

**MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY AND TRADE  
HANOI UNIVERSITY OF INDUSTRY**



**DAO QUE GIANG**

**A STUDY ON LANGUAGE GAMES USED IN TEACHING  
ENGLISH VOCABULARY FOR 6TH GRADERS**

**MASTER THESIS IN ENGLISH LINGUISTICS**

**HANOI, 2024**

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Major: English Linguistics

Code: 8220201

MASTER THESIS IN ENGLISH LINGUISTICS

SUPERVISOR: Dr. Le Mai Van

Hanoi – 2024

**DECLARATION BY THE AUTHOR**

I, the undersigned, affirm that I am the exclusive author of this thesis.

To the best of my understanding, this thesis does not contain any content previously published by any other individual, except where proper acknowledgment has been provided.

Date: .....

Name: .....

Signature: .....

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## ABSTRACT

Today the significance of teaching and learning English is very important not only globally but also in Vietnam. Among language components, vocabulary is an important aspect and plays an indispensable role. Various methods have been employed in teaching vocabulary and language games stand out as one of the techniques that many previous studies have indicated to be effective in teaching English vocabulary. However, there were few studies that have proved the efficacy of language games in teaching English vocabulary, especially for the secondary level in Vietnam. This study was carried out to investigate students' and teachers' feedback, and current practices of language games used in teaching vocabulary for 6th graders. The study combined qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. The qualitative aspect involved observations during three English teachers incorporated language games into their teaching practices and teacher semi-structured interviews. Additionally, the quantitative component involved questionnaires with 100 6<sup>th</sup> graders to discover their views. The findings showed that both teachers and students had positive feedback about the integration of language games in vocabulary teaching. Language games positively influenced students' engagement, motivation, and overall retention of learned vocabulary. However, teachers did not apply this method regularly in their classes. The reason for this frequency was that teachers had to face up to certain difficulties in preparing materials and managing classes. This research advocated for the integration of language games as a valuable supplement to traditional vocabulary teaching methods.

Keywords: language games, vocabulary, 6th graders, perspectives, practices

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION BY THE AUTHOR.....	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	ii
ABSTRACT.....	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	iv
LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES.....	vii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	viii
INTRODUCTION.....	1
1. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY.....	1
2. AIMS OF THE STUDY.....	2
3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	2
4. SCOPE OF THE STUDY.....	3
5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY.....	4
CHAPTER 1: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	6
1.1. VOCABULARY.....	6
1.1.1. The definitions of vocabulary.....	6
1.1.3. Difficulties in learning vocabulary.....	8
1.1.4. Difficulties in teaching vocabulary.....	8
1.2. LANGUAGE GAMES.....	10
1.2.1. Definition of language games.....	10
1.2.2. Types of language games.....	11
1.2.3. Common language games used in teaching English vocabulary.....	12
1.3. LANGUAGE GAMES APPLIED IN TEACHING VOCABULARY.....	13
1.3.1. Advantages of language games.....	13
1.3.2. Disadvantages of language games.....	15
1.4. PREVIOUS STUDIES OF APPLYING LANGUAGE GAMES IN TEACHING VOCABULARY IN VIETNAM.....	16

1.4.1. Previous studies in the world .....	16
1.4.2. Previous studies in Vietnam .....	19
CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....	24
2.1. RESEARCH SETTING AND PARTICIPANTS .....	24
2.1.1. Research setting .....	24
2.1.2. Research participants .....	24
2.2. DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS .....	26
2.2.1 Questionnaires .....	26
2.2..2 Interviews .....	27
2.2..3. Observations .....	29
2.3. DATA ANALYSIS METHOD .....	30
2.4. PROCEDURE .....	31
CHAPTER 3: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION .....	34
3.1. ADVANTAGES OF APPLYING LANGUAGE GAMES IN TEACHING VOCABULARY .....	34
3.1.1. The feedback of students .....	34
3.1.2. The feedback of teachers .....	39
3.1.3. The comparison between students' and teachers' feedback on the advantages of applying language games in teaching English vocabulary .....	40
3.2. DISADVANTAGES OF APPLYING LANGUAGE GAMES IN TEACHING ENGLISH VOCABULARY .....	40
3.2.1. The feedback of students .....	40
3.2.2. The feedback of teachers .....	43
3.2.3. The comparison between students' and teachers' feedback on the disadvantages of applying language games in teaching vocabulary .....	44
3.3. GAME APPLICATION IN TEACHING ENGLISH VOCABULARY FOR 6TH graders .....	44
3.3.1. Frequency of applying language games in teaching English vocabulary for 6th graders .....	44

3.3.2. Language games used in teaching vocabulary for 6th graders .....	51
3.3.3. The comparison between students' and teachers' feedback on applying language games in real classes and actual practices .....	58
3.4. DISCUSSION .....	58
CONCLUSION .....	63
1. Recapitulation .....	63
2. Recommendations .....	64
3. Limitation of the study .....	65
4. Suggestions for future studies .....	66
REFERENCES .....	67
APPENDICES .....	75



## LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1.1. Data collection instruments correspond with two research questions.....	3
Table 3.1. List of lessons which used Lucky Numbers, Pictionary, and Guessing Game in Observations.....	48
Figure 3.1. The motivation of language games.....	35
Figure 3.2. The increase in students' vocabulary when language games were applied.....	36.
Figure 3.3. The benefit of language games in helping 6th graders remember vocabulary.....	37
Figure 3.4. Helping to practice vocabulary.....	38
Figure 3.5. Expectations about the existence of language games in teaching vocabulary.....	39
Figure 3.6. Interruption of language games in their learning process.....	42
Figure 3.7. Making noise and chaotic.....	43
Figure 3.8. Frequency of language games used in English lessons.....	46
Figure 3.9. Games that were mostly used in English lessons. ....	52
Figure 3.10. The teaching part in a lesson mostly used to organize language games.....	53
Figure 3.11. The appropriateness of language games compared to the curriculum.....	54
Figure 3.12. Student's desire to continue playing games.....	55

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

EFL	English as a Foreign Language
L2	Second Language
ESL	English Second Language

## INTRODUCTION

### 1. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

In the contemporary context, English teaching is popular and crucial all over the world. Vocabulary teaching plays an important role in teaching and learning any language; nonetheless, students frequently encounter numerous challenges when trying to absorb vocabulary. As Nguyen and Khuat (2003) claimed Vietnamese students typically find vocabulary sessions to be boring because they have not modified their learning patterns, such as writing terms on paper, attempting to memorize them, or passively taking in the teacher's explanations. In fact, there are numerous methods used in teaching vocabulary, and applying language games has been believed to be effective in vocabulary instruction. Language games are considered to be an indispensable part of the teaching language process. The study focused on the application of language games in teaching vocabulary to 6th graders. Students at this age have just switched to secondary school, and they are still familiar with how they were taught in primary school. The teaching style in secondary school is different from primary school which may cause students to lose interest and motivation in learning English vocabulary. According to Reece and Walker (1997), motivation was a key factor in the second language learning process. To motivate 6th graders to learn English vocabulary, teachers should change their teaching methods. Language games could help teachers to improve this situation as they are believed to provide young learners with a wide range of benefits. Gozcu & Caganaga. (2016). claimed that "games are one of the most important components in EFL classrooms" (p.127). Schuna (2010) confirmed that educational games help learners with concentration, self-esteem, and memory. Polat (2015) also concluded that young students' English skills improved as a result of the language games' assistance in helping them build strong vocabulary skills. They also absorbed information faster and stored terminology better and longer in their memory.

Polat (2015) also suggested that teachers could use language games in various situations for different purposes to motivate students or manage the classroom better and more easily. Therefore, exploring how teachers and students perceived and actual use of language games in classrooms is of great importance to improve the quality of vocabulary teaching. However, there was little research in Vietnam that reports on the teachers and students' views on language games and how language games are applied in teaching vocabulary, especially in secondary schools. Therefore, this study was conducted to occupy this gap to investigate the perspectives of teachers and students towards language games used in vocabulary lessons, and actual practices of language games in teaching vocabulary for 6th graders in Vietnam. Additionally, the study put forth recommendations for suitable and effective English language games for both teachers and students.

## **2. AIMS OF THE STUDY**

This study was carried out to explore the feedback of 6th graders and teachers about applying language games in teaching new words and how language games were used in vocabulary lessons. in teaching vocabulary for 6th graders.

The aims of this study were specified as following objectives:

(1) To investigate the advantages and disadvantages of applying language games by collecting the feedback of teachers and students about using language games in teaching English vocabulary to 6<sup>th</sup> graders.

(2) To investigate the actual practices of applying language games in teaching English vocabulary to 6<sup>th</sup> graders.

## **3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

To demonstrate clearly the aims stated above, this study followed below research questions:

1. What are teachers' and 6th graders' feedback about applying language games in teaching English vocabulary?

2. How language games are used in teaching English vocabulary to 6th graders?

Throughout the research process, all data collection instruments were employed to clarify the answers to these research questions as displayed in below table:

**Table 1.1**

*Data collection instruments correspond with two research questions.*

<b>Research questions</b>	<b>Research purposes</b>	<b>Data collection methods</b>	<b>Data sources</b>
1. What are teachers' and 6th graders' feedback on applying language games in teaching English vocabulary?	- Examine the feedback of teachers and students about applying language games in teaching English vocabulary to 6th graders.	- Questionnaires	- Students
		- Interviews	- Teachers
2. How are language games used in teaching English vocabulary to 6th graders?	- Investigate the actual practices of applying language games in teaching English vocabulary to 6th graders.	- Observations	- Students and Teachers

#### **4. SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The study only focused on language games in teaching and learning English vocabulary. Language games in this research include both offline games which could be brought into classes at school and online games which could be used in online lessons in case the schools are locked down such as when we are in a pandemic, the

teacher can create language games via certain platform to motivate students to learn English vocabulary.

The researcher mainly examined 6th graders, not all other grades of English students. Because 6th graders have just switched to secondary school, language games can help them feel less pressure when learning in a new environment and become more interested in absorbing a new language. The researcher intended to investigate whether language games benefit 6th graders in improving their learning engagement.

The study was conducted at a public secondary school in Vietnam where English is taught as a compulsory subject at all educational grades. The study concentrated on 6th-grade students and their current English teachers. It's crucial to note that this study solely examined the feedback of both students and teachers regarding the incorporation of language games for vocabulary teaching. Despite its limited scope, the study's findings remain robust, and it strongly advocates for further research to evaluate the efficacy of these methods on a larger scale.

Based on the scope stated above, the limitations of the research and suggestions for further studies are also discussed in the conclusion part, so that future studies will have more directions for further development.

## **5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

First, the study figured out the advantages of language games in teaching vocabulary to 6th graders. It supported previous studies to point out that language games improve students' motivation and experience in learning English vocabulary, help students remember new words effectively, and let them practice their vocabulary immediately in a real context.

Second, the study also discovered the disadvantages of the integration of language games in teaching English vocabulary. Teachers had difficulties in preparing a lot for

the games and managing their classes. A potential disadvantage of this method was that it could make classes unordered and chaotic if teachers cannot control their classes well.

Third, by discovering the advantages and disadvantages of using language games, this research benefits students in general, and secondary school students in particular. This study assessed the effect of applying games in teaching vocabulary in order to improve student motivation and experience. Thereby, the study helped 6th graders, who have switched from primary schools, gain a certain amount of vocabulary to continue learning to the next grades. Additionally, the study conveyed that games are not only for entertainment; students could harness the advantages of game-based learning to make the process of acquiring English more engaging and enjoyable.

In addition, this research also benefits teachers in general, and secondary school teachers in particular. This study helped them recognize language games as enjoyable and contemporary tools that can enhance their students' engagement in English lessons. Subsequently, teachers can determine the most appropriate situations to incorporate games into English vocabulary instruction.

Finally, the study contributes to the ongoing discourse on innovative teaching methodologies and offers practical insights for educators seeking to enhance their vocabulary teaching strategies.

## **CHAPTER 1: LITERATURE REVIEW**

This section begins with the definition, importance of vocabulary, and the difficulties in learning vocabulary. It is followed by the definitions, types, and benefits of language games. Finally, this chapter provides previous studies which can support the aims of this study.

### **1.1. VOCABULARY**

#### **1.1.1. The definitions of vocabulary**

First of all, it is necessary to provide a clear definition of vocabulary. Basically, vocabulary can be defined as the number of new words that students should know when they learn a new language, and these words should be enough to express their thoughts and help them understand what others are saying. Zhihong Bai (2018) said that vocabulary is one of three elements of language, a construction material, and the foundation of language. The more words you know, the more you will be able to communicate. Depending on one's point of view, the term vocabulary may be defined differently. Vocabulary can be generally defined as the knowledge of words and their meanings, or someone else may describe vocabulary as a list of terms listed alphabetically. Alizadeh I. (2016) defined that “A word, in most linguistic analyses, is described as a set of properties, or features, each word is the combination of its meaning, register, association, collocation, grammatical behavior, written form (spelling), spoken form (pronunciation) and frequency” (p.22).

Norbert (2005) also stated that vocabulary refers to words that students have known well enough to recognize quickly and accurately. Alqahtani (2015) also claimed that vocabulary is the total quantity of words required to represent the speaker or writer's ideas and meaning.

