

THE STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES ON THE TECHNIQUE OF USING LANGUAGE GAMES IN LEARNING VOCABULARY

PabbuletiPrasad

Ph.D. Research Scholar

Department of English

Acharya Nagarjuna University

Prof.K.RatnaShiela Mani

M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D., PGDTE

Department of English

Acharya Nagarjuna University

Abstract

Vocabulary plays a vital role in the day to day communication. It is a well-known fact that vocabulary is the foundation or basic component of a language. No one can improve English without mastering vocabulary. In order to make the students learn vocabulary interestingly, language teachers employ different methods in the classroom; one such innovative technique is using language games. The aim of the research paper is to find out the students' opinions and attitudes towards using language games in learning vocabulary. For the present study, a sample of 700 students taken from various engineering colleges of Krishna, Guntur, and Prakasam districts of Andhra Pradesh. The sample of the students covers different branches of first-year engineering course. The results of the survey indicate that the students have responded positively to learn vocabulary through language games not only it creates more fun and exciting but also it facilitates vocabulary retention. Based on the results, this paper suggests the language teachers make use of language games as much as possible in the classroom to motivate the students in the process of learning vocabulary.

Keywords: vocabulary, language games, students' questionnaire

Introduction

Craik and Lockhart's study (as cited in Carter & Nunan, 2001) proposed teaching vocabulary through creative and diverse activities in which learners acquire meaning and imagery for those words. Similarly, Bell and Cook (as cited in Bell, 2005) advocated vocabulary acquisition through activities such as games to help in the deeper processing of words. Games provide students with stimulus and opportunity to actively participate in their own learning (Claxton, 2008). Through games, students practice and develop vocabulary in a way that reinforces meaning and retention (Peregoy & Boyle, 1993). "Through games children experiment, discover and interact with their environment." (Lewis & Bedson, 1999, p.5) It is well known that playing game forms part of growing up and learning, playing them is fun and students love them; so this is a strong argument for using them as part of the lessons. The use of games in the lessons increases motivation for learning and makes of it a memorable process. Games will become the key motivational factor since they will make the second language useful to the students.

The aim of the paper is to find out the students' opinions and attitudes towards using language games in learning vocabulary and its effectiveness in the process of learning. The researcher has elicited responses and opinions of the students about the role of vocabulary in learning English and the innovative technique of using language games to improve vocabulary. For the present study, a sample of 700 students is taken from various engineering colleges of Krishna, Guntur, and Prakasam districts of Andhra Pradesh. The students are from different branches of the first-year engineering course.

Analysis of the Students' Questionnaire

Students' Questionnaire is used as an instrument to know the vital role of language games being used in making the students learn vocabulary. The numerical percentage of the responses is analyzed with Excel program.

Q1. Does vocabulary play a very important role in learning English?

Table. 1
Role of Vocabulary in Learning English

Response	Participants	Percentage
Disagree	56	8%
Not sure	49	7%
Agree	595	85%
Total	700	100%

