**Gamification as a means of developing lexical competence
of high school students in English lessons**

by

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**Abstract**The teaching of English should not only aim to be effective and beneficial but also engaging and enjoyable for students. To achieve this, educators are encouraged to incorporate a variety of contemporary instructional strategies that enhance the learning experience and foster student motivation. Among these, gamification has emerged as a particularly effective approach, especially in the context of vocabulary acquisition. This study aims to explore the impact of gamification on the development of lexical competence in high school students. The research was conducted over a 10-week period with a group of 8 eleventh-grade learners. During this time, students were exposed to different types of language games designed to facilitate the learning and active use of vocabulary. These games were specifically chosen to support the development of both speaking and writing skills, helping students reinforce pronunciation, spelling, and word usage in context. A range of data collection methods were employed, including tests, teacher observations, surveys and interviews , to assess the effectiveness of the gamification approach. The results indicated a notable improvement in students' vocabulary knowledge, with all data sources-test results, teacher observations, and student feedback-confirming that the language games were both motivating and enjoyable. The study concludes that the use of language games can significantly enhance students' lexical development and recommends that English teachers integrate gamification strategies into their teaching practices to promote active engagement and facilitate more effective vocabulary learning.

  ***Keywords:*** *gamification; impact of games; developing lexical competence; enjoyment; motivation*.

**Анотація**Викладання англійської мови має бути не лише ефективним і корисним, але й цікавим, привабливим та мотивуючим для студентів. Для досягнення цих цілей викладачам слід використовувати сучасні та інноваційні навчальні стратегії, які покращують навчальний процес і сприяють підвищенню зацікавленості учнів. Однією з таких стратегій є гейміфікація, яка стала особливо популярною в контексті розвитку лексичних навичок, зокрема для розширення словникового запасу. Це дослідження має на меті вивчити вплив гейміфікації на формування лексичної компетенції учнів старших класів. Дослідження було проведене протягом 10 тижнів з групою з 8 учнів одинадцятого класу. Протягом цього часу студенти ознайомилися з різноманітними мовними іграми, які були спеціально підібрані для сприяння активному освоєнню та використанню нової лексики. Ігри включали завдання на покращення вимови, правопису та вживання слів у різних контекстах, що сприяло розвитку як усних, так і письмових навичок учнів. Для оцінки ефективності гейміфікації використовувалися різноманітні методи збору даних, зокрема тести, спостереження за учнями, опитування та інтерв’ю. Результати дослідження показали значне покращення словникового запасу учнів, оскільки всі джерела даних – тести, спостереження вчителів та відгуки студентів – підтверджують, що мовні ігри не тільки підвищили мотивацію учнів, але й зробили процес навчання більш приємним і захоплюючим. На основі отриманих результатів дослідження можна зробити висновок, що гейміфікація є ефективним інструментом для розвитку лексичної компетенції учнів, і рекомендується використовувати мовні ігри як складову частину викладання англійської мови для покращення результатів навчання та стимулювання активної участі учнів у навчальному процесі.
 Ключові слова: гейміфікація; вплив ігор; розвиток лексичної компетенції; мотивація.

**Introduction**

## **Background and Context**

 Vocabulary teaching and learning is definitely central to acquiring proficiency in a second language. Vocabulary serves as the foundational building block upon which all other language skills, as reading, writing, listening, and speaking, are developed. The importance of vocabulary cannot be overstated, as it is essential for both understanding and communicating in the second language. However, despite its fundamental role, many high school students find vocabulary acquisition challenging and unmotivating. This lack of engagement and motivation often leads to a limited vocabulary, which in turn hampers their ability to fully comprehend and express themselves in English.
 The challenge, then, for language educators is to find effective ways to increase the students' interest in vocabulary learning and motivate them to expand their lexical knowledge. In the early stages of learning the second language, it is important to present vocabulary in engaging, enjoyable, and relevant ways. It is highly recommended to use language games for teaching vocabulary, as games provide an interactive and dynamic approach to vocabulary instruction, making the learning process both fun and effective.
 Language games, when incorporated thoughtfully into lessons, have been shown to significantly enhance students' motivation. By making vocabulary learning more enjoyable and less formal, games help create a positive classroom atmosphere, where students are not only more willing to participate but also more likely to retain new words. Through repetition and active engagement in the game, students memorize the vocabulary better.
 However, it is important to note that not all games are equally effective, because games must be meaningful. The teacher must carefully select or design games that reinforce specific vocabulary goals and provide opportunities for students to practice and use the words in context. Games should encourage meaningful interaction and ensure that the vocabulary is being actively used, not just passively memorized. When implemented thoughtfully, language games can be an excellent tool for expanding vocabulary and increasing students' overall language proficiency.