#### **1.1.2. The importance of vocabulary**



Vocabulary is the key for students to communicate in any language. Without vocabulary, nothing can be formed in a second language. Lewis (1993) stated that “lexis is the core or heart of language” (p.89). Vocabulary is a fundamental prerequisite for acquiring proficiency in any language. Cameron (2001) said that vocabulary is one of the knowledge areas in language and it plays a great role for students in acquiring a language. Vocabulary serves as a tool to express people's thoughts, and perspectives. According to Schmitt (2000), lexical knowledge is the key to communicative competence and the process of acquiring a second language. Richards & Renandya (2002) similarly asserted that vocabulary stands as a fundamental element of language proficiency, shaping how students engage in speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The importance of vocabulary lies in its role as the foundation of the language system.

Compared to grammar, vocabulary seems to be the first requirement in learning a foreign language, and grammar is the second one. Lewis (1993) stated that “when students travel, they don't carry grammar books, they carry dictionaries” (p.25). If people have vocabulary but without grammar, they can still express their thoughts. However, when people know grammar without vocabulary, nothing can be voiced out. Therefore, vocabulary is the most important tool to communicate in a foreign language. Wilkins (1972) claimed that “while without grammar very little can be conveyed; without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed” (p.111).

To evaluate the level of proficiency in a foreign language, people often rely on their proficiency in four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Nation (2001) noted that learning vocabulary plays an essential role in all these four skills. Certain studies indicated that individuals reading in a second language heavily depend on their understanding of vocabulary. The lack of vocabulary knowledge constitutes the primary and most significant hurdle that students need to overcome, as highlighted by Nation (2001) and Alqahtani (2015).

### **1.1.3. Difficulties in learning vocabulary**

Though vocabulary holds significant importance in the process of learning any language, students often face various challenges. According to Oxford (1990), the acquisition of vocabulary is identified as the most substantial and challenging aspect in the learning process of any language, whether it is a foreign language or a native tongue. This difficulty comes from the existence of tens of thousands of diverse meanings associated with words. Meara (1980) also posited that the acquisition of vocabulary was commonly identified as the most significant challenge faced by students when immersing themselves in a new language.

Nation (2000) argued that the learning of vocabulary is an accumulative process, where words become more enriched and firmly established when students encounter them repeatedly. However, repeating vocabulary makes students lose interest and gradually lose motivation. Riahipour and Saba (2012) noted that traditional methods, including memorizing lengthy word lists, studying derivations, repeating words, and translating, and completing fill-in-the-blank exercises, often lead to boredom among students. Scrivener (2012) also pointed out the lack of assurance that students can retain new words effectively when relying on long lists of words and translations.

### **1.1.4. Difficulties in teaching vocabulary**

Suci and Niken (2019) conducted qualitative research with eighteen students at a university in Indonesia to figure out the challenges encountered by English teachers. There were main difficulties as follows:

#### *1. Students' restricted understanding of word meanings and pronunciation*

According to Sedita (2005), a significant obstacle in teaching vocabulary is the students' restricted understanding of word meanings. In cases where students lack adequate knowledge of word meanings, their ability to comprehend the texts they read

is compromised. This causes teachers to fail in teaching vocabulary, and in teaching English in general.

*2. Insufficient memorization skills and low levels of learning motivation among students.*

When students struggle to retain previously learned words, their motivation to engage in vocabulary learning diminishes. Consequently, when teachers attempt to revisit these words, students may easily dismiss them and show little effort in recalling or remembering the vocabulary. The phenomenon of forgetting predominantly takes place shortly after students acquire new words (Griffin, 1992, as cited in Nation, 2005). Consequently, educators must pay careful attention to this issue. It is imperative to provide students with training in memorizing words, as highlighted by Shen (2003), who asserted that memorization is crucial for vocabulary learning: if words cannot be remembered, proper usage is less likely. Thus, the process of memorization becomes essential in the vocabulary learning journey for students.

*3. Teachers' restricted knowledge of words and teaching techniques.*

Dastjerdi and Amiryousefi (2010) emphasized the importance of understanding what it means to know a word and how to effectively teach it. They suggested that teachers should be proactive in anticipating challenges by acquiring ample knowledge of words and adopting suitable techniques beyond relying solely on translation before embarking on vocabulary instruction.

*4. Time constraint*

According to Astika (2015), Hunt and Beglar (2005), and Schmitt (2008), a potential challenge for teachers in classroom practice is dealing with a limited time frame. Due to a shortage of time, English teachers may encounter challenges in effectively teaching vocabulary, as vocabulary instruction demands careful attention (Brown, 2000). He further emphasized that teachers must allocate dedicated class time specifically for vocabulary learning. This underscores the importance of setting aside

particular moments in the classroom for the explicit purpose of teaching and learning vocabulary, as both teachers and students need to focus their attention on mastering words.

#### *5. Choosing words for instructional materials*

Hiebert and Kamil (2005) proposed that the selection of words for teaching constitutes a significant aspect of vocabulary instruction. This choice has a direct impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of learning within the classroom. Fisher and Blachnowicz (2005), as referenced in Buckland (2008), also advised teachers to meticulously choose words for planned instruction and reinforcement, aiming to support vocabulary development. If learning materials incorporate numerous challenging words, both educators and students may face difficulties in the process of vocabulary learning and teaching. Therefore, careful consideration is necessary when deciding which words to teach to students.

## **1.2. LANGUAGE GAMES**

### **1.2.1. Definition of language games**

Hadfield (1990) defined a game as an activity that includes rules, a purpose, and fun components. Therefore, language games can be described as activities that are used in a language class with rules, to teach language to learners, with exciting environments. Polat (2015) also claimed that language games are activities that are carried out in the classroom to facilitate the foreign language acquisition of students. Language games are not designed primarily to entertain students. They are more than just a diversion or a break from normal activities; these games are means of persuading the student to apply the language during the game. According to Lewis and Bodson (1999), language games were distinguished from other activities in the EFL classroom by the inclusion of a visible set of rules that guide the children's actions, as well as an element of strategy that can help students successfully apply their language (and other) skills.

Games are an agreeable way of getting a class to use their initiative in English (Haycraft, 1978). Games facilitate children to develop physically, socially, emotionally, and cognitively as well as being enjoyable and fun (Read, 2007).

Language games must include lots of factors. Deesri (2022) claimed that language games should involve “rules, competition, relaxation, and learning” because “the main focus of using games in class is to help students learn and have fun”. Language game competition is significant since it can motivate and inspire kids to participate in the activity because they naturally want to beat the other teams.

In essence, language games encompass language acquisition through playful activities (Godwin-Jones, 2014), incorporating the communicative elements of learning (Willis & Willis, 2013; Adeng & Shah, 2012).

### **1.2.2. Types of language games**

Language games can be categorized in various ways. According to Hadfield (1998), there are two types of language games: linguistic games and communicative games. Linguistic games focus on correct usage of language usage while communicative games emphasize the exchange of message and ideas.

Hadfield also divided language games into two kinds: competitive games, in which players or teams compete to see who can reach the goal first, and cooperative games, in which players or teams collaborate to achieve a common purpose.

She also categorized language games based on techniques such as information gap games, guessing games, searching games, matching games, exchanging games, combining games, arranging games, card games or board games, puzzle-solving games, and role-play games.

Nye (1996) also classified language games based on techniques the games as the following seven games: Number games, Spelling games, Vocabulary games, Structure-Practice games, Pronunciation games, rhyming games, and Miscellaneous games.

Due to the various types of language games, it is significant for teachers to choose suitable games in order to achieve the most effective learning outcome when games are applied. They should consider numerous variables such as students' language level, students' characteristics, game duration, lesson content, class facilities, and appropriate materials.

### **1.2.3. Common language games used in teaching English vocabulary.**

This section described vocabulary games that could be used in teaching English vocabulary. These games were investigated and proved their efficiency through several previous studies.

#### ***Hangman***

Before a whole image of their guy being hung appears, students must guess what letters are in the word. Hangman is a quick game, so it is suitable to design warm-up activities. Srimaharani et al. (2019) claimed that the "Hangman game is a suitable technique to teach vocabulary and it makes students have fun while learning vocabulary" (pp.87-88).

#### ***Taboo***

The game requires teachers to have their students guess the word on the teacher's card without using the word itself or five additional words listed on the card. Taboo can be held both offline by using a card, and online via website: <https://playtaboo.com/playpage>. Mega and Rahmah (2023) stated that students were happy when they used the Taboo game to take part in their learning progress, and the game also boosted their confidence in expressing their ideas in English.

#### ***Crossword Puzzle***

This game includes several arranged squares. Students need to fill correct letters into each square to complete a word in each row and column. These words are the answers related to several provided clues. Dini et al. (2014) suggested that using crossword

puzzles encouraged students' motivation to learn English and they were more active in participating in the class.

### ***Scrambled Game***

Write up five words with their letters shuffled on the board. When the teacher says "go", students individually or in pairs try to arrange the words as quickly as they can. The first student or pair to complete the correct words is the winner. Vanilla et al. (2022) asserted that using scrambled word games helped encourage students to be active in teaching as well as the learning process, and students also said that the game could improve their vocabulary.

### ***Pictionary***

Pictionary is one of the most popular games that have been used in teaching English vocabulary. Welliam (2019) concluded, "Pictionary game as instructional methods and/or technique is one of many interesting vocabulary games in English instruction activities". (p.50) Pictionary games require students to guess the word from the picture represented by a picture on the board or screen.

## **1.3. LANGUAGE GAMES APPLIED IN TEACHING VOCABULARY**

### **1.3.1. Advantages of language games**

Halliwell (1992) contended that, because of the creative linguistic abilities that young students possess, teachers must establish a communicative environment in the classroom to facilitate their self-expression. Furthermore, due to the unpredictable nature of language used in various activities, teachers should motivate students to actively generate language on their own. This underscores the significance of incorporating games, which not only offer enjoyment but also foster a desire to communicate and establish predictability.

Many researchers have shown that language games have advantages and effectiveness in teaching and learning vocabulary.

*1. Providing a fun environment for the learner to retain new words:*

Games are regarded as the most appropriate instructional activities for learners because they bring several benefits to their language learning. Newton (1975) explained that language games offer a wonderful way to break the routine of classroom drills, providing both enjoyment and relaxation while staying firmly within the context of language learning. Moreover, they have the potential to reinforce the learning process. Polat (2015) stated that language games provide a stress-free environment and entertainment for students, which allows them to quickly acquire and retain a new language.

*2. Improving students' confidence to learn vocabulary*

As Horwitz et al stated in 1986, language games provided a fun and enjoyable atmosphere so young students could utilize the target language in front of their classmates without anxiety. Moreover, Richard (1988) also claimed that games not only alleviated fear, frustration, and confusion, but they also kept shy students interested in varied activities.

*3. Motivating students to be involved in learning vocabulary*

Furthermore, games motivate young students who actively participate in learning activities. Games included competitive elements so that students had considerable motivation for deliberate language use (Prasad, 2003). While playing language games, students were attempting to win or defeat other teams either for themselves or on behalf of their team. Learners were more willing and involved in learning under this type of instruction. This motivated them to learn vocabulary.

*4. Providing students with a practical context for language use.*

According to Nguyen and Khuat (2003), language games brought the outside world into the classroom, increasing students' usage of English in a flexible, communicative way. Hadfield (1990) also said that games provided effective language practice both inside and outside of the classroom.



### 1.3.2. Disadvantages of language games

Besides the numerous advantages that language games bring to English classes, there are still weaknesses of this method that teachers and students should be aware of. Niń and Leskovac (2010) conducted an empirical study in a Primary School in Southern Serbia, several drawbacks and obstacles were identified regarding the utilization of games in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. These challenges include:

*1. Discipline Issues:*

The potential for excessive noise and disruptions among students during game activities.

*2. Deviation from Educational Goals*

The risk of veering away from the intended educational purpose of the game-play activity. This might occur due to inadequate instruction in the rules, leading to excessive playing without sufficient learning.

*3. Lack of Engagement with Familiar or Boring Games*

If the games used are already familiar or deemed uninteresting by students, there may be a diminished level of engagement and participation.

*4. Perceived Immaturity*

Some students, particularly teenagers, may perceive games as unnecessary and childish, potentially impacting their willingness to participate.

Identifying and addressing these challenges can contribute to a more effective integration of games into EFL classrooms.

## **1.4. PREVIOUS STUDIES OF APPLYING LANGUAGE GAMES IN TEACHING VOCABULARY IN VIETNAM**

### **1.4.1. Previous studies in the world**

Noho (2016) conducted a study to determine whether game-based learning strategies may increase students' vocabulary when learning English. The second class of SMK Almamater Telaga was invited to join this study, with a sample size of 30 pupils. One group of pre-test and post-test study designs were used in the quasi-experimental methodology. The information was gathered from a test, specifically a 35-item vocabulary multiple-choice test. The outcomes showed that the game strategy can help expand pupils' vocabulary. This indicated that using games to teach vocabulary will promise better results.

Siti and Mawar (2022) also investigated the usefulness of applying games in English classrooms and whether they might help improve pupils' vocabulary mastery. Ten University of Muhammadiyah Aceh students and one English lecturer participated in this study. Data were obtained through student questionnaires and lecturer interviews. As a consequence of this study, it was clear that using games to teach and learn was a successful strategy because it motivated and involved students in their learning process. Therefore, they concluded that applying games could become the necessary method for lecturers to improve students' vocabulary mastery.

Deng (2006) conducted a 4-month experiment to observe 45 students. The experiment was to use the traditional method for the first two months and then use games for the final two months to teach vocabulary. The teacher then chose 10 words and taught five of them in a traditional way manner and the other five words were taught via games. The results of the experiment comparing game teaching to non-game teaching showed that using games to foster language competency and vocabulary development was advantageous.