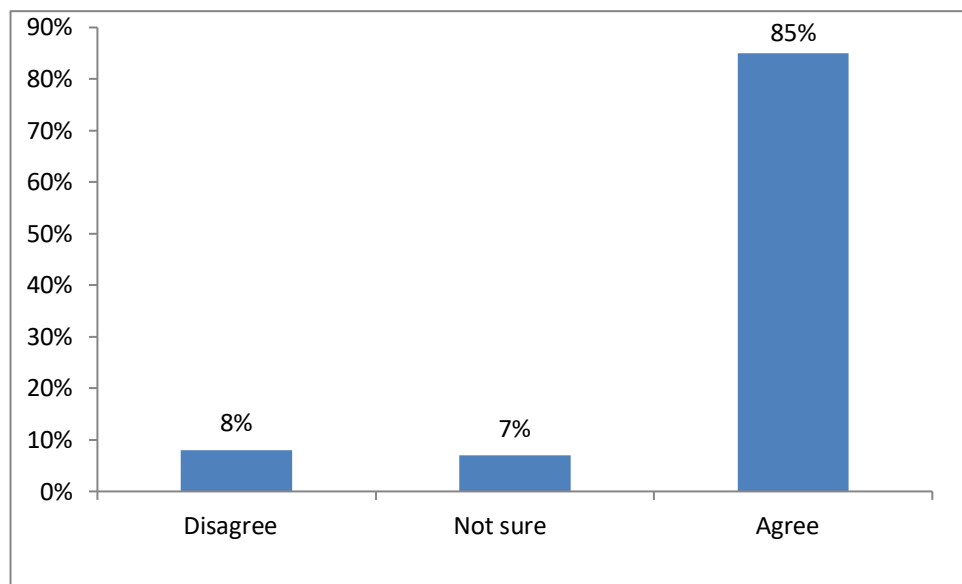


Fig.1

Role of Vocabulary in Learning English

The question aims at knowing the important role being played by vocabulary to make the students learn English. The results show that 85% of the students have agreed with the given statement. 8% of the students have disagreed with the given statement which indicates that there are other elements of English that play a role in learning English. 7% of the students are not sure about the given statement.

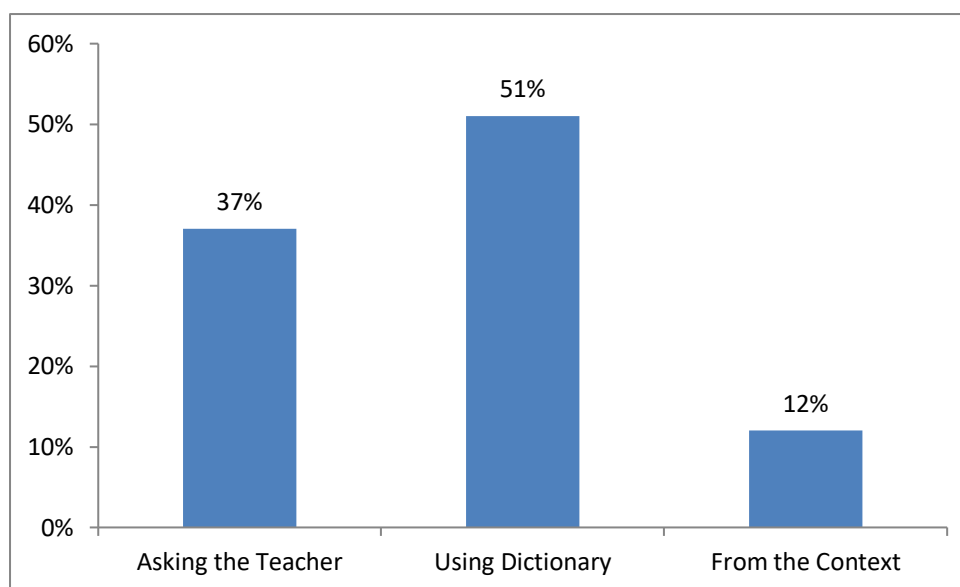
Q2. How do you get the meaning of the unknown words?

Table.2

Ways of Getting the Meaning of the Unknown Words

Response	Participants	Percentage
Asking the Teacher	259	37%
Using Dictionary	357	51%
From the Context	84	12%
Total	700	100%

Fig.2
Ways of Getting the Meaning of the Unknown Words



The question investigates different ways of getting the meaning of the unknown words being followed by the students. The data shows that 37% of the students have responded that they ask the teacher to know the meanings of the unknown words. 51% of the students have responded that they refer to the dictionary and 12% of the students have replied that they guess the meaning from the context. The data shows that less number of students follow the effective method of guessing the meaning from the context which is actually a good technique and needs to be followed by the students to improve the knowledge of vocabulary.