## **Problem Statement**

Existing research has shown that incorporating games into educational settings can increase student motivation and engagement. This is particularly relevant in language learning, where sustained interest is crucial for effective learning. Games have been proven to contribute positively to language acquisition by providing a context for meaningful language use, fostering communication, and reinforcing vocabulary in a more interactive manner. In addition, games create a more relaxed and informal learning environment, encouraging students to experiment with language without fear of failure, thus potentially facilitating vocabulary retention and application.
 While the existing literature supports the positive impact of games on language learning in general, there is a lack of in-depth investigation into the direct impact of games on high school students` lexical competence. It is essential to explore how different types of games influence the acquisition, retention, and application of vocabulary specifically. High school students have unique characteristics and learning preferences. Research should discover how language games influence the vocabulary level of the high school students, as well as how different game formats might be more or less effective for this age group.

All in all, while the benefits of games in language learning are acknowledged, further research is needed to specifically address their impact on the development of lexical competence in high school students.

## **Research Questions**This study aims to answer the following***research questions****:***1.What impact do language games have on vocabulary retention level of high school students ?2.Which types of games are more engaging and effective for development lexical competence of high school students ?** The study will examine the following hypothesis: ***the usage of language games in English lessons will improve high school learners’ vocabulary retention level.***

## **Relevance and Importance of the Research**

This research aims to provide valuable insights into the potential of gamification as a tool for developing lexical competence among high school students in English lessons. By addressing the needs of modern learners and incorporating innovative teaching strategies as using games, this study contributes to the ongoing improvement of language education practices and supports students in acquiring the essential language skills for academic and real-world success.This research could provide valuable insights for educators, aiming to enhance English language education in high schools through innovative and engaging methods.