Ayesha et al (2016) examined the efficacy of language games in acquiring vocabulary while learning English in Pakistani. The data was gathered by selecting five English language professors and 150 eighth graders from various public schools in Lahore. They used an evaluation checklist and a survey questionnaire as research instruments. After analyzing the data, they found that games could acquaint pupils with new words or phrases and enabled deep learning of vocabulary in a better and faster way. Games could also assist pupils improve their communication skills. Most of the students believed that learning new skills through games was beneficial for enhancing vocabulary. The research also revealed that language games helped second language (L2) students preserve vocabulary. While playing games, students acquire language unconsciously. Because of the playful atmosphere, using games could also be highly beneficial for the language teacher, and make the teaching-learning process more facilitating.

A study conducted by Ariat and Iswahyuni (2023) utilized qualitative research methods, presenting descriptive data through data interpretation. To address the research inquiries, semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face with 31 seventh-grade students from a public junior high school in Malang. The findings revealed that a significant portion of the students frequently engaged with digital games, with some even having a preferred game. Additionally, students expressed a positive outlook on the integration of gamification into the learning process because they thought that this method helped increase motivation and create an enjoyable classroom atmosphere. Nonetheless, the implementation of gamification could lead to drawbacks such as making noise and disorganization. Yet, with adequate supervision and proficient teachers adept at integrating meaningful gamification, these adverse effects can be mitigated.

Ethel and Marvin (2019) examined students' feedback regarding the utilization of educational games in language classrooms for Remedial Instruction among English

students at SOE (2018-2019) at Emilio Aguinaldo College. Employing qualitative questionnaires and random interviews, the research aimed to determine the relevance, suitability, and effectiveness of games in enhancing various language skills, including grammar, vocabulary, and speaking. The findings revealed students' suggestions for beneficial classroom games, indicating that educational games were most applicable in improving spelling, vocabulary, grammar, writing, reading, listening, and speaking skills. However, not all games were suitable for every college student demographic. Additionally, it was noted that numerous educational games may foster collaboration and creativity among learners, particularly when integrated with other teaching methodologies. Overall, respondents demonstrated a positive attitude towards the integration of games in language classrooms. The study suggested that teachers should consider students' diverse learning styles with sensitivity, creativity, and flexibility to sustain higher levels of engagement.

Fei et al (2021) conducted a study to explore the impact of games on enhancing students' willingness to communicate (WTC) and the attitudes of their teachers towards this approach. The researchers administered a 28-item questionnaire to 60 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners at an English center. Subsequently, the students were randomly assigned to two groups: a control group and an experimental group, each comprising 30 learners. The experimental group received game-based activities during their language lessons, while the control group did not. Towards the end of the term, the same questionnaire was re-administered to assess whether playing games had influenced their WTC significantly. Additionally, teachers were asked to complete a 30-item questionnaire to gauge their perspectives on incorporating games into language classes. The findings revealed that the majority of teachers in the study held the belief that games positively impact students' attitudes toward learning English. They perceived games as effective tools for energizing and educating students, providing enjoyment, pleasure, passionate engagement, structure, and motivation,

among other benefits. Moreover, teachers supported the use of games as brief warm-up activities. Furthermore, games were found to play a significant role in enhancing EFL learners' willingness to communicate.

#### **1.4.2. Previous studies in Vietnam**

Vu and Nguyen (2019) conducted large-scale research to evaluate the comprehension of word meanings among 500 Vietnamese EFL 12th graders (aged 18) from various high schools across different provinces of Vietnam. The outcomes from a vocabulary assessment indicated that only a minute fraction of Vietnamese 12th graders had attained proficiency at the 2000-word level (14%), and even fewer students could master subsequent levels. The research also highlighted a notable discrepancy in vocabulary aptitude between students in rural and urban areas, possibly stemming from variations in English exposure, guidance of their parents, goal setting, motivation, and resource accessibility. Furthermore, male students exhibited more restricted vocabulary knowledge compared to their female counterparts. This research focused on 6th graders, but the research of Vu and Nguyen can partly support in demonstrating Vietnamese students' vocabulary knowledge because before students reached grade 12, they had to pass grade 6.

Despite the complexity of vocabulary acquisition processes and explicit instruction in class, only a fraction of the words that students learn can be effectively covered. Vu and Peter (2021) found a typical approach to teaching vocabulary in many EFL classrooms in Vietnam. To start teaching vocabulary, a Vietnamese EFL teacher commonly displays a list of new English words on the board, along with their Vietnamese translations. The teacher then demonstrates the pronunciation of these words and prompts the entire class to repeat them several times. Typically, the focus remains on single words from glossaries in textbooks and reference materials. Following this introduction of vocabulary, the teacher often shifts to language skills,

typically focusing on reading and grammar instruction. In subsequent classes, the teacher may assess some students to gauge their memorization of the previously introduced words. However, students frequently rely on their efforts for vocabulary acquisition. While they are often encouraged to learn by heart vocabulary, they often have limited opportunities to apply these words during lessons, as the teacher will typically focus on reading and grammar instruction.

According to Phan (2017), one of the challenges in teaching English in general, and teaching vocabulary in particular in Vietnam is insufficient provision of an encouraging environment for students to actively practice the target language. According to Phan (2017), one of the challenges in teaching English in general, and teaching vocabulary in particular in Vietnam is insufficient provision of an encouraging environment for students to actively practice the target language. Students had restricted chances to utilize English and employ vocabulary in practical contexts. Applying language games in teaching vocabulary can contribute to solving this problem, as Nguyen and Khuat (2003) stated that language games brought the outside world into the classroom.

Nguyen and Khuat (2003) conducted a study to improve Vietnamese student's learning vocabulary situation. They found that Vietnamese students typically find vocabulary sessions to be boring because they had not modified their learning patterns, such as writing terms on paper, attempting to memorize them, or passively taking in the teacher's explanations. They wanted to determine the answer to the question, "Do games help students learn vocabulary effectively, and if so, how?". Therefore, they started an action research project that involved implementing games in their courses, observing other teachers' classes, and conducting interviews with both teachers and students to get their feedback and feelings about the use of games in vocabulary learning. According to research, they found that games were effective in helping students to improve their vocabulary-building skills.

Nguyen (2021) also investigated the influence of employing games in vocabulary teaching from the perspectives of students who had previously participated in language games. Data for analysis were obtained from 100 students at a foreign language center in Binh Duong province using a questionnaire. The findings demonstrated that most individuals were motivated to learn when they were playing games. Furthermore, if the games were based on criteria such as the students' gender, age, and educational standing, they could learn the language more quickly and readily. The study revealed that, despite the benefit of employing games in vocabulary teaching, games should not be utilized excessively or infrequently in classrooms.

Nong (2021) created a vocabulary-based pre-test consisting of 20 items to collect data. Before the introduction of games in these classes, a pre-test was sent to 70 students across two classrooms (Class A and Class B). In the first week, Class A students were exposed to various vocabulary-based games, while Class B underwent traditional vocabulary teaching courses. Observations were conducted during three vocabulary-based teaching and learning sessions to capture students' reactions, preferences, attitudes, feelings, and expectations. Subsequently, a post-test was conducted to assess the effectiveness of vocabulary teaching and compare lexical outcomes between the two classes. The findings indicated that teaching through games was highly beneficial, contributing to the expansion of students' vocabulary. Language games not only enhanced lexical knowledge but also added an element of enjoyment to the lessons, fostering enthusiasm among students for studying English and promoting increased interactions with teachers and classmates. The study recommended that, before incorporating games into the language classroom, teachers should carefully choose resources, levels, settings, subjects, and gaming time.

Pham and Duong (2022) conducted a study to explore the feedback of undergraduate English students at a Vietnamese university regarding the utilization of Kahoot, a game-based platform for vocabulary learning. The study employed a sequential

explanatory mixed methods approach, collecting and analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data from 53 first-year English major students. While the games were found to be entertaining by the participants, their engagement was not consistently maintained throughout the experiment. Nevertheless, important factors such as interaction, engagement, focus, competition, and motivation significantly contributed to the students' enjoyable learning experiences and facilitated improvement in their vocabulary retention. Considering these noteworthy findings, specific recommendations were proposed to address the incorporation of more digital-game-based activities in classroom education, aiming to enhance student encouragement and sustain classroom engagement.

Phuong and Nguyen (2017) conducted a study examining teachers' attitudes toward utilizing communicative language Games in teaching English to young learners. Their research involved 93 Vietnamese EFL instructors to delve into their perspectives on the roles, advantages, and challenges of employing communicative language games for teaching English to young learners. The findings of the study showed several benefits perceived by teachers regarding the use of communicative language games: enhance lesson engagement, facilitate better learning for young learners, enable unconscious learning during play, boost young learners' motivation for lessons, and improve speaking practice. Additionally, the research revealed challenges encountered by teachers in implementing communicative language games: noises made by students when they play language games, lack of appropriate materials for language games in textbooks, some young learners exhibit shyness in speaking English, even during game sessions, and significant time investment is required for CLG preparation.

Tran (2021) investigated the advantages of integrating games into language teaching classes. Drawing from various research findings, it can be inferred that games offer numerous benefits to language learners. Teachers are encouraged to consider the learning environment and align lesson objectives with appropriate games tailored to



specific purposes, thus enhancing the overall teaching quality. Additionally, the researcher proposed that teachers should adapt games to suit the class context, students' proficiency levels, and subject disciplines by considering various features and formats. Regular incorporation of games into language instruction is suggested to foster student encouragement and increased engagement in the language learning process. Furthermore, the study outlines strategies for implementing games in the language classroom and presents a selection of common vocabulary games for language learning as a point of reference for teaching.

This chapter explores the definitions and importance of teaching vocabulary, along with the challenges teachers and learners face in vocabulary lessons. It also explores definitions, types, the advantages and disadvantages of language games. Previous studies provide a foundation for further exploration into teachers', and students' perceptions and actual practices of language games, aiming to enhance pedagogical practices in language education. The data collection instruments and research procedure are demonstrated more clearly in the next part.

## **CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This chapter starts with introducing the research setting and participants. This is followed by the three data collection instruments: questionnaires, interviews, and observations. Methods for data analysis are also provided in the last part of the chapter.

### **2.1. RESEARCH SETTING AND PARTICIPANTS**

#### **2.1.1. Research setting**

The research was conducted in a public secondary school, which is located in the North of Vietnam. The school includes grade 6 to grade 9 for 11-year-old to 14-year-old students. English is a compulsory subject in all classes. There were a total of 760 students in this school, and there are six classes of grade 6.

#### **2.1.2. Research participants**

The participants were selected randomly to participate in this study on a voluntary basis.

Firstly, 100 students in 6th grade were chosen randomly to take part in the research. They are both male and female students of three 6th-grade classes at a selected secondary school. All students have been learning English for more than 5 years. They have just switched from primary school to secondary school. They are in the same age range (from 11 to 12 years old). They have the same range of proficiency in English level (A1-A2 level) in Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing skills. These 6th graders are using the latest textbook of the Ministry of Education: Global Success version published in 2018. The content of the book is a smooth combination of familiar cultural values and customs of the Vietnamese people with international cultural features, especially from English-speaking countries with developed cultural economies. The textbook is divided equally into seven parts: listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation, in which vocabulary will

account for approximately 14.3%. The textbook in this research was for the first semester, and it was used to teach English to 6th graders in 54 lessons, a total of 18 weeks. The book included six units corresponding to six topics: Unit 1: My New School, Unit 2: My House, Unit 3: My Friends, Unit 4: My Neighborhood, Unit 5: Natural Wonders of Vietnam, Unit 6: Our Tet Holiday, and two review parts.

Secondly, three teachers were also selected randomly to join the study, and they were also English teachers in three classes of 100 students who participated in this research. They had at least 7 years of experience in teaching English. These teachers had joined some seminars and training courses on English vocabulary teaching. They understand very well the curriculum as well as the ability and current situation in learning the vocabulary of each student participating in the study. The names used for teachers in this study were not their real names in real life. The information of three teachers is described as follows:

The first teacher was called Teacher Minh who had seven years of experience in teaching English for secondary school, and she had a Bachelor's degree in English teaching. She was in her mid 30s at the time of the fieldwork.

The second teacher was called Teacher Quyen. She was in her mid 40s. She had fifteen years of experience in teaching English for secondary school. She had both Bachelor's and Master's degree in Theory and Methodology of English Language Teaching.

The third teacher was called Teacher Cuc. She was in her mid 30s. She also had a Bachelor's degree in English teaching. She had five years experience of teaching English in primary school, and 3 years of teaching English in secondary school.

All teachers' English proficiency were C1 level.

## **2.2. DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS**

This research combined both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods to clarify two main research aims: to investigate the advantages and disadvantages as well as the current situation of using language games. The quantitative nature of this research was demonstrated through the implementation of questionnaires to collect students' feedback about the use of language games, while the qualitative nature was illustrated by using interviews to collect teachers' viewpoints and using observation Actual to observe the process of applying language games as well as students' reactions.

### **2.2.1 Questionnaires**

As Lambert (2019) stated questionnaires are especially beneficial when the purpose of the research is to capture a surface impression of individuals whether they agree or disagree on an issue or to establish the range of thoughts and views on specific topics. Therefore, the questionnaire is a suitable tool for gathering data on students' feedback of language games used in teaching vocabulary. Among data collection instruments such as interviews, and document analysis, the questionnaire might be the easier way for young students like 6th graders to express their ideas.