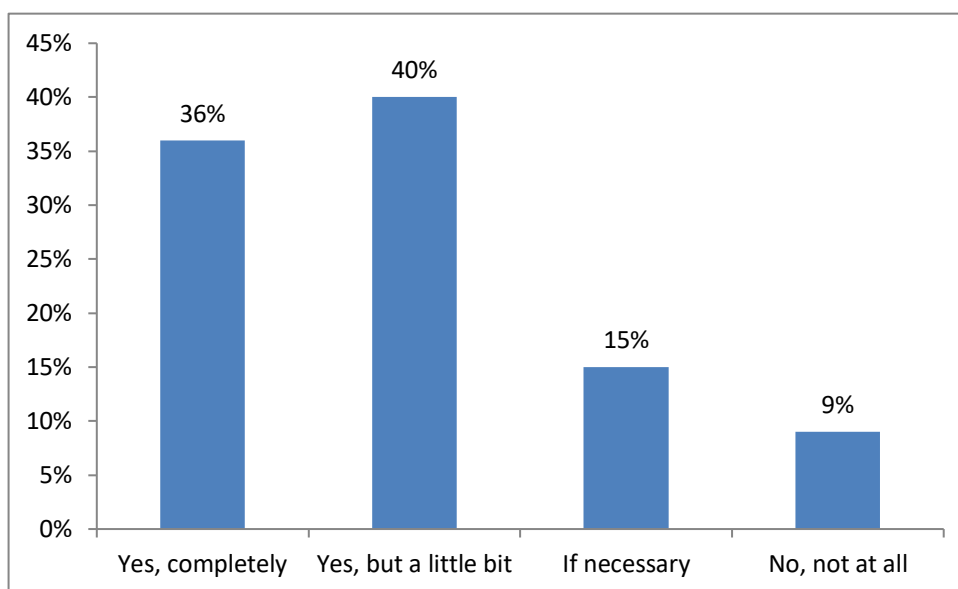
Q3. Does your teacher focus more on vocabulary while he teaches the syllabus?

Table.3
Focus on Vocabulary While Language Teacher Teaches

Response	Participants	Percentage
Yes, completely	252	36%
Yes, but a little bit	280	40%
If necessary	105	15%
No, not at all	63	9%
Total	700	100%

Fig.3

Focus on Vocabulary While Language Teacher Teaches



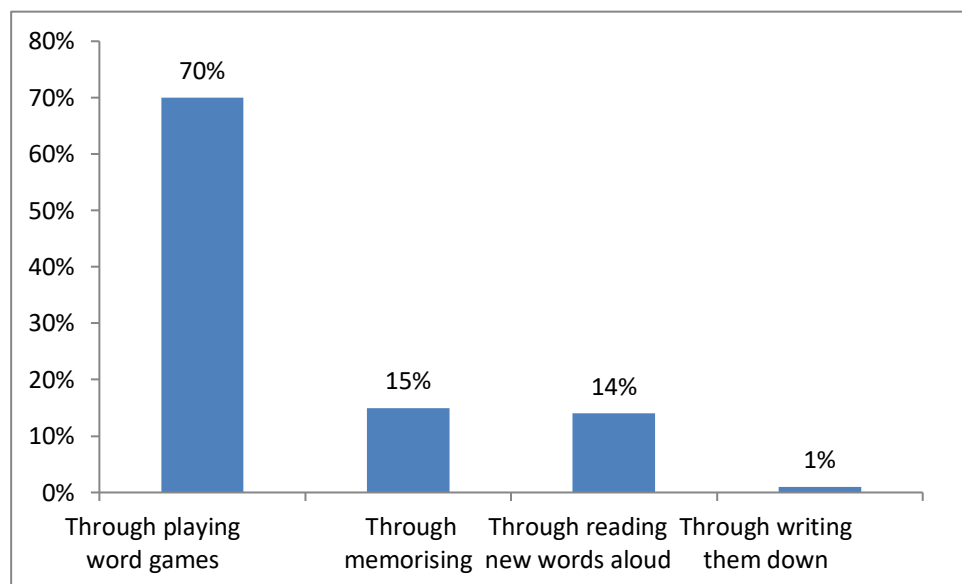
The question tries to find out whether the language teacher focuses more on vocabulary while he teaches the syllabus. The analysis of the data indicates that 36% of the students have responded completely positive to the given statement and 40% of the students have responded partial agreement. 15% of the students have responded that the language teacher focuses on vocabulary whenever it is necessary and 9% of the students have responded that the language teacher never focuses on vocabulary while he teaches the syllabus.