# **Literature review****Why are games effective for learning vocabulary ?** As Harmer (2001) believes: “If language structures make up the skeleton of language, then it is vocabulary that provides the vital organs and the flesh” (p.153). Vocabulary is significant since it is the foundation of all communication. It's the basis materials with which we may communicate our thought and ideas, share information, comprehend others, and strengthen personal bonds. Simply put, the greater vocabulary, the easier it will be to improve your language skills (Egamova J.K., Sharofova, 2022). Lexical competence refers to the ability to recognize, understand, and use vocabulary effectively in communication. It is a critical component of language proficiency, particularly in learning English as a second language. Wilkins (1972) famously stated, "Without grammar, very little can be conveyed; without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed," highlighting the importance of vocabulary in language acquisition. According to Q. Pan, R. Xuto (2011) “To a great extent, students‘ ability of listening, speaking, reading, writing and translating is all influenced by the vocabulary” (p.1). Vocabulary development is a continuous process, where learners meet the words many times in their learning to increase and deepen their knowledge and their use of words in the foreign language (Cameron, 2001). Learning vocabulary is quite difficult, so the teacher's task is to choose good techniques and methods to present and practise words. Games are one of the modern methods of learning a second language. A game is an organized activity that usually has the following properties: a particular task or objective, a set of rules,competition between players, and communication between players by spoken or written language (Richards J. C. , Platt J., and Platt H., 1992, p. 153). Game is also defined as an “activity with rules, a goal, and an element of fun” (Hadfield, 1990, p. 98).  Learning vocabulary through games is considered to be an effective method of teaching vocabulary. The advantage of using games is that it helps learners interact with each other in the class environment and keep the students awake (Deesri, 2002). Moreover, Rixon (1992) states that “Games help students revise vocabulary and recalling something that happened in a game may help a student remember the language connected with it” (p. 82). According to Hadfield (1990), games provide as much concentrated practice as a drill. What is more important, they create meaningful contexts for communication and thus constitute a bridge between classroom and the real world (p. 10-11).  According to Huyen (2003) there are some advantages of games especially in teaching vocabulary: “First, games bring in relaxation and fun for students, thus help them learn and retain new words more easily. Second, games usually involve friendly competition and they keep learners interested. These create the motivation for learners of English to get involved and participate actively in the learning activities. Third, vocabulary games bring real world context into the classroom, and enhance students' use of English in a flexible, communicative way”(p.113). Gamification also promotes collaborative learning, which can enhance lexical competence. Liu and Chu (2010) found that gamified group activities encouraged peer-to-peer interaction and communication, providing students with more opportunities to practice and apply new vocabulary in meaningful contexts. Gamification leverages the motivational aspects of games to engage students and enhance learning outcomes. According to Deterding et al. (2011), gamification involves integrating elements such as points, badges, leaderboards, and challenges into the learning process to foster a more interactive and engaging environment. In educational contexts, these elements have been shown to increase student motivation, participation, and retention of information (Hamari, Koivisto, & Sarsa, 2014). Research by Abrams and Walsh (2014) found that gamified learning environments significantly increased student engagement and motivation, which are crucial for effective vocabulary acquisition. Students were more willing to participate in learning activities and reported higher levels of enjoyment. **Types of Games for Vocabulary Learning** *Matching Games:* Matching games involve pairing words with their meanings, definitions, synonyms, or images. These games help learners connect vocabulary items with their corresponding concepts, which aids in retention and recall. This method can be used with flashcards, where learners match words to pictures, definitions, or antonyms. According to Nation (2001), vocabulary learning through context and associations (like in matching games) can lead to deeper semantic processing, enhancing word retention.

##   *Role-Playing Games:* Role-playing games (RPGs) allow learners to practice vocabulary in context, often by adopting specific roles and acting out scenarios. These games help learners use new vocabulary in meaningful communication, reinforcing its utility in real-world contexts.According to Ellis (2003), task-based language teaching, which often uses role play, is highly effective for vocabulary acquisition because it involves the use of language in realistic and communicative situations, enhancing both receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge.

##  *Word Search and Crossword Puzzles:* These types of games focus on recognizing words within a given set of letters or solving clues to fill in vocabulary terms. Such games help reinforce spelling, meaning, and word recognition. As suggested by Cameron (2001), games like crosswords can be particularly useful for consolidating vocabulary because they engage both visual and cognitive processes, fostering deeper connections between words and their meanings.

##  *Scrabble and Word Formation Games:* Games like Scrabble or other word formation activities encourage learners to think about the structure of words, combining letters to form valid words. These games help with spelling and word recognition while providing an engaging way to practice new vocabulary. Research by Hatch and Brown (1995) emphasizes the importance of word-forming activities in vocabulary learning, as they involve both cognitive effort and word recognition, leading to enhanced vocabulary retention.

##  *Quizzes and Competitions:* Quiz games, including vocabulary challenges or competitive games, promote active recall, where learners try to remember and use words under time pressure or against peers. This adds an element of excitement and motivation. According to White (1998), competitive games increase motivation and engagement in vocabulary learning, especially when they involve peer interaction and immediate feedback.