The questionnaire was designed for students after 5 weeks of applying language games. This questionnaire was used to examine whether there were any changes in their perspectives about language games before and after language games were used to teach English new words. The questionnaire also allowed the researcher to understand the current situation of applying language games in teaching English vocabulary such as how often their teacher used language games, the teacher applied language games in which period of the lesson, etc. Therefore, the results of the questionnaire helped the researcher answer two research questions: (1) the feedback of students about language games applied in teaching vocabulary and (2) the actual practices of applying language games in teaching English vocabulary. Rating Scale questions, multiple choice, and

open-ended questions were included in the questionnaire to collect data. In particular, Rating Scale questions were adapted from the questionnaire list of Ayesha et al (2016) to ensure the validity of the research. There were three parts in the questionnaire (see Appendix 1):

Part 1: 6 questions related to the personal information of students such as full name, date of birth, gender, English proficiency, etc.

Part 2: 10 questions related to students' feedback about the advantages and disadvantages of language games used in teaching English vocabulary (Do they want to play language games, do they prefer using language games instead of other traditional methods, which activities they like to be used, did language games help motivate you to learn vocabulary, increase your vocabulary, and help you practice your vocabulary in a real context? Or did language games make your class noisy and chaotic, and interrupt your learning process? etc.).

Part 3: 7 questions are about how their teacher applied language games in teaching English vocabulary. (How often the teacher applied language games, which activities are used, language games are used in which period of the lesson, etc.).

After 5 weeks of applying language games, the researcher came to each class to deliver the questionnaires to 100 students. Each student in each class took about 20 minutes to complete the questionnaires, and the researcher stayed in classes until the last students completed their questionnaires to ensure collected enough 100 answer sheets of students. These answer sheets were stored in a hard file, and then the researcher compiled the results of all questionnaires and put them into Microsoft Excel to create a Figure for data analysis.

### **2.2..2 Interviews**

According to Akbayrak (2000), "a disadvantage of the questionnaire is the advantage of the interview" and "oral proficiency is a powerful factor for reliability and

validity of an interview" (p.8-9). Mike (2019) also noted that questionnaires functioned more effectively in combination with interviews, which allowed researchers to collect data with greater depth and detail. Therefore, both questionnaires and interviews were used to ensure the validity of the research.

Semi-structured interviews were employed in this research. Magaldi and Berler (2020) characterize the semi-structured interview as an investigative dialogue. They elaborate by stating that this type of interview usually follows a loose framework and centers around a central theme, offering a flexible structure. Moreover, Magaldi and Berler (2020) contend that while the semi-structured interview sets a direction with predefined topics, it still allows researchers to delve deeply into uncovering new insights. Therefore, this type of interview could help the research find out both old and new features of applying language games in teaching English vocabulary to 6th graders. Keller et al. (2020) also stated that, as a hybrid of both unstructured and structured interviews, the semi-structured interview leverages the benefits of each approach. This format allows interviewees to freely express feedback and pose questions, fostering richer insights, particularly regarding sensitive topics. Moreover, participants find it easier to articulate the rationale behind their responses. Additionally, the structured elements of semi-structured interviews ensure that interviewers gather reliable and comparable qualitative data. Thus, semi-structured interviews could help teachers freely share their feedback about the application of language games in teaching English vocabulary to 6th graders.

After 5 weeks of observation, three teachers were interviewed to investigate their feedback about the application of language games in teaching vocabulary for 6th graders, and how they used language games in teaching new words. Therefore, interviews were also used to answer both research questions: the feedback of teachers about the application of language games and a deeper understanding of the current situation of applying this method. A semi-structured interview was conducted with

three teachers to collect the current situation of applying languages in teaching English vocabulary and their feedback about this method. After receiving the consent of the three teachers, the researcher contacted three interviewers to arrange the interviews on the same day. The researcher chose a quiet room in the secondary school to interview three teachers. Only the researcher and each teacher were present in that room so that each teacher could answer the questions as comfortably and honestly as possible. The interviews were audio-recorded by a smartphone. Another smartphone was also available in case there were some issues with the recording. Each interview was conducted for 30 to 45 minutes. There were eight main questions such as the differences in students' reactions when language games were used compared to and when traditional methods were used in teaching English vocabulary; the benefits and difficulties of applying language games, and their opinion about the application of language games in teaching vocabulary in real English classes, etc. (see Appendix 2). There were also random follow-up questions so that the teachers could provide more details about their feedback and experiences of applying language games in teaching vocabulary.

### **2.2..3. Observations**

Murthy and Bhojanna (2009) suggested that by using observation, the original data could be obtained at the time the event occurs. The observation was carried out in natural settings, so the facts became more evident. Therefore, observation was beneficial in this research to investigate naturally how language games were used in teaching English vocabulary.

The researcher came to each class to clearly explain the positive purpose of the observation so that the teachers and students could feel comfortable and safe during the observations. A camera was set up at the back of the classrooms to record the natural teaching process. In this research, observation was conducted in 5 weeks. There were

45 lessons in a total of three classes, and the researcher observed all 45 lessons. The number of lessons observed in each class was the same: each class was observed a total of 15 lessons, 3 lessons each week per class, and were numbered from Observation 1 to Observation 45. The observation was conducted to collect information about the difference between when teachers apply language games and when teachers apply traditional methods. The researcher was not involved directly in any classroom activity. Each week, the participants had three English lessons, the researcher stayed until the end of each lesson and took notes on how teachers applied language games, and how students reacted to those games. Audio recording was conducted during the observation. The observation sheet included two parts: part 1 was used to take notes of the teaching process and students' reactions when language games were applied, part 2 was used to write down the difference in students' reactions when language games were not applied. (see Appendix 3). The researcher carefully recorded and took note of how teachers prepared and organized those games during the lessons that they used language games to teach vocabulary, The process of preparing and organizing vocabulary games is described more clearly in Chapter 3: Findings and Discussion.

Data collected from this observation was used to answer the second research question: how language games are applied in their English lessons. In other words, this method allowed the researcher to collect data about current teaching methods of teachers applied to teach English vocabulary.

### **2.3. DATA ANALYSIS METHOD**

As mentioned above, qualitative and quantitative data were gathered through three major research instruments: questionnaire, interview, and observation. The data collected from the questionnaire displayed Figures, graphs, and tables were analyzed to gain students' feedback about the application of language games in their class, both before and after this method was applied. Data collected from students' answers to the



questionnaire was used to investigate the current situation of language games applied in teaching vocabulary. The data collected from interviews including feedback, attitudes, feelings, and experiences were also analyzed to identify the answer to both research questions and helped to identify the feedback of teacher about language games, and how they applied them in their lessons. The observation was used as a tool to ensure the liability of both the questionnaires and interview through words and sentences that presented participants' experiences, and feelings. The data collected from observation helped to answer the second research question: the current situation of the applying language games in teaching English vocabulary, how they applied vocabulary games, and how these games improved students' excitement in their lessons.

Microsoft Excel and Google Forms were employed to compute data collected from questionnaires and visually present the findings through Figures, graphs, and tables. Interviews were conducted, and the data obtained were both audio-recorded and transcribed in written form to enhance the reliability and validity of the questionnaire results. Additionally, comprehensive notes were taken during observational sessions.

## **2.4. PROCEDURE**

Stage 1: Conducting observations.

First, the researcher contacted three teachers who volunteered to join the study, then came to three classes to explain the purpose of observations to teachers and students. Therefore, they could be comfortable with the researcher's presence in their classrooms. Observations were carried out over 5 weeks with a total of 45 lessons in three classes. In each lesson, the researcher came in and stayed at the back of the classrooms to observe and take notes without any feedback or assessments.

Stage 2: Delivering the questionnaires to students.

After 5 weeks of observations, the researcher arranged questionnaires during the break time of each class. It took approximately 20 minutes for each student in each class students who were randomly chosen on a volunteer basis, to fill out the questionnaires. The researcher remained in the classes until all students finished their questionnaires, ensuring the collection of a sufficient 100 answer sheets from the students. Then the researcher stored the answer sheets in a hard file for the data analysis process.

Stage 3: Conducting interviews with three teachers.

After 5 weeks of observations, the researcher also arranged interviews with three volunteer teachers. A quiet classroom in their secondary school was chosen to conduct the interviews. Only the researcher and each participant were in that room to ensure a private and comfortable space. The researcher conducted three interviews with three teachers, and each interview lasted about 30 to 45 minutes. The conversation of each interview was audio-recorded by a smartphone, and another smartphone was available to ensure the conversation could be fully recorded without any technical problems. There were eight main questions for each teacher to collect their feedback about applying language games in teaching vocabulary, and how they applied this method in their lessons. Some follow-up questions were also prepared to collect more details about their opinion and experiences.

Stage 4: Gathering the data of three instruments and analyzing them.

After conducting observations, questionnaires, and interviews, the researcher gathered all data from three instruments to analyze the findings. Based on the notes and recorded videos taken from the observations, the answer sheets written by students, and the audio-recorded from the interviews with teachers, the researchers summarized the data, Figures, and quotes to analyze important findings: the advantages and disadvantages of language games applied in teaching vocabulary via students' and teachers' viewpoints, and the actual practices of this teaching method.

Stage 5: Providing discussions regarding the collected data.

Based on the findings of analyzed above, the researcher compared with previous studies to see whether these findings can support the discoveries in the past and figure out more new points to supplement previous studies.

This chapter detailed the research techniques employed in the study. It began with an overview of the research environment and individuals involved. Subsequently, it delved into the research design and indicated three data collection tools: observations, questionnaires, and interviews. Research findings and discussion which are based on the collected data from data collection instruments are elaborated in the next chapter.

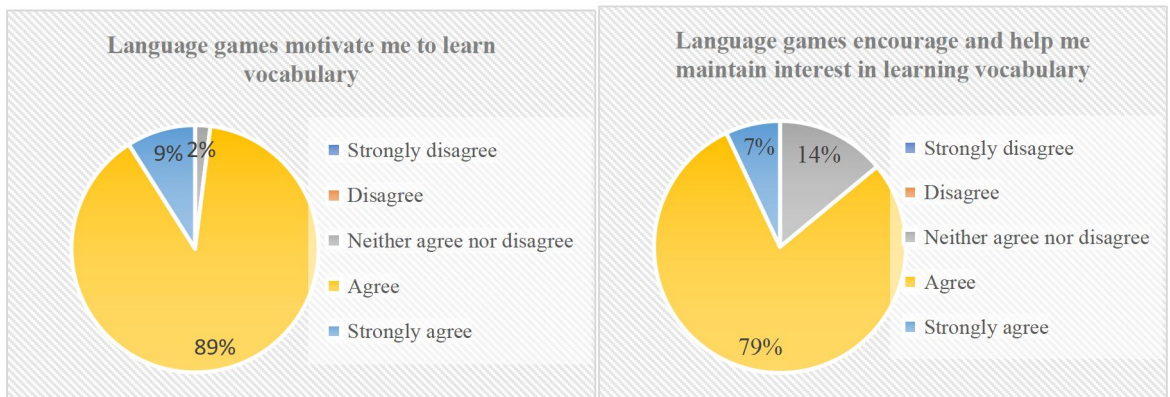
## CHAPTER 3: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter demonstrated all important findings collected and analyzed from the result of three research instruments: advantages and disadvantages of language games in teaching vocabulary through students' and teachers' feedback gathered from questionnaires and interviews, the actual practices of language games used in teaching vocabulary through students' and teachers' feedback collected from questionnaires, interviews, and observations noted by the researcher.

### 3.1. ADVANTAGES OF APPLYING LANGUAGE GAMES IN TEACHING VOCABULARY

#### 3.1.1. The feedback of students

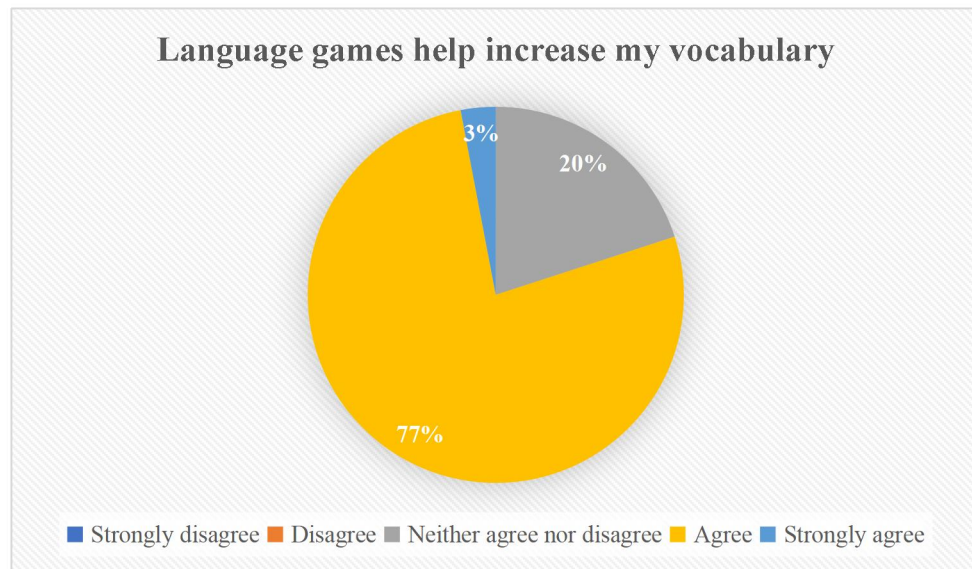
The questionnaire list was distributed to 100 6th graders to indicate their feedback about language games used in their English vocabulary lessons. The following Figures explain the results collected from questionnaires.