Q4. How do you learn vocabulary more interestingly?

Tab.4
Various Ways of Learning Vocabulary

Response	Participants	Percentage
Through playing word games	490	70 %
Through memorizing	105	15%
Through reading new words aloud	98	14%
Through writing them down	07	01%
Total	700	100%

Fig.4
Various Ways of Learning Vocabulary



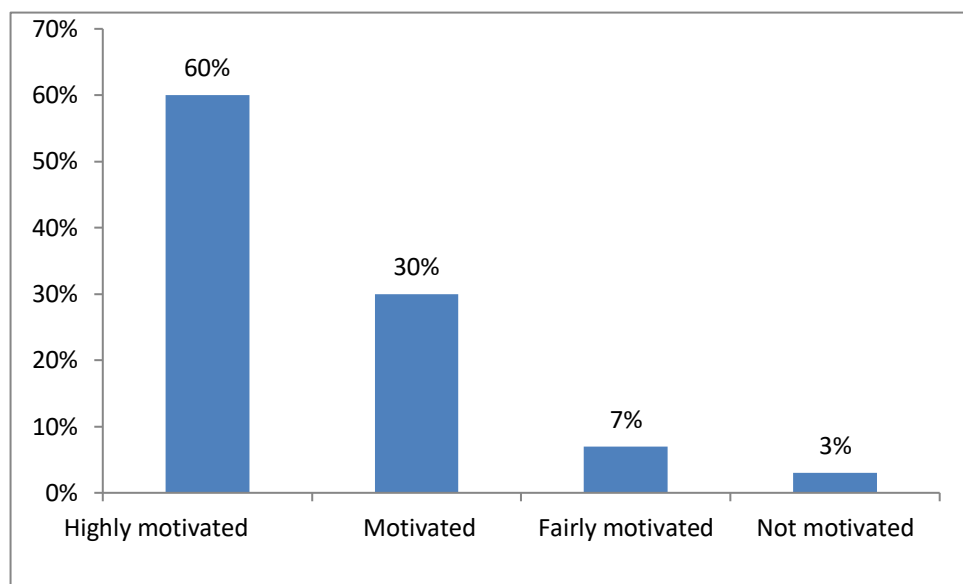
The results indicate that 70 % of the students want to learn vocabulary interestingly through playing word games. 15% of the students show interest to learn vocabulary through memorizing while 14% of the students are interested in learning vocabulary through reading new words aloud and only 01% of the students show interest to learn vocabulary through writing them down. The majority of the students (70 %) show interest to learn vocabulary through playing word games.

Q5. How do you feel when your language teacher uses language games in teaching vocabulary?

Tab.5
Motivation Levels

Response	Participants	Percentage
Highly motivated	420	60%
Motivated	210	30%
Fairly motivated	49	7%
Not motivated	21	3%
Total	700	100%

Fig.5
Motivation Levels



The table and its relevant bar graph show that 60% of the students are highly motivated when their language teacher uses language games in teaching vocabulary and 30% of the students have responded that they get motivated. The data also shows that 7% of the students are fairly motivated whereas 3% of the students are not at all motivated with the use of language games in the classroom. The analysis reveals that when the language games are used in teaching vocabulary, the majority of the students get motivated and they become part of the learning process.