## **Challenges the teachers can face** While the benefits of gamification are evident, some challenges must be considered. Not all students may respond positively to gamified learning environments, and excessive focus on game elements can sometimes detract from educational objectives (Seaborn & Fels, 2015). Additionally, the design and implementation of gamified activities require careful planning to ensure they align with learning goals and provide meaningful educational value. The main thing teachers should remember is that the games should be meaningful. The teachers have to choose appropriate games and definitely adapt them to the class and to the context to make them also useful, not only enjoyable. Klimova (2015) claims that the organization of any game-like activity places great demands on the teacher. They must prepare the content of the game, materials needed for its completion, clearly explain the rules of the game to students and set the time. The teacher should mind the procedure of the introduction in order to make the game rules clear for all pupils (p. 4). Teachers should consider games which are appropriate to students’ age,cultural background and interests, and teacher also should consider activities where students can experience success (Lightbown and Spada, 1999). According to the views of scientists and methodologists, language games are worth using for learning a second language. They are effective in increasing the level of students' vocabulary, because they help students remember words better, and also create a pleasant and enjoyable atmosphere during the learning process The integration of gamification in English lessons has shown promise in enhancing the lexical competence of high school students. By increasing engagement, motivation, and retention, gamified learning environments offer an effective approach to vocabulary acquisition. However, educators must balance game elements with educational content to maximize the benefits of this innovative teaching strategy. **Methodology and procedureParticipants**The research was conducted over a period of 10 weeks, during the school practice, which took place within a high school setting. The participants in this study were 8 11th-grade students who were non-native English speakers, for whom English is a second language.

Engaging the learners in the study was not challenging in general, as the students were generally enthusiastic and motivated. They were characterized by their active participation and positive attitudes towards learning. The classroom environment was dynamic and collaborative, with students showing a strong interest in both the subject matter and the learning activities. This engagement was crucial for the study, as it allowed for meaningful interactions between the students and the learning process.
 Regarding the students' vocabulary level and their attitude towards learning words, it was immediately observed that they had certain problems with this and were not very enthusiastic when it came to learning words and everything related to them. At the beginning of the introduction of games for learning words, the students were not very interested and motivated, but after a few days of the games intervention, the students began to get involved in the process and had an increasing desire to participate in games aimed at improving their vocabulary level, which was of course very important. At the end of the intervention, it was noticeable that the students already had a different attitude towards learning vocabulary.
**Ethics consideration**The research was carried out in adherence to ethical standards. Both the school administration and the teachers were fully informed about the nature and purpose of the action research, and they granted their approval. I provided them with a clear explanation of the type of action research I intended to conduct and its objectives. During the research sessions, I fostered a supportive and welcoming environment in the classroom to ensure that students feltcomfortable. The activities I implemented were designed to have a positive impact, not only avoiding any disruption to the students' educational experience, but also helping them feel more relaxed and engaged in the learning process.

Additionally, the teacher of the class had access to all lesson plans and activities I carried out. I assured full confidentiality regarding all data collected, and I adhered to this promise. Only the English teacher and I had access to the test results, and the identities of the students and teachers involved in the research were kept anonymous throughout the study.

  **Stages of action research**
The first step in my action research was to select a relevant and engaging research topic, followed by the formulation of clear research questions. These questions were designed to guide the study and help focus the investigation on specific aspects of the research area. This stage was crucial in setting the direction for the entire research process.

The next stage involved conducting a thorough literature review. During this phase, I examined existing studies and theoretical frameworks that were relevant to the research topic. By analyzing the literature, I gained a deeper understanding of the context surrounding my research questions and was able to identify the significance of exploring this issue further. In particular, I explored the role of games in teaching vocabulary, reviewing works by prominent educators and methodologists who had studied this approach. This review helped me to understand how games have been used successfully in language education and the potential benefits they offer. Additionally, I investigated various types of educational games that could be incorporated into my intervention, considering how they might enhance vocabulary learning in high school students.

Following the literature review, I moved on to the data collection tools phase. Here, I selected appropriate methods to gather relevant data that would allow me to assess the effectiveness of my intervention. The tools I chose included teacher observation, testing, and learners` feedback through questionnaires and interviews. Each of these tools provided a unique perspective: teacher observation allowed me to monitor students’ behavior and engagement with the games; testing provided measurable data on their vocabulary knowledge; and learner feedback helped me understand students' attitudes towards the games and how they perceived their own learning experience.

The next stage was the intervention phase. This was the practical implementation of my research plan, where I integrated various types of games into the learning process. The goal was to use these games to help high school students better engage with and learn vocabulary in a dynamic and interactive way. During this stage, I carefully observed how students interacted with the games, noting their behavior, level of engagement, and progress. I also collected data on their vocabulary acquisition with the help of tests before and after the intervention. The data collected during this phase was essential for evaluating the impact of the games on students’ learning outcomes.