*Figure 3.1. The motivation for language games*

Figure 3.1 displayed the results of whether language games can motivate 6th graders to learn vocabulary. 9% of participants strongly agreed and 89% of participants agreed that language games motivate them to learn vocabulary, while 2% of them had no idea

about this point. Moreover, 7% of students strongly agreed and 79% agreed that they were encouraged to learn vocabulary and their interest in learning new words was maintained via language games. 14% of them could not show their agreement or disagreement with this point. In terms of this, it could be confirmed that language games not only motivated students but also maintained their excitement to learn English vocabulary.



*Figure 3.2. The increase in students' vocabulary when language games were applied*

Figure 3.2 showed that 3% of the participants expressed strong agreement, and 77% indicated agreement with the statement, "Language games help increase my vocabulary.", while there were still 3% of them who had neutral feedback about this statement. Overall, most students expressed their positive feedback with the statement "Language games help increase my vocabulary". Therefore, it could be inferred that language games can also help 6th graders boost their vocabulary.



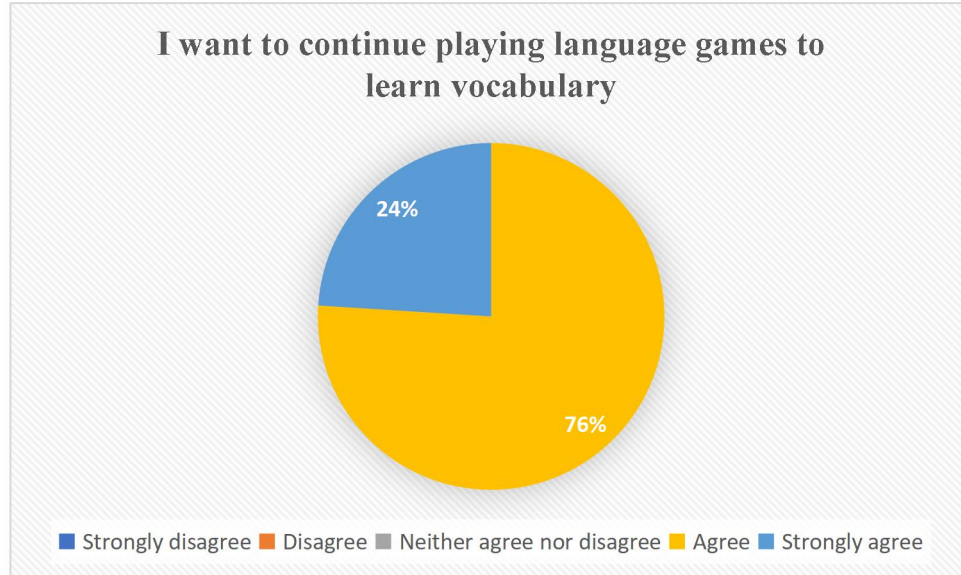
*Figure 3.3. The benefit of language games in helping 6th graders remember vocabulary*

The pie Figure given above indicated the feedback of 6th graders about a benefit of language games used in teaching vocabulary - helping them remember new words easily. 6% of participants strongly agreed and 80% of participants agreed that language games could improve fun and relaxation, which helped 6th graders remember words, while there were only 14% having a neutral opinion about this statement. Overall, a majority of the respondents agreed with this point.



*Figure 3.4. Helping to practice vocabulary*

The pie Figure above demonstrated the feedback of 6th graders about the next advantages of language games in teaching vocabulary. Only 8% neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement that “language games allow me to practice the vocabulary I have learned in a real context”, while 16% strongly agreed and 76% agreed with this statement. In terms of this, it could be inferred that many 6th graders shared their agreement with the advantage of language games that they helped bring new words into real context for practicing purposes.



*Figure 3.5. Expectations about the existence of language games in teaching vocabulary*

As a result of all the advantages collected and mentioned above, 6th graders agreed that they wanted to continue playing language games to learn vocabulary (26% strongly agreed and 76% agreed with respondents).

After analyzing the answers of students in the questionnaires about the advantages of applying language games in teaching vocabulary, it could be proved that 6th graders had positive feedback about language games applied in teaching vocabulary. They found that language games brought them certain benefits in learning vocabulary such as: creating motivation, increasing their vocabulary, increasing fun and relaxation, remembering new words easily, and practicing new words in a real context. Due to such advantages, 6th graders hoped that teachers could apply language games more regularly in English classes to learn vocabulary.

Overall, students had positive feedback about the advantages of language games in teaching vocabulary such as creating motivation, increase of students' vocabulary, helping students remember new words better, and give chance for them to practice vocabulary in a real context.



### 3.1.2. The feedback of teachers

Interviews were employed to investigate the feedback of teachers regarding language games used in teaching new words.

First, when responding to the questions “What are the differences in your students’ reactions between when you use language games?”, and “when you use traditional methods to teach English vocabulary?”. All three teachers showed that there were certain differences in students’ reactions between when language games were applied and when traditional methods were used to teach English vocabulary. Especially, all the differences were positive. Teachers’ positive views on this point are presented in the following excerpt:

*My students were more excited when they could play games to learn vocabulary. (Teacher Minh-Interview).*

*When my students can play games in their lessons, they are more excited and motivated to learn English than in lessons without games. Even students who were very quiet and rarely spoke up during English lessons also became more active when playing games. (Teacher Quyen-Interview).*

*My students were more excited and interested when I organized games in English lessons because they wanted to win the games. (Teacher Cuc-Interview)*

These pieces of data reported that all three teachers had the same answers that, compared to when traditional methods were used, their students felt more interested and motivated in their English lessons when language games were applied.

*Moreover, all three teachers confirmed that applying language games helped create an interesting environment, motivated students, and increased their interest in teaching vocabulary. The feedback of teachers about the advantages of language games are illustrated as below excerpts:*

*When our lessons included games, the learning atmosphere was more fun which helped motivate my students and made them more interested. (Teacher Minh)*

*When my students got to play games during class, they enjoyed it a lot, and they were more motivated to learn, and the class atmosphere was happier. (Teacher Quyen)*

*The classroom was always exciting when I used games in my lesson, my students enjoyed learning more than normal, and they were more active during the lesson. They were motivated to learn English; I was also motivated to teach them English. (Teacher Cuc).*

It could be concluded that all three teachers had positive feedback and found the same advantages when they applied language games in teaching vocabulary. Especially, Teacher Cuc claimed that by using language games, her students were motivated, so she was also inspired to be involved in the lessons.

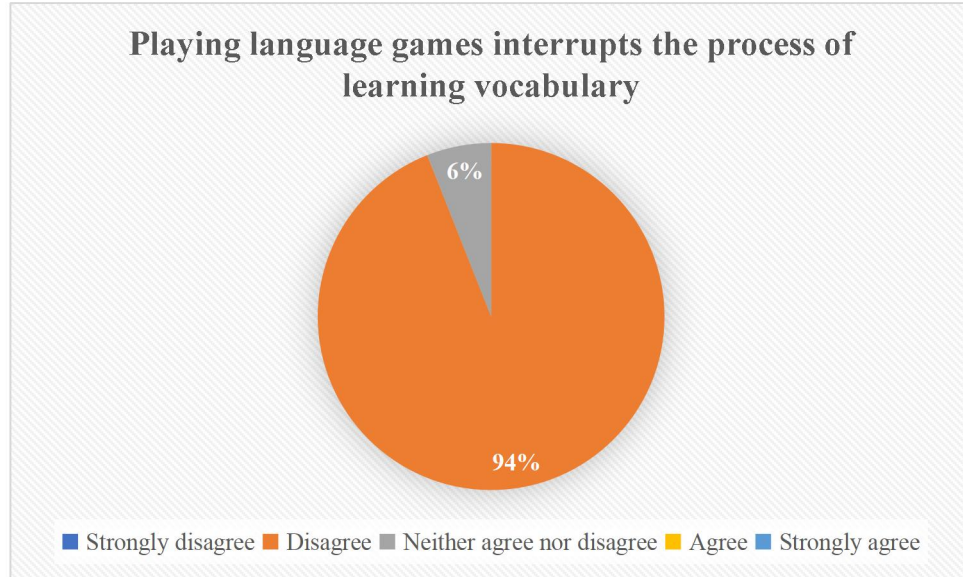
### **3.1.3. The comparison between students' and teachers' feedback on the advantages of applying language games in teaching English vocabulary**

As stated in the above sections, it could be noted that there was a similarity between students' and teachers' feedback about the advantages of language games applied in teaching vocabulary. Both teachers and students had positive views about language games. They agreed that games could boost students' motivation and experience in the learning and teaching process, so they were more excited to learn vocabulary. In addition, they also had the same thought that language games helped students practice their new words in a real context.

## **3.2. DISADVANTAGES OF APPLYING LANGUAGE GAMES IN TEACHING ENGLISH VOCABULARY**

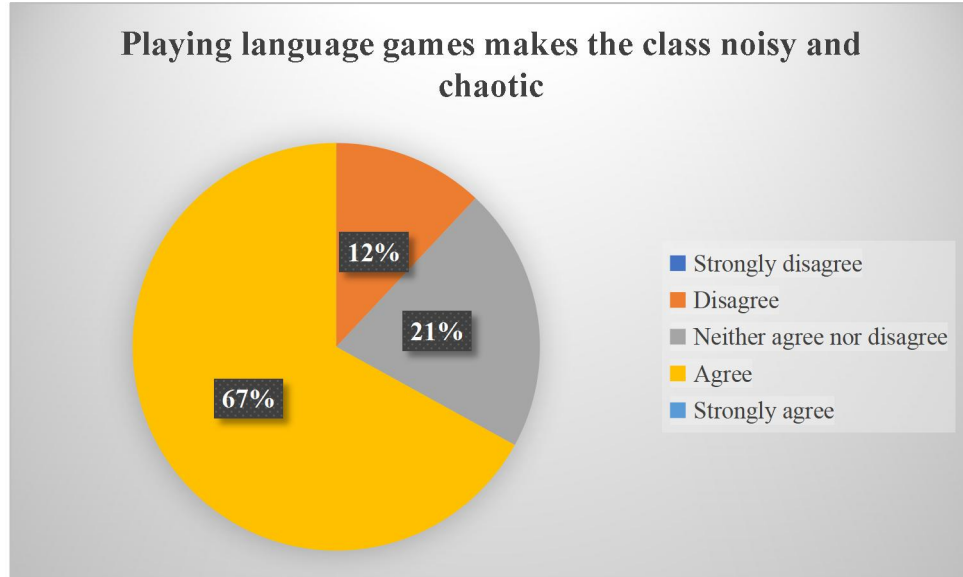
### **3.2.1. The feedback of students**

The questionnaire also investigated the feedback of 6th graders about the weaknesses and challenges of language games when they were used in teaching English vocabulary. The results are demonstrated via the following Figures:



*Figure 3.6. Interruption of language games in their learning process*

Figure 3.6 presented how 6th graders thought about one of the potential disadvantages when applying language games in teaching vocabulary - interrupting their learning vocabulary process. 96% of students disagreed with this disadvantage, and 6% of them could not decide whether to agree or disagree. Overall, 6th graders did not find that playing games could interrupt their learning new words process.



*Figure 3.7. Making noise and chaotic*

Regarding the statement language games make class noisy and chaotic, 67% of student participants expressed that language games made their classes noisy, and 21% preferred a neutral opinion, while there were still 12% of students who did not think that their class became chaotic when language games were applied. It could be inferred from this piece of data that, although students were aware of language games' advantages such as motivating them to learn English, improving their learning experience, and providing a chance for them to practice vocabulary in a real context, they also realized the disadvantage of this method - making their class noisy and unordered.

Overall, students did not think that playing language games to learn vocabulary could interrupt their learning process because they all agreed that this method could facilitate them in learning vocabulary as well as enhance their motivation in English learning in general. However, they had already been aware of one drawback of this method their class could become unordered because students may make lots of noise when they were playing language games.

### 3.2.2. The feedback of teachers

Although three teachers found the advantages of language games applied in teaching vocabulary, certain disadvantages could be noticed during the application of games.

All three teachers found that they faced several difficulties when they applied language games in their lessons. These obstacles were presented in more detail in the following excerpts:

*When deciding to apply language games, I must ensure good class management so that my class can play language games without making too much noise that may affect the surrounding classes. (Teacher Minh-Interview)*

*I have difficulties in managing the classroom and avoiding disruption affecting other classes. In addition, it also takes me more time to prepare for language games, such as games that require PowerPoint design or preparing teaching tools or materials to play. (Teacher Quyen-Interview)*

*When playing games, students laughed and talked more than normal, their voices were also louder, and there were even games in which students had to move and change seats, so the most difficult thing was to control the class well, and not let them make so much noise beyond my control. (Teacher Cuc-Interview)*

It could be inferred from the excerpt that all teachers had difficulties in managing and controlling the class to avoid making noise which can affect other classes. Teacher Cuc shared that the reason for this disadvantage is that students tended to laugh or talk louder than usual, and even changed their seats to play the games. Moreover, teacher Quyen found it took time for her to prepare for the games, especially games that need designing in PowerPoint or preparing teaching materials.

Finally, all three teachers agreed that they preferred to apply language games to using traditional methods due to these games could inspire and increase students' interest. However, they did not want to organize games in all their lessons because it required lots of preparation and effort to manage the class well.