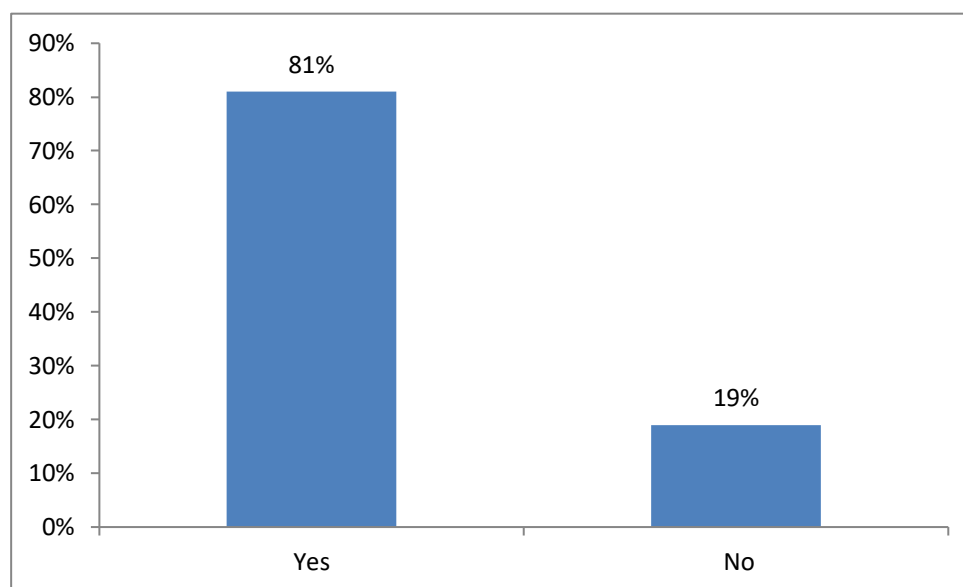
Q6. Do you think that the games are motivating and entertaining even to the uninterested students in the class?

Tab.6
Motivating the Uninterested Students by Games

Response	Participants	Percentage
Yes	567	81%
No	133	19%
Total	700	100%

Fig.6

Motivating the Uninterested Students by Games



The question tries to find out whether games can motivate or entertain uninterested students in the class. The analysis shows that 81% of the students have responded positively to the given statement while 19% of the students have responded negatively.

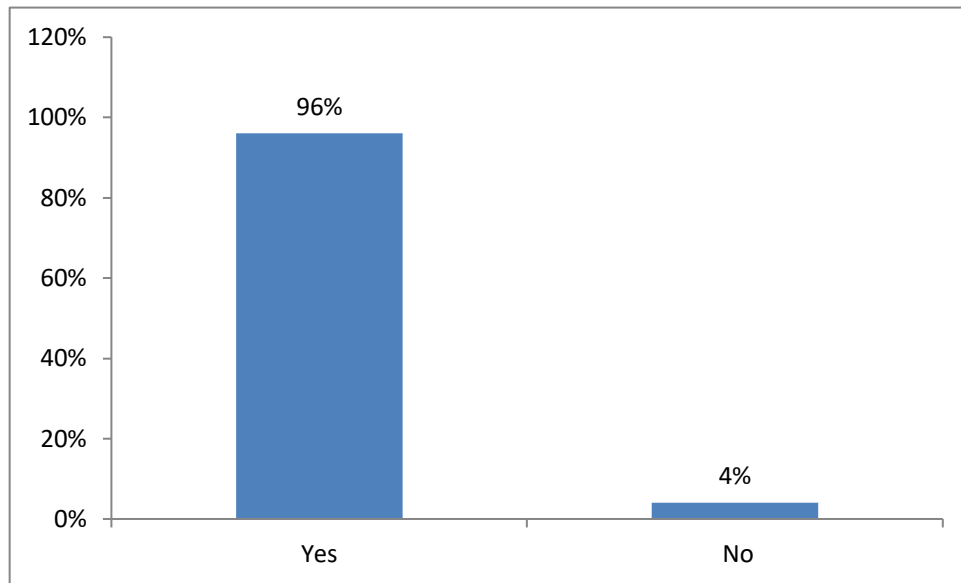
Q7. Do you remember new words better by playing language games?

