا

أثر الألعاب التربوية على تحسين مهارات
الحديث لطلاب الصف السادس في محافظة نابلس

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الملخص

هدفت الدراسة الحالية إلى تقصي أثر استخدام الألعاب التعليمية في تحسين مهارات التحدث لدى عينة من طلاب الصف السادس في محافظة نابلس. ولتحقيق هذا الهدف تم استخدام التصميم شبه التجريبي مع 40 طالباً وطالبة تم تقسيمهم إلى مجموعتين: المجموعة التجريبية والمجموعة الضابطة. بحيث درست المجموعة التجريبية الوحدة الثالثة عشرة من كتاب اللغة الإنجليزية للصف السادس الابتدائي وعنوانها "من أين يأتي المطر؟" من خلال استخدام ست ألعاب تعليمية، بينما درست المجموعة الضابطة نفس الوحدة التعليمية باستخدام طريقة التدريس التقليدية دون استخدام هذه الألعاب. وللإجابة على أسئلة الدراسة واختبار فرضياتها، تم استخدام ثلاث أدوات تضمنت بيانات كمية ونوعية شملت الاختبار القبلي ، والاختبار البعدي، وبطاقة الملاحظة الصفية. ولتحليل البيانات الكمية تم استخدام الحزمة الإحصائية للعلوم الاجتماعية (SPSS) بينما استخدم منهج التحليل الموضوعي لتحليل البيانات النوعية التي تم جمعها من خلال الملاحظة الصفية. أظهرت نتائج الدراسة وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية في متوسطات درجات أداء الطلاب في الاختبار البعدي بين المجموعة التجريبية والمجموعة الضابطة لصالح المجموعة التجريبية مما يعني أن استخدام الألعاب التعليمية له تأثير إيجابي على مهارات التحدث لدى الطلاب.. علاوة على ذلك، أظهر التحليل الموضوعي أن معظم الطلاب يستخدمون لغتهم الشفوية لطرح الأسئلة والإجابة عليها وتمثيل لعب الادوار لنصوص معينة وترديد الكلمات بشكل صحيح بالإضافة إلى استخدام أصواتهم بشكل مناسب مع قدر كبير من الثقة بالنفس. كما أظهر معظم الطلبة حماسا ودافعية عالية للمشاركة في محادثات مع معلمهم وقد تميز ذلك بنطق أفضل عندما طُلب منهم الإجابة عن أسئلة شفوية أو طرح أسئلة حول أفكار محددة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: ألعاب تعليمية، مهارات التحدث، الصف السادس.