### **3.2.3. The comparison between students' and teachers' feedback on the disadvantages of applying language games in teaching vocabulary**

It could be stated from the above findings that both students and teachers have the same views about the weakness of language games applied in teaching vocabulary. First, 6th graders expressed that language games could make their classes noisy and chaotic. Similarly, the teachers definitely found it difficult to control their students and not to make too much noise. Moreover, teachers also demonstrated they encountered challenges in preparing materials and gaming tools before applying language games in their lessons.

## **3.3. GAME APPLICATION IN TEACHING ENGLISH VOCABULARY FOR 6TH graders**

### **3.3.1. Frequency of applying language games in teaching English vocabulary for 6th graders**

#### ***3.3.1.1. Students' respondents.***

The frequency of language games used in teaching vocabulary to 6th graders was collected from students' responses to the questionnaire list. This issue is demonstrated through below Figures:



*Figure 3.8. Frequency of language games used in English lessons.*

As displayed in the above Figure, 74% of the respondents agreed that the teacher sometimes applied language games, while 23% of the respondents expressed their opinion that language games were rarely used in their English class, and 2% of the respondents shared that they could often play language games in their lessons. This result showed that, in students' opinion, their teachers already used language games in their lessons to change the teaching environment, but they did not apply this method regularly. This might be the result of difficulties that the teachers shared in the interviews such as they needed more time to prepare the games and more effort to manage their classes, so they did not organize language games very often.

### ***3.3.1.2 Teachers' respondents***

Through the data from interviews, the frequency of applying language games in teaching vocabulary was collected via teachers' answers. It is presented in the following excerpt:

*“I do use language games when I teach vocabulary, but not very often because my students are easier to make noise and talk too loudly when they have chances to play. I have to manage the class very well” (Teacher Minh-Interview).*

*“I only occasionally apply language games in teaching vocabulary because I have to prepare a lot for those games such as preparing PPT, and some materials for the games” (Teacher Quyen - Interview).*

*“I do apply language games in class, but not very often, I only use them when I want to change a bit to make the classroom atmosphere more fun and comfortable to motivate students” (Teacher Cuc-Interview)*

All three teachers shared that they applied language games in teaching vocabulary, but the frequency was not regular. There were two main reasons for this frequency. Firstly, teachers applied language games when they had certain purposes in their English classes. For example, teacher Cuc only applied language games when she wanted to make the class environment more fun and interesting to motivate her students. The second reason why teachers did not often organize games in their lessons was that they found some difficulties in preparing language games. For instance, teacher Minh had to deal with managing the classes well because students tended to make noise during the games, and teacher Cuc spent lots of time preparing PowerPoint, and other teaching materials for the games.

In conclusion, although the teacher had already applied language games in teaching English vocabulary; however, the frequency of applying this approach was irregular. There were certain reasons for this frequency: teachers found difficulties in managing their classes and preparing for the games, and teachers only used games for special purposes such as changing the learning environment.



### 3.3.1.3. Frequency of using language games in actual classes

The observations were conducted in 45 lessons in three classes. There were 20 out of 45 lessons using language games in teaching vocabulary. Moreover, there were 13 lessons in which teachers used Lucky Number, 5 lessons used Pictionary, and 2 lessons used Guessing games, out of total 45 lessons. It could be inferred from these numbers that teachers did not integrate language games into teaching vocabulary regularly. This result matched with the feedback of students and teachers via questionnaires and interviews about the frequency of using language games in teaching vocabulary for 6th graders.

Types of language games	Observations	Teachers
Lucky Numbers	Observation 1, 6, 8, 12, 14, 15, 21, 26, 30, 40, 41, 45	Teacher Cuc, Teacher Minh, Teacher Quyen
Pictionary	Observation 2, 5, 7, 16, 39	Teacher Cuc, Teacher Minh, Teacher Quyen
Guessing Game	Observation 13, 44	Teacher Minh, Teacher Quyen

*Table 3.1. List of lessons which used Lucky Numbers, Pictionary, and Guessing Game in Observations*

From the results of observations, the mostly-used games organized by teachers could be described as below:

#### 1. Pictionary (teacher Minh - Observation 2)

##### **Preparation:**

- The teachers divided the class into two teams. Each team had an equal number of players.
- The teachers set up a whiteboard with a large sheet of paper and markers for students to draw on the surface.

**Word Selection:**

- The teachers prepared a list of English vocabulary words relevant to the topics or themes that the teachers taught in the lessons. These words should be challenging but still within the students' comprehension level.

**Gameplay:**

- Each team took turns selecting a player to draw. The player approached the whiteboard and selected a word from the prepared list without showing it to their team.
- The player then had a limited amount of time (usually 1-2 minutes) to draw clues related to the word while their teammates tried to guess what it is.
- The drawer could not speak, write letters or numbers, or make gestures to convey the word.
- If their team successfully guessed the word within the time limit, they earned a point. If not, the opposing team got a chance to steal and guessed the word for a point.
- Rotate drawing duties among team members until all the words had been guessed or until a predetermined number of rounds had been completed.

**Scoring:**

- Keep track of each team's points on the board or a piece of paper.
- Award extra points for particularly creative or challenging drawings, or for guessing difficult words.

**2. *Lucky Numbers (teacher Cuc - Observation 1)*****Preparation:**

- Create a grid on the whiteboard or PowerPoint to show on the screen. The grid should consist of rows and columns, with each cell containing

a number. The size of the grid could vary depending on the number of students and the complexity desired.

- Prepare a list of English vocabulary words relevant to the lesson or topic. Each word should correspond to a number on the grid.

### **Gameplay:**

- Divide the class into two teams. Each team selected a representative to play the game.
- The teacher called out vocabulary words from the prepared list. The representatives from each team took turns selecting a number from the grid.
- When a number was chosen, the teacher revealed the corresponding vocabulary word. The representative must then provide a definition, synonym, or antonym, or use the word in a sentence to earn points for their team.
- If the representative answered correctly, their team earned a point, and the cell on the grid is marked as "claimed" by that team.
- If the representative answers incorrectly, the other team has the opportunity to "steal" the point by providing the correct answer.
- Continue taking turns until all the numbers on the grid have been chosen or until a predetermined number of rounds have been completed.

### **Scoring:**

- Keep track of each team's points on the board or a piece of paper.
- Award additional points for particularly creative or accurate responses.

### **3. *Guessing Games (teacher Quyen - Observation 13)***

#### **Preparation:**

- Prepare a list of English vocabulary words relevant to the lesson or topic. These words were the clues for the game.

- Write each vocabulary word on a small piece of paper or index card. Fold the papers or cards and place them in a container, such as a bowl or envelope.

**Gameplay:**

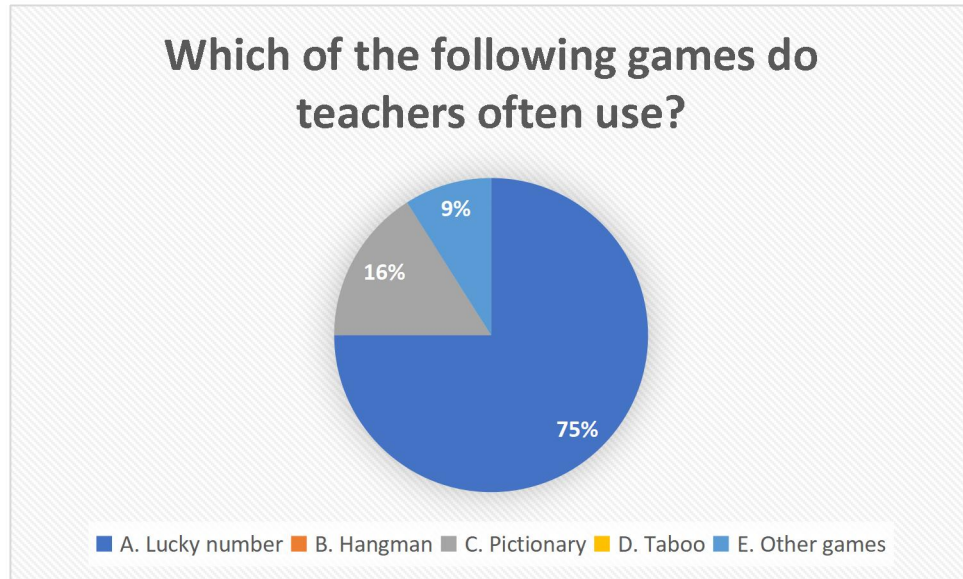
- Divide the class into two teams. Each team selected a representative to play the game.
- The teacher began the game by selecting a vocabulary word from the container without showing it to the players.
- The representative from the first team came to the front of the class and had a limited amount of time (usually 1-2 minutes) to convey the word to their team without saying the word itself.
- The representative could use verbal descriptions, gestures, and actions to communicate the word to their team. They can also provide synonyms, and antonyms, or use the word in a sentence.
- The team members tried to guess the word based on the clues provided by their representative. They should shout out their guesses, and the representative could give feedback (e.g., "hotter" or "colder") to help them narrow down their guesses.
- If the team successfully guessed the word within the time limit, they earned a point. If not, the word went to the other team for a chance to steal the point.
- Repeat the process with representatives from the second team taking turns to convey words to their team.

**Scoring:**

- Keep track of each team's points on the board or a piece of paper.
- Award points for each correctly guessed word.

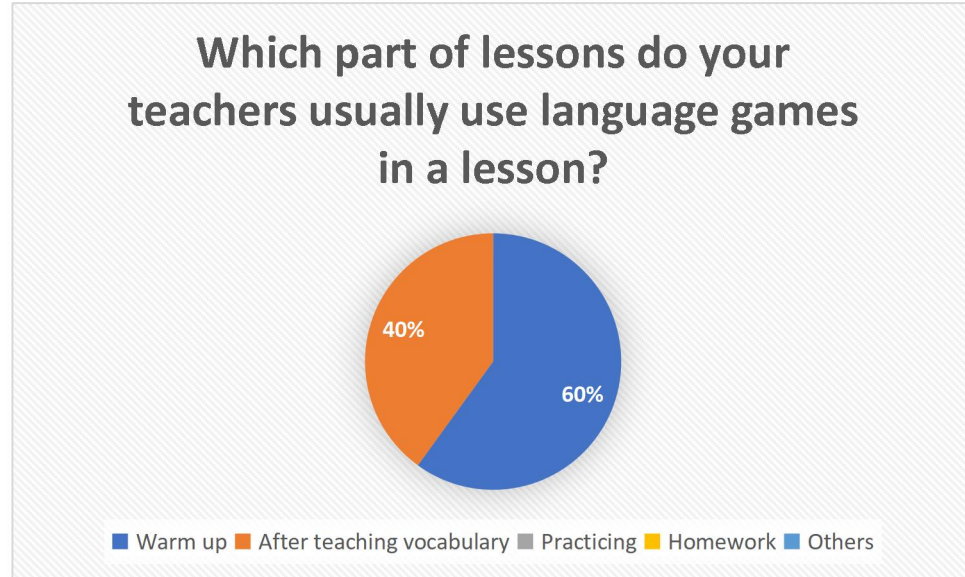
### 3.3.2. Language games used in teaching vocabulary for 6th graders

#### 3.3.2.1. Students' respondents



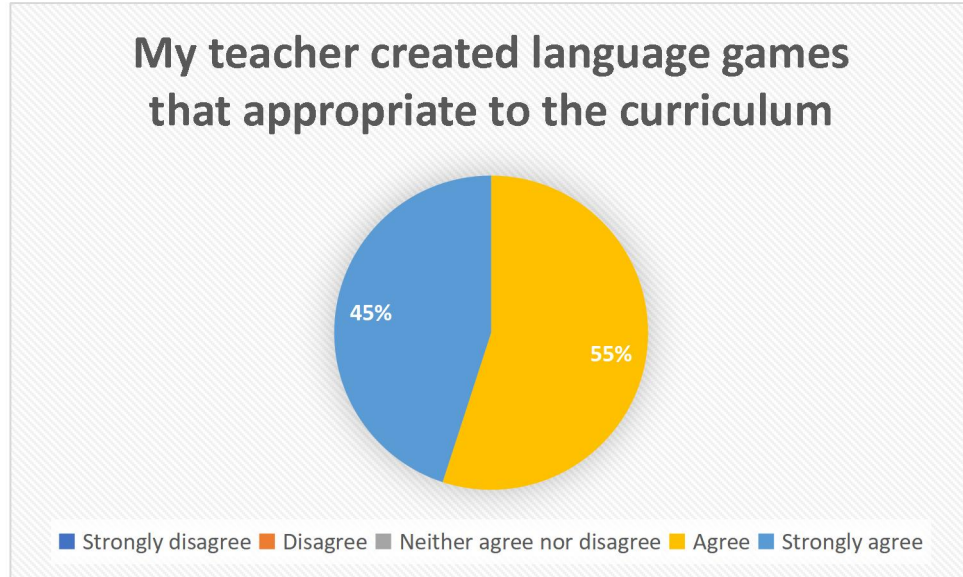
*Figure 3.9. Games that were mostly used in English lessons*

Figure 3.9 expresses the games that teachers often used to teach vocabulary according to students' feedback. As displayed in the pie Figure, 75% expressed their idea that teachers usually used Lucky numbers, and 16% of students who chose those teachers often used Pictionary, while there were still 9% of students presented that other games such as using body language to express the words.