Tab.7

Remembering New Words

Response	Participants	Percentage
Yes	672	96%
No	28	4%
Total	700	100%

Fig.7
Remembering New Words



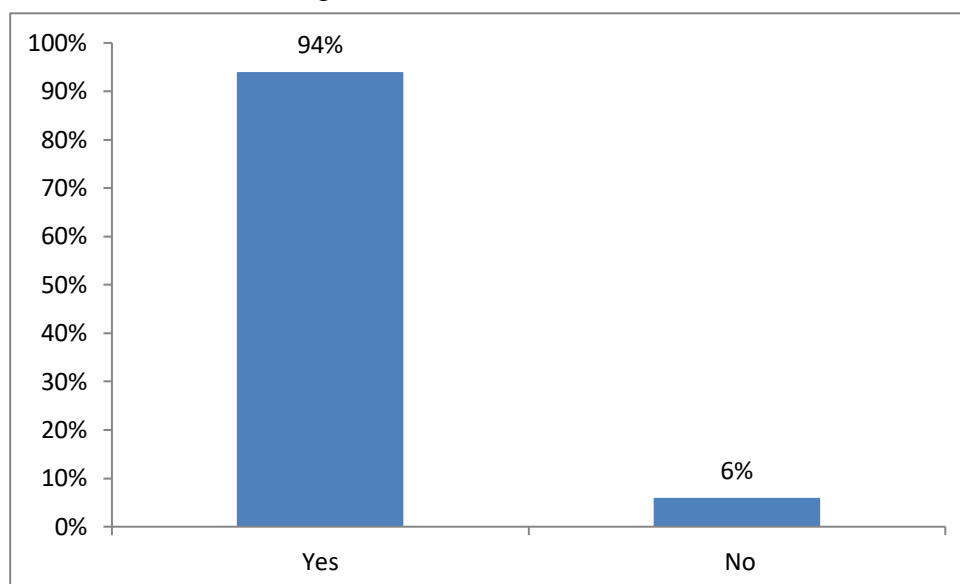
The question tries to find out whether playing language games can retain new words for a longer period. The data shows that 96% of the students have responded positively to the given statement. However, 4% of the students have responded negatively to the given statement. The majority of the students (96%) have answered that a better way of remembering new words is learning them through language games.

Q8. Do you learn new words from your classmates and partners who joined in these games?

Tab.8
Learning New Words from Classmates

Response	Participants	Percentage
Yes	658	94%
No	42	6%
Total	700	100%

Fig.8
Learning New Words from Classmates



The question aims at finding out whether the students learn new words from their classmates and partners while playing the games. The results show that 94% of the students have responded positively to the given statement and 6% of the students have responded negatively.

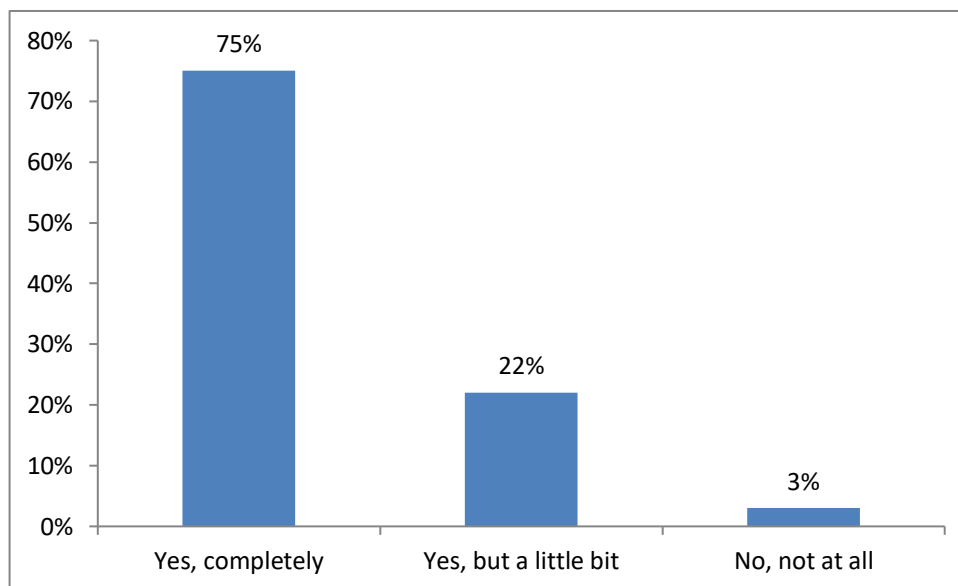
Q9. Do language games serve the purpose of learning vocabulary in a better way?