After the intervention, I moved on to data analysis. This involved organizing and analyzing the collected data to identify patterns, trends, and insights. I looked for changes in students' vocabulary knowledge, as well as any shifts in their attitudes toward learning. The analysis also involved comparing the results from pre- and post-tests, assessing the effectiveness of the games in improving vocabulary retention.

Finally, in the conclusion phase, I summarized the key findings from my research and reflected on the overall process. I formulated conclusions based on the data analysis and offered practical recommendations for teachers who may want to incorporate games into their own classrooms. These recommendations were aimed at helping educators effectively use games to enhance vocabulary teaching and student engagement.
**Data collection methods and tools** To address the research question, four data collection methods were employed: testing (pre-test and post-test), teacher observations, questionnaires and interviews for learners' feedback. Each method provided valuable insights into different aspects of the research, allowing for a comprehensive analysis of the research problem. Below is an overview of each data collection tool and its role in the study.
***1. Testing (Pre-test and Post-test)*** Pre-test (Appendix A): The pre-test was administered at the beginning of the study to assess the participants' baseline knowledge of vocabulary . This tool was crucial for measuring the participants' initial level of understanding or competence before any intervention took place.

Post-test (Appendix B): After the intervention, a post-test was administered to measure any improvements or changes in vocabulary knowledge. Comparing pre-test and post-test results allowed to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention, using games for improving vocabulary level.
***2. Teacher Observations*** Teacher observations were an essential qualitative tool for gathering data on how learners were engaged into studying vocabulary through games. I observed specific behaviors, interactions, or performances of learners during the games.
These observations provided deeper insights into the learners' engagement, participation and motivation.
***3.Questionnaire*** The students were asked to complete a short questionnaire (Appendix C) to find out how they felt about being engaged in different language games.

 The purpose of the questionnaire was to find out whether the learners considered it useful and effective to use games for learning vocabulary and if it improved their vocabulary level.
***4. Interview***
Besides, I conducted a type of interview with students to determine their attitude to language games in English lessons. This helped to understand whether the students felt that this method was useful for learning games and whether such activities motivated them to learn more vocabulary.

**Materials (Samples of Games)** The full intervention lasted for 10 weeks. During this time, different types of language games were introduced, each corresponding to the learners' school topics. Before each game, the learners revised the relevant vocabulary and participated in drilling exercises with the teacher. Additionally, clear and simple instructions were provided for each activity, and the teacher demonstrated an example to ensure the students could easily understand how to engage in the games.
**Game 1 – Guessing Game: Family Members Riddle***Aim:* To practice vocabulary related to family members, improve critical thinking, and pronunciation.
*Procedure:* The teacher reads out riddles describing different family members. Students take turns guessing who the family member is based on the clues. The student who guesses the most correctly wins the game.
*Example:* “I’m your father’s brother. Who am I?” (Answer: Uncle)
*Example:* “I’m the daughter of your grandmother, but not your mother. Who am I?” (Answer: Aunt)
**Game 2 – Role-Play Game: "Family Conversation"
Aim:** To practice conversational vocabulary and simulate real-life family discussions.
**Procedure:** Students are assigned roles as members of a family (mother, father, daughter, son, etc.). They must role-play a situation where a family is having a discussion (e.g., planning a holiday, discussing chores, etc.). The teacher provides the context and some vocabulary words to use in the dialogue.
*Example Scenario:* "A family is planning a birthday party. The son is arguing about the guest list, and the mother is trying to compromise." Students act out the dialogue, ensuring they use family-related vocabulary during their conversation.
**Game 3 – Quizless: "Relationships Survey"**