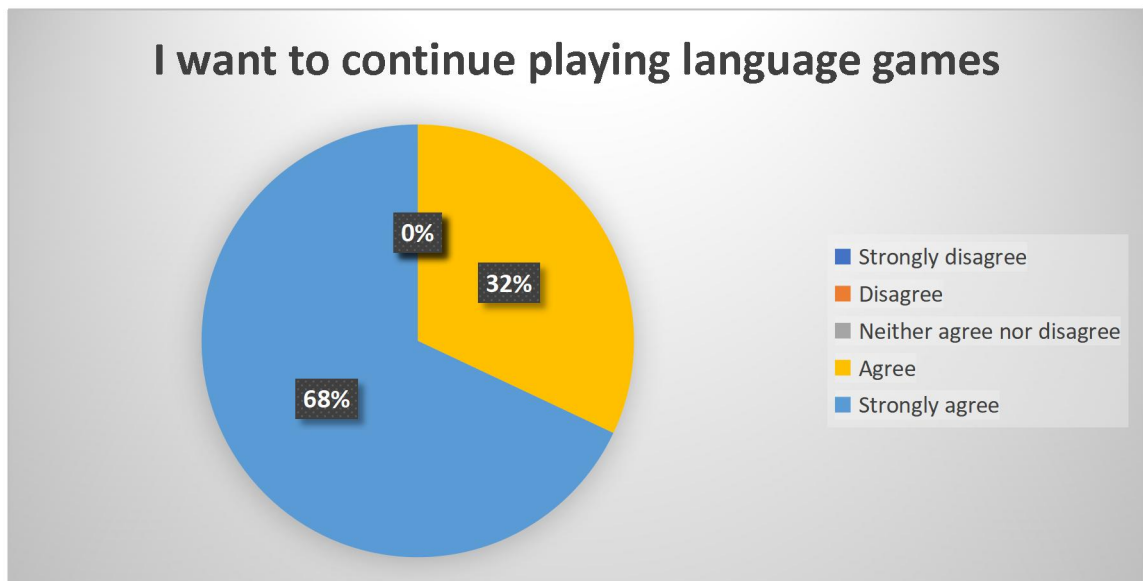
*Figure 3.10. The teaching part in a lesson mostly used to organize language games*

Figure 3.10 illustrates the part of a lesson that teachers preferred to use language games. According to students, their teacher set up games mostly in the warm-up period, and after teaching vocabulary. This was proved through the pie Figure that 60% of the respondents expressed their strong agreement that language games were applied in the warm-up, and 40% of the students showed their agreement teacher also used games after teaching vocabulary.



*Figure 3.11. The appropriateness of language games compared to the curriculum*

As Figure 3.11 presented, most of the students showed their positive views that their teachers set up language games that were suitable to the lessons and curriculum, with 55% of the respondents agreeing and 45% of the respondents strongly agreeing. It showed that 6th graders believed that their teachers applied suitable games in their lessons.



*Figure 3.12. Students desire to continue playing language games*

According to Figure 3.12, all students hoped to play language games to learn English vocabulary. Students realized certain advantages of language games such as creating fun, motivation, and chances for them to practice vocabulary, etc. as mentioned in previous parts. Therefore, students had a desire to continue playing language games.

**3.3.2.2. Teachers' respondents**

The interviews were used to collect the current situation of how language games were used in teaching vocabulary to 6th graders. The answers of the three teachers are demonstrated in below excerpts:

*“The game I use most often is Lucky Number” (Teacher Minh-Interview).*

*I often use lucky numbers because they are easy to design, there are templates available online and sometimes I just need to download them and change the content. I also use Pictionary” (Teacher Quyen-Interview).*

*Lucky numbers are the game I use the most. In addition, I also call some students to the board and then ask them to use body language to describe vocabulary, so that the whole class can guess that word. (Teacher Cuc-Interview)*

From the first piece of data, it could be concluded that Lucky Numbers was the game that all three teachers used the most in their lessons. Teacher Quyen also used Pictionary in her lesson, and Teacher Cuc sometimes used Guessing Games such as asking some students to stand up to use body language to describe the words, and then the whole class guessed the words.

*Language games are suitable for warm-up because I can check whether students have learned and remembered vocabulary from the previous lesson, and language games can also be used after the explanation of the semantics of vocabulary to students. (Teacher Minh-Interview)*



*Language games are suitable to use in warm-up periods because they help increase students' interest before starting the lesson. In addition, games can also be used after teaching vocabulary. (Teacher Quyen-Interview)*

*I use language games for warm-up to motivate and create excitement for students. Moreover, I also use games after teaching vocabulary to check how well they can understand and remember words as well as allow them to practice vocabulary immediately after learning. (Teacher Cuc-Interview)*

It could be concluded from this piece of data from Interviews that three teachers had the same answers about the period in a lesson that they usually set up language games: warm up, and after explaining new words. Teacher Minh expressed her positive opinion that language games were suitable to be used in warm-up because she could check students' memory of vocabulary taught in previous lessons. Moreover, Teacher Quyen also presented positively that she used games in the warm-up period because this activity helped to boost students' interest before joining the lessons. Furthermore, Teacher Cuc expressed that language games used after explaining new words could help students remember and practice new words immediately in a real context.

*Yes, I used the games that are suitable for the lesson and curriculum because the game is used to check whether students have learned the vocabulary from the previous lesson or not, so the game must be close to the content of the lesson. (Teacher Minh-Interview)*

*Yes, because the purpose of using games is to increase interest in learning so it must be related to the lesson. (Teacher Quyen-Interview).*

*Using games is to check whether students learn and remember words or not, so the game content must be related to the lesson content. (Teacher Cuc-Interview)*

Finally, it could be inferred from the above piece of data that all three teachers confirmed they set up language games that were suitable for the lessons and curriculum. As Teacher Minh claimed, games were used in the warm-up to check students'

memory of vocabulary of the previous lessons, so the games corresponded to the lesson content. Teacher Quyen also expressed that the purpose of using language games was to motivate students and help them remember new words in the lessons, so the games must be aligned with the teaching schedule and the curriculum.

However, teachers and students have different feedback about continuing to apply language games in teaching vocabulary. Students wanted to play games in all their lessons. In contrast, teachers did not tend to organize language games regularly. They only applied this method for a certain purpose.

The similarity between students' answers and teachers' answers ensured the liability of the result about how language games are used in teaching vocabulary. The liability of this result is also proved through observation in the next part.

### ***3.3.2.3 Language games used in actual classes***

The observations were conducted in 45 lessons in three classes. There were 20 out of 45 lessons using language games in teaching vocabulary. Moreover, there were 13 lessons in which teachers used Lucky Number, 5 lessons used Pictionary, and 2 lessons used Guessing games, out of total 45 lessons. It could be inferred from these numbers that teachers did not integrate language games into teaching vocabulary regularly.

Moreover, the most used games were Lucky Number, Pictionary, and sometimes Guessing games. This finding is similar to the findings in questionnaires and interviews about the frequency of using language games in teaching vocabulary and which games were mostly used in their lessons.

The observation demonstrated that the number of lessons that applied games in warm-up was 14 lessons, and after the introduction of new words was 6 lessons, out of total 20 lessons. These numbers showed that teachers preferred to apply language games in the warm-up and after they explained vocabulary to their students. This result

matched the results of questionnaires and interviews mentioned above about the period that teachers used to apply language games.

It could be noticed from the observation that the teacher could give clear instructions to their students because they used both English and Vietnamese to explain the rules of the games, and even used their body language. Therefore, 6th graders could easily understand how to play the games.

It was noted from the observation that there were certain differences in students' reactions between when language games were applied and when traditional methods were applied. During the lessons that teachers integrated language games into teaching, all students laughed, talked, and raised their hands many times. In contrast, when teachers did not organize any games, some students did not concentrate on the lessons, and they raised their hands less than when they had a chance to play games. This result was in line with both teachers' and students' feedback about the advantages of language games that those games could foster an interesting learning environment to increase students' interest and motivation to learn vocabulary.

The data from the observation also revealed that language games applied by teachers were aligned with the lesson content and curriculum. When teachers used games in the warm-up period, the contents of the games were closely related to the vocabulary of previous lessons. Also, when teachers applied games after teaching vocabulary, the game contents helped students practice all the new words that they had just learned.

Moreover, it could be also noted from the observation that, though students laughed and talked more than when language games were not applied, teachers could manage their classes well to avoid interrupting other classes. The teachers required students not to make too loud noises by releasing certain rules such as deducting points or eliminating the teams that were out of order. Moreover, teachers used actions such as clapping their hands or slapping their hands on the board to attract students' attention, so that they could stop making noise and concentrate on the next activities.

### **3.3.3. The comparison between students' and teachers' feedback on applying language games in real classes and actual practices**

As highlighted above, it could be noted that there were some affinities between students' and teachers' views about the actual practices of applying language games in vocabulary teaching. First, both teachers and students agreed that, despite the advantages of language games, teachers did not utilize this method regularly. Second, they had the same answers about the games mostly used in their classes: Lucky Numbers, Pictionary, and Guessing Games. Third, students and teachers shared similar views that teachers often integrated language games in warm-up and after explaining the vocabulary. Finally, they had the same view that the language games used in their lessons by the teachers were appropriate and aligned with the curriculum of teaching English for 6th graders.

The observations proved that the answers of students and teachers about the frequency of using language games were correct. Despite knowing the advantages of language games, teachers did not apply them regularly. The results from observations also showed that Lucky Numbers, Pictionary, and Guessing games were three kinds of language games that were mostly used by teachers. However, according to the results of the questionnaires, students expressed that they wanted to play more diverse vocabulary games, such as Hangman, taboo, etc. In contrast, the teachers did not tend to apply lots of language games into their lessons because they had to deal with class management and teaching material preparation. They chose Lucky Numbers, Pictionary, and Guessing Games because these games were easy to prepare and organize.

## **3.4. DISCUSSION**

The findings of the research showed that there were similarities between teachers' and students' views on how they positively thought about language games' advantages. For

the students, data which were gathered through questionnaires reported that when they could play language games to learn vocabulary, they experienced more excitement and motivation. Likewise, the teachers, based on the insights obtained from interviews, affirmed that language games could contribute to enhancing their students' interest and motivate them to learn vocabulary due to those games could foster a fun and comfortable classroom atmosphere. This result is similar to the findings in Polat's (2015) research which stated that language games provided a stress-free environment and entertainment for students, thereby allowing them to quickly acquire and retain a new language. Moreover, data collected through students' responses in questionnaires also indicated that they found other benefits of language games, such as increasing their vocabulary, remembering new words better, and practicing the words in a real context. This finding is in line with current studies (Noho, 2016; Siti & Mawar, 2022). In Noho's (2016) research, the results indicated that game strategy can help expand students' vocabulary. Moreover, this finding is similar to the result of Siti and Mawar's (2022) research which highlighted that employing games as a teaching and learning strategy is successful because it effectively motivates and engages students in their learning processes. Consequently, it could be concluded that integrating games can be an essential method for lecturers aiming to enhance students' mastery of vocabulary.

The questionnaire and interview data revealed that both teachers and students found that language games could make their classes noisy and unordered, so it required teachers to have really good class management skills to avoid students making too much noise when playing language games to learn vocabulary. This finding aligns with the result in the research of Ariati and Iswahyuni (2023). Ariati and Iswahyuni conducted a qualitative study to find out that, although students expressed positive feedback about the integration of gamification in teaching English, there were still drawbacks of this method such as making noise and disorganization. This finding is also similar to the result in the research of Phuong and Nguyen (2017). They also

found that there were challenges that teachers encountered when applying communicative language games in teaching English to young learners: noises made by students when they play language games, lack of appropriate materials for language games in textbooks, and significant time investment required for language games preparation.

The results from interviews also showed another difficulty that teachers encountered when applying language games in their lessons. Teachers needed a lot of time to prepare tools for playing games, preparing power points, etc.

The results also revealed the actual practice of language games applied in teaching vocabulary. The frequency of using language games in teaching English vocabulary was presented through students' responses in questionnaires and teachers' responses in interviews. Although language games were perceived as beneficial by both teachers and students, the teachers did not utilize this approach regularly. Teachers elucidated the rationale behind this frequency in interviews, stating that they needed to effectively manage the class and allocate time for game preparation. This finding is in line with the result of Nguyen's (2021) research which indicated that, while applying games in vocabulary teaching has its advantages, teachers should not use games excessively in classrooms.

The data obtained from both questionnaires and interviews indicated that, despite the availability of various language games for teaching vocabulary, teachers specifically selected Lucky Number, Pictionary, and Guessing Game for their lessons. This choice was influenced because these games were easy to prepare, and there were various Lucky Number games PPT samples available on the Internet. It could be noted from the data analysis that teachers mainly apply language games during warm-up sessions and after explaining vocabulary. This pattern stemmed from their specific objectives in utilizing language games, such as assessing students' recall of new words from previous lessons, checking their depth of understanding of the words, and offering

them an immediate opportunity to practice the words in a real context. The finding is similar to the result of Le's (2018) research, which applied the Lucky Number game in warm-up activities to conclude that it was important to apply some language games in “warm-up” to create excitement and enhance learning English environment for students. This finding is also similar to the finding in the research of Fei et al (2021). They found that teachers hold a positive view regarding the influence of language games on students' attitudes toward learning English. Teachers consider games to be effective instruments for invigorating and educating students, offering enjoyment, pleasure, and motivation, among various other advantages. Specifically, teachers expressed support for utilizing games as quick warm-up activities. The finding also partly supports the research of Amina (2020) which indicated that the Pictionary game was more beneficial than traditional approaches, such as vocabulary lists and dictionary use. The research included that Pictionary was a superior method for teaching vocabulary. This student-centered technique not only enhanced motivation for learning and memorizing new words but also contributed to a more enjoyable classroom atmosphere due to students' collaborative efforts and competitive elements for earning rewards.