**Aim:** To practice speaking, vocabulary recall, and listening.
**Procedure:** The teacher asks a series of questions related to family and relationships, but instead of a traditional quiz, students must conduct a "survey" among their peers to find out who answers each question in a particular way. They have to ask questions like: “Do you have siblings?” or “Do you get on well with your parents”.
*Example Question:*"Do you spend time with your grandparents ?" "How often do you visit your relatives?"
**Game 4 – "Personality Profiles"
Aim:** To practice understanding and using adjectives in context.
**Procedure:** The teacher prepares a set of cards, each with a list of personality traits (e.g., "tactful," "lazy," "strict," "talkative"). Students are divided into small groups, and each group is given a set of cards. One student from the group picks a card without showing it to others and has to describe a person who exhibits that trait, without directly naming the word. The rest of the group has to guess which word fits the description. For example, if the word is "strict," the student might say, "This person always enforces rules and expects high standards."
After the group guesses the word, they discuss why the word fits and then move on to the next card.
**Game 5 – "Survey Says!"**
**Aim:** To practice speaking, listening, and understanding the vocabulary.
**Procedure:** Create a set of questions related to personal habits, preferences, and behaviors, each with a connection to one of the vocabulary words (e.g., "Do you like to talk a lot?" for talkative, or "How do you feel when you are under pressure?" for nervous). Students will survey their classmates, asking these questions and writing down the answers. The goal is to find out who matches each description. For example, they might ask, "Who is the most strict person in the class?" or "Who is the most relaxed?" and note down the answers. At the end of the survey, students will compare their results.
**Game 6 -"Filling in the Gaps"
Aim:** to revise and practice vocabulary, to use these words in context and improve sentence-building skills.
**Procedure:** Read each sentence carefully. Choose the most suitable word from the list to complete the sentence. After all vocabulary words have been used in the sentences, ask the teams to create their own sentences using the vocabulary words in context.
*Task*

**Game 7 - "Matching Game"
Aim:** to check the understanding of the vocabulary, to use words in sentences
**Procedure:** The students need to match the words with their definitions and then create 3 own sentences with 3 chosen words from the list.

**Game 8 - Role -Play "At the restaurant"**
**Aim:**  to practice students` communication skills in a real-life restaurant setting, focusing on ordering food, making requests, and using polite expressions in English.
**Procedure:** Students will be divided into pairs, with one taking the role of the waiter and the other as the customer. The waiter will greet the customer, take their order, and suggest items from the menu, while the customer will ask questions about the food, make special requests, and express preferences. Afterward, they will switch roles. The teacher will provide a sample menu for reference and guide the students in using polite phrases and appropriate vocabulary related to eating out.
**Game 9 - Debates " For or against Fast Food"
Aim:** to develop and practice key vocabulary and critical thinking skills by engaging in a structured debate on the topic "For or Against Fast Food." The game will encourage students to understand and use persuasive language, while also enhancing their ability to form arguments, counterarguments, and responses in a debate setting.
**Procedure:** Divide the class into two teams, one advocating "For Fast Food" and the other "Against Fast Food." Provide each team with a set of vocabulary words related to the topic (e.g., "convenience," "nutrition," "obesity," "healthy," etc.). Each team must prepare arguments using these words. During the debate, students take turns presenting their points, while their opponents respond. After the debate, the class will vote on which team presented the most compelling arguments, with special emphasis on effective vocabulary usage.
**Results**
 During the intervention and implementation of vocabulary games in lessons, tools such as **pre-test (Appendix A) and post-test (Appendix B)**, teacher observations, and student interviews and surveys were used to obtain results on whether games really improve the vocabulary level of older students and motivate them to learn words.
 The first tool was testing. Before the intervention, students had to take a vocabulary test on the previous topic "Make up your mind" to test the level of vocabulary knowledge of students at the end of the topic before the intervention and the use of various vocabulary games in the learning process. The test contained 3 blocks of tasks: word translation, matching words with explanations and filling in the gaps. After the intervention, students had to take a post-test on the topics «Family Relationship» and «Eating out». Both tests had the same tasks, but different words. In general, the students could get 21 points for each test. The results of the tests are presented in the following tables.

 **Table 1: Results of the Pre-test**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Participants | Amount of correct words (out of 21) |
| Student 1 | 10 |
| Student 2 | 15 |
| Student 3 | 8 |
| Student 4 | 17 |
| Student 5 | 4 |
| Student 6 | 9 |
| Student 7 | 8 |
| Student 8 | 15 |

## **Table 2: Results of the Post-test**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Participants | Amount of correct words (out of 21) |
| Student 1 | 14 |
| Student 2 | 13 |
| Student 3 | 15 |
| Student 4 | 19 |
| Student 5 | 6 |
| Student 6 | 14 |
| Student 7 | 8 |
| Student 8 | 16 |

**Table 3: Comparison of Pre – Test and Post – Test Results**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Participants | Pre –Test Results(amount of words) | Post – Test Results (amount of words) | Increase |
| Student 1 | 10 | 14 | 4 |
| Student 2 | 15 | 13 | -2 |
| Student 3 | 8 | 15 | 7 |
| Student 4 | 17 | 19 | 2 |
| Student 5 | 4 | 6 | 2 |
| Student 6 | 9 | 14 | 5 |
| Student 7 | 8 | 8 | 0 |
| Student 8 | 15 | 16 | 1 |
| Average amount | 10.75 | 13.1 | 2.375 |
| Total amount | 86 | 105 | 19 |

All 8 students of grade 11 passed the tests. According to the results of the pre-test, the students wrote 86 words correctly in total, which is an average of 10.75 per student. As we can see, the results were not very good, the students mastered the words of the topic at a level below average. Regarding the post-test, there were 105 correct words in total, an average of 13.1. Comparing the results, it can be noted that the level of vocabulary knowledge has improved considerably, which means that the use of language games had a positive effect on the vocabulary level of high school students. But of course, we can observe that the results of some students have not changed and even worsened, because the level of mastery of the material is also influenced by other factors (frequency of attending classes, individual characteristics of students, interest in the topic, etc.).
 The next tool for collecting results was **teacher observations**. Students' behavior, their moods, attitudes towards activities and engagement were observed during the lessons, namely language games. As a teacher, taking into account these factors, I made certain notes while conducting and observing students' behavior during various games. In general, it is observed that during games, students feel more relaxed and open compared to other activities in English lessons. Of course, in the first weeks of the intervention, some games were new and unusual for students, so they were not very active, but later it was possible to notice how mood and motivation increased during language games, because they motivated even weaker students who are usually less active in lessons. From my observations, students prefer more active games, such as role plays, debates or questioning each other, than such as filling in the blanks or matching. This suggests that games where high school students interact and communicate with their peers are more engaging and therefore better for memorizing vocabulary.
 The third tool was a questionnaire (Appendix C). At the end of the intervention, students were asked to complete a questionnaire, which aimed to investigate students’ attitudes and opinions regarding the use of language games and their impact on the vocabulary level of high school students. The results of the questionnaire showed that most students have a positive attitude towards games and that they help them to remember new words better. In addition, role-playing games were also indicated as their favorite types of games. This confirms that real-life activities help to better understand the meaning of English words and remember them.
The last tool was **interviewing** students after different types of games. Students were asked the following questions: “How do they feel after this game? Did you like the game? Which activity did you like the most?” In most cases, students’ reactions were positive.
 So, the implementation of vocаbulаry games in lessons had a noticeable positive impact on students' vocabulary levels. The results from pre- and post-tests, teacher observations, student surveys and interviews indicate that language games not only improved vocabulary аcquisition but also motivated students to engage more аctively in lessons. While there were some variations in individual performance, the overall trend shows an increase in vocabulary knowledge. Additionally, students preferred interactive games, highlighting the effectiveness of communication-based activities in enhancing word retention.
**Discussion**
 The main aim of this study was to investigate the impact of language games on improving vocabulary acquisition of high school students. According to the results of the study, which were analyzed using methods such as testing, observation, surveys and interviews, the views and theories of well-known methodologists regarding the effectiveness of using language games to improve vocabulary have been proven. The implementation of vocabulary games really positively influenced high school students' vocabulary knowledge and their motivation to learn.
 The results of the study confirm the theories of famous methodologists such as Huyen, Abrams, Walsh, Cameron, that games motivate students to learn vocabulary, creating a stimulating atmosphere and engaging students in the learning process.
 Judging by the observations, the students really liked the games in which they interacted more (role plays, surveys, quizzles), they were more exciting and motivating for them, which confirms Deesri`s idea that the advantage of using games is that it helps learners interact with each other in the class environment and keep the students awake (Deesri, 2002). During such interaction in language games, students can use and practice vocabulary in real-life situations, as Hadfield (1990) noted, that games create meaningful contexts for communication and thus constitute a bridge between classroom and the real world.
 Overall, the results of the study correspond with the discoveries and attitudes to vocabulary games of leading methodologists and scientists mentioned in this paper, so the expected results regarding the effectiveness of using language games for improving vocabulary have been met.
 However, it is important to point out that other factors may also have had some influence on the results. For example, on the one hand, the results also depended on other activities carried out by the teacher in the lesson, that is, I mean that the use of few effective language games and other boring, useless tasks would not improve the students' vocabulary level that much. On the other hand, if students were less absent from classes for certain reasons and some lessons were not canceled due to air alarm, then students would have the opportunity to play more games to practise vocabulary, and of course their results would be even better.
 In addition, during the implementation of language games in the educational process, I noticed that some games were not at all interesting for students, while others, seemingly primitive, on the contrary were engaging for them. That is why it is important to use different types of games, because each student has different interests, so it is necessary to vary language games so that they suit the interests of all students.
 Based on the research and my own experience of implementing language games for learning vocabulary in the high school, I want to give some recommendations for other teachers.