The data collected from interviews expressed that teachers had certain purposes for applying language games in their lessons, such as: organizing games in the warm-up section to check and recall students' memory of vocabulary that they had learned in previous lessons, giving opportunities for students to practice new words in a real context after learning vocabulary. This result was aligned with the findings in the research of Tran (2021). She indicated that teachers should consider learning context and learning objective to choose relevant games which suitable for different teaching aims. Moreover, she also suggested that teachers should customize games to fit different teaching contexts and students' proficiency levels, and correspond with subject disciplines.

The results from the findings also indicated that both teachers and students confirmed the suitability of the language games employed in their lessons, stating that these games were well-aligned with the content of the lessons and the curriculum. This finding partly supports the result in the study by Nguyen (2021). Vocabulary-based pre-tests and post-tests were conducted to collect data, and finally found that though teaching games were extremely beneficial in the language classroom, but before using games in the language classroom, teachers should select appropriate resources, levels, settings, subjects, and gaming time.

This chapter presented the key results collected from the outcomes of three research tools: the benefits and challenges of language games in vocabulary teaching as perceived by students and teachers, the practical application of language games in vocabulary teaching as well a comparison between teachers' and students' views on these issues based on data from questionnaires, interviews, and observations. The next chapter will summarize the important results of this research and suggest pedagogical recommendations for further research.



## CONCLUSION

### 1. Recapitulation

This study focused on teachers' and students' perceptions of language games applied in teaching vocabulary for 6th graders at a secondary school in Vietnam. Data were gathered through student questionnaires and teacher semi-structured interviews. Research findings indicated that both teachers and students had positive feedback on the advantages of language games as language games could motivate students and maintain students' interest during lessons, increase their vocabulary, help them remember new words, and enable them to practice new words in a real context. Besides, both teachers and students also found the same disadvantage of this method: language games could make their classes become noisy and disorganized. This study also found out the current situation of how language games were applied in teaching vocabulary to 6th graders. Although language games could bring many benefits as mentioned above, the teachers did not organize games very often in their lessons because they had to manage the class well to ensure they did not make noise and become unordered. Sometimes it took lots of time to prepare for the games such as designing PowerPoint, preparing materials, etc. The teachers mostly used the game Lucky Number and sometimes used Pictionary in their lessons. These games were organized by the teachers in the warm-up and after explaining new words to check whether they remembered vocabulary taught in previous lessons, or whether they understood the words deeply, and let them practice the words immediately. Language games' content was suitable and related to the lessons and the curriculum. Both students and teachers wanted to continue using language games to teach and learn English vocabulary. However, teachers did not wish to apply games very often. The reasons for this are the difficulties that are mentioned above.

## 2. Recommendations

Based on the advantages of language games investigated in this research, the researcher highly suggested that Vietnamese schools and teachers should bring language games into their lessons to support a successful teaching process.

The researcher strongly agreed with the recommendations highlighted by Groff et al. (2010), which were categorized into two main areas: policy and school leadership. Below is a summary of these recommendations, aligned with the commendations provided by the researchers:

1) Policymakers should encourage and support teachers to implement language games within classrooms. They should ensure curriculum and assessment flexibility, align initiatives with the goals of the curriculum, and enhance support for schools to adopt game-based learning approaches.

2) School leaders should promote and facilitate the integration of game-based learning initiatives within classrooms. They should recognize that such approaches are challenges for many teachers, and then they should collaborate with parents to foster an understanding of the educational advantages of game-based learning and enable them to support their children accordingly.

Moreover, based on the results mentioned above, there are certain recommendations for the teachers:

**Game selection:** The teachers should choose language games that align with the learning objectives and vocabulary goals of the curriculum and ensure that the selected games are age-appropriate, challenging, and engaging for 6th graders.

**Variety of games:** The teachers should incorporate a variety of language games to cater to different learning styles and preferences among students, including games that focus on various aspects of vocabulary, such as meaning, pronunciation, and usage in context.

Integration with curriculum: The teachers can integrate language games seamlessly into the existing curriculum to reinforce and complement regular vocabulary lessons and align game activities with the specific vocabulary themes covered in class.

Real-life Context: Teachers can integrate vocabulary games that relate to real-life contexts, making the learning experience more practical and applicable. They should connect vocabulary to everyday situations to enhance students' understanding and retention.

Familiarity with modern technology: Teachers should utilize digital resources for better learning by equipping themselves with ICT skills and applying more effective learning strategies.

Classroom management skills: In order to successfully apply language games in teaching English in general, and in teaching vocabulary in particular, teachers should prepare good classroom management skills to encounter challenges such as students making too much noise and the class becoming unordered due to students would move a lot to play the games.

Time management skills: The teachers should arrange time suitably to apply language games in their classes effectively. Time management includes preparing the games before teaching, and organizing the games in the classes as well.

### **3. Limitation of the study**

There are some limitations in the study. First, about the generalization to other grades: since this research focused on 6th graders, it might be unclear whether the results could be extended to other grade levels or age groups. Secondly, the study did not examine the application of language games on other English skills: since this research focused on vocabulary, the results might not be similar to the effects of language games on other skills such as grammar, listening, speaking, reading, or writing. Thirdly, the duration of the study might be a limiting factor. Language

development is a gradual process while this was a short-term study. The study might not capture the long-term effects of using language games for vocabulary acquisition.

#### **4. Suggestions for future studies**

Drawing from the above limitations, with the aim to expand the knowledge base in the field of language games and vocabulary teaching for 6th graders, the following suggestions were proposed as avenues for further exploration and improvement for future studies:

**Age-group variability:** The study only focused on 6th graders, so future studies can investigate whether the effectiveness of language games varies among different age groups within the middle school range. Assess whether modifications are needed for younger or older students. Moreover, future studies should compare the effectiveness of different types of language games to identify which specific games or categories of games are most beneficial for 6th-grade vocabulary acquisition, or which games are suitable for other age groups.

**English skills variability:** The study paid attention to vocabulary acquisition of 6th graders, so future studies should investigate the impacts of language games on other skills such as grammar acquisition, listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Also, they can compare and figure out which games are most appropriate for each skill.

**Long-Term Impact Assessment:** Future studies can investigate the long-term impact of language games on vocabulary retention by conducting follow-up assessments of the advantages or disadvantages of language games weekly or monthly to assess the persistence of acquired vocabulary.

**Teacher training and support:** Future studies can investigate the role of teacher training and support in optimizing the implementation of language games. Assess how teacher preparedness, teaching experience, and teaching enthusiasm impact student engagement and learning outcomes.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1. Questionnaire

#### Questionnaire to investigate students' feedback about language games used in teaching English vocabulary.

##### Part 1. Personal information

Họ và tên:					
Ngày sinh:					
Giới tính:					
	Yếu	Trung bình	Khá	Tốt	Xuất Sắc
Lực học tiếng Anh:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Hoàn toàn không thích	Không thích	Phân vân	Thích	Rất thích
Em có thích học tiếng Anh không?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Em có thích học từ vựng không?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

##### Part 2. Students' feedback about advantages and disadvantages of language games used in teaching English vocabulary.

###### 1. Rating Scale questions (Adapted from Ayesha Perveen, Muhammad Asif, and Sidra Mehmood (2016), Effectiveness of language games in second language vocabulary acquisition )

S T T	Câu hỏi	Mức độ				
						

		<b>Hoàn toàn không đồng ý</b>	<b>Không đồng ý</b>	<b>Phân vân</b>	<b>Đồng ý</b>	<b>Hoàn toàn đồng ý</b>
1	Em đã từng được chơi các trò chơi ngôn ngữ trước đây rồi					
2	Em cảm thấy giáo viên tạo ra các trò chơi ngôn ngữ có ý nghĩa và hữu ích phù hợp với bài học					
3	Trò chơi ngôn ngữ khuyến khích và giúp em duy trì hứng thú học từ vựng					
4	Trò chơi ngôn ngữ tạo động lực cho em học từ vựng					
5	Trò chơi ngôn ngữ giúp em tăng vốn từ vựng					
6	Trò chơi ngôn ngữ tăng tính vui vẻ, thư giãn, giúp em nhớ từ dễ dàng					
7	Trò chơi ngôn ngữ giúp em thực hành 1 cách thực tế từ vựng em đã học					
8	Em muốn được tiếp tục chơi trò chơi ngôn ngữ để học từ vựng					
9	Chơi các trò chơi làm gián đoạn quá trình học và tiếp thu từ vựng trên lớp của các em					
10	Chơi các trò chơi ngôn ngữ khiến lớp ồn ào và hỗn loạn					

### Part 3. Students' feedback about actual practices of language games used in teaching English vocabulary.

#### 2. Multiple choice questions

S T T	Câu hỏi	Đáp án				
1 1	Em cảm thấy giáo viên tạo ra các trò chơi ngôn ngữ có ý nghĩa và hữu ích phù hợp với bài học	A. Hoàn toàn không đồng ý	B. Không đồng ý	C. Phân vân	D. Đồng ý	E. Hoàn toàn đồng ý
1 2	Giáo viên có thường xuyên sử dụng các trò chơi từ vựng trong lớp học không?	A. Rất thường xuyên	B. Thường xuyên	C. Bình thường	D. Không thường xuyên	E. Không bao giờ
1 3	Giáo viên thường sử dụng những trò chơi nào sau đây? (có thể chọn nhiều đáp án)	A. Lucky number	B. Hangman	C. Pictionary	D. Taboo	E. Những trò chơi khác nữa (vui lòng điền chi tiết):..... ..... ..... ..... .....
1 4	Giáo viên thường sử dụng trò chơi vào thời điểm nào? (có thể chọn nhiều đáp án)	A. Khởi động tiết học?	B. Sau khi giảng bài	C. Khi luyện tập	D. Giao làm bài tập về nhà	E. Đáp án khác (vui lòng điền chi tiết):..... ..... ..... .....

1 5	Em thường sử dụng phương pháp gì để ghi nhớ từ vựng?	A. Chép lại từ vựng	B. Đọc to từ nhiều lần	C. Tìm hiểu cách sử dụng từ trong câu Tiếng Anh	D. Tạo ví dụ về câu có từ vựng đó	E. Đáp án khác (vui lòng điền chi tiết):..... ..... ..... .....
1 6	Em sử dụng bao nhiêu thời gian một ngày để học từ vựng?	A. Dưới 15 phút	A. Dưới 30 phút	B. 30 phút đến 1 tiếng	C. Hơn 1 tiếng	E. Đáp án khác (vui lòng điền chi tiết):..... ..... ..... .....

### 3. Open-ended questions

S T T	Câu hỏi	Câu trả lời
1 7	Em có mong muốn gì thêm về việc giáo viên sử dụng trò chơi ngôn ngữ trong tiết học Tiếng Anh không?	



**APPENDIX 2. Interviews**

1. Do you often apply language games to vocabulary teaching?
2. What type of games do you often use to teach vocabulary?
3. Were the games suitable for the curriculum?
4. At what stage of the lesson do you often use vocabulary games?
5. How do your students react differently between using language games and not applying language games?
6. Are there any benefits when you apply language games in teaching English vocabulary?
7. Are there any difficulties when you apply language games in teaching English vocabulary?
8. Do you prefer applying language games to using traditional methods?
9. Are there any factors that affect the effectiveness of the application of language games?

Other ideas: .....

**APPENDIX 3. Observations****PART 1. OBSERVATION SHEET (Teachers apply language games)**

Date:

Class:

Lesson Title.:

<b>Parts</b>	<b>Note</b>
Lesson's content	
Which activities have teachers applied to teach English vocabulary?	
Which part of a lesson Teachers use vocabulary games to proceed (warm-up, while-teaching, post-teaching, or giving homework)	
Do teachers give clear enough instruction to students about the game rules?	
Do students understand the game rules?	
Do students make so much noise while playing?	
Can the teacher control the class well?	

Which purpose do teachers use language games for?	
What are students' reactions to the games?	
<p>What are students' reactions and attitudes in the next period/ skills:</p> <p>Grammar:</p> <p>Listening:</p> <p>Speaking:</p> <p>Reading:</p> <p>Writing:</p>	
How often do teachers apply vocabulary games to teach English vocabulary?	

**PART 2. OBSERVATION SHEET (Teachers do not apply language games)**

Date:

Class:

Lesson Title.:

What are students' reactions and attitudes in each period/ skill:	
Vocabulary	

Grammar	
Listening	
Speaking	
Reading	
Writing	

## APPENDIX 4. Observation sheet sample

### OBSERVATION SHEET

Date: 14/9/23

Class: 6A4

Lesson Title: Unit 1 : My new school - Skills 1: Reading and Speaking

#### Teachers apply language games

Parts	Note
Lesson's content	- Reading: Read a passage about 3 kinds of school - Speaking: Speak about one kind of school that ss like
Which activities teachers applied to teach English vocabulary?	Students are given a word or sentence and have to draw it until their partners guess what they are drawing
Which part of a lesson Teachers use vocabulary game to proceed (warm-up, while-teaching, post-teaching or giving homework)	Warm-up
Which purpose teacher use language game for?	Check students' memory of vocabulary in the last lesson
What are students' reactions to the games	Excited Actively raise their hand to get points to win the game
What are students' reactions and attitudes in the next period/ skills: Grammar: Listening: Speaking: Reading: Writing:	- Reading: They can remember new words that learned in the last lesson which appeared in current lesson. - Speaking: Students are confident to use vocabulary that they have learned Students are actively raise their hand to answer T's questions and focus on the lesson
How often teachers applied vocabulary games to teach English vocabulary?	Teacher used language games once in a lesson