 ***Recommendations:*** - Use language games to teach new vocabulary, because they help to create a pleasant atmosphere and interest students.

 - Choose language games appropriate to the grade, age, level of language and interests of your students. Don`t take all the games in a row, but try to adapt them to your class.

 - Language games should be meaningful. Games  should be used not only for fun, but on purpose first. Before conducting the activity, think if it will really help your learners to memorize the vocabulary better.

 - Use different types of games to match different learning preferences of your students ( e.g. matching,  role play, guessing games).

 - Give clear, simple instructions and an example so that the games are really fun and not confusing for the students.It`s necessary to give clear examples for all activities to make the task understandable.

 - Don't exaggerate, use language games when they are appropriate to the context and topic. Do not use a lot of language games, because they can also bore students, try to mix with other equally interesting tasks.

 - Use different interaction patterns conducting vocabulary games. According to the research, high school students prefer more interactive games, that require communication and peer interaction, such as role-plays, debates, and surveys. These types of games are effective, because they create real-life contexts while studying process.

**Conclusion**The purpose of this action research  was to investigate whether language games have a good effect on vocabulary learning by high school learners. The study lasted 10 weeks, during which there was an intervention with the use of different types of language games for teaching vocabulary. The results, which were based on the pre- and post-test, observation, student`s survey and interviews were satisfactory, because the use of language games helped the students to memorize new words better and faster. The use of language games helped to create a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in the classroom during the learning process, so the students really enjoyed the language games and participated in them with pleasure. Even weaker, not very active students were involved in the process, because they wanted to participate in games, which are a kind of small competitions for students. Besides, the students felt more relaxed and got rid of the tension and pressure of learning new words. This teaching technique also raised the motivation of students, as they really were interested in such kinds of activities.

   The first research question "What impact do language games have on vocabulary retention level of high school students?" was answered , as the conducted research showed that language games affected the level of vocabulary of 11th grade learners  in a good way.  The findings of the research proved the effectiveness of using language games for better memorization of words by high school students, so the formulated hypothesis “ the usage of language games in English lessons will improve high school learners’ vocabulary retention level" was confirmed. As for the second research question ("Which types of games are more engaging and effective for development lexical competence of high school students?"), games that included interaction (in pairs, groups), such as role-plays and dialogues, turned out to be the most interesting and effective for students.
 So, the use of language games is an effective method for increasing the vocabulary level of high school students, which is confirmed by the results of this study. Second language teachers are recommended to use language games in the language learning process, because games help to motivate and engage  students in the process.

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**Appendix A (Pre-Test)**


**Appendix B (Post-Test)**


**Appendix C**