Tab.9
Language Games Serve the Purpose of learning Vocabulary Better

Response	Participants	Percentage
Yes, completely	525	75%
Yes, but a little bit	154	22%
No, not at all	21	3%
Total	700	100%

Fig.9

Language Games Serve the Purpose of learning Vocabulary Better



The question tries to identify whether language games serve the purpose of learning vocabulary in a better way. The data indicates that 75% of the students have responded completely positive to the given statement. Whereas 22% of the students have responded partially and 3% of the students have responded not at all to the given statement. The majority of the students (75%) have responded completely positive which indicates that the language games serve the purpose of learning vocabulary in a better way.

Q10. How do you feel when taking part in the word games?

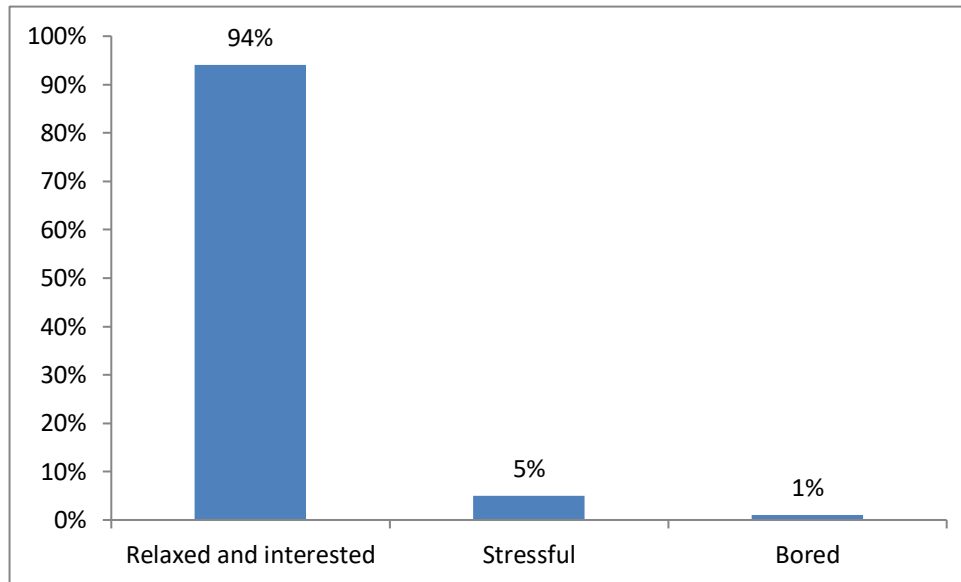
Tab.10

The Feelings of the Students When Involved in the Word Games

Response	Participants	Percentage
Relaxed and interested	658	94%
Stressful	35	5%
Bored	7	1%
Total	700	100%

Fig.10

The Feelings of the Students When Involved in the Word Games



The aim of the question is to know the feelings of the students when they take part in the word games. The data shows that 94% of the students have responded that they get relaxed and interested. The analysis indicates that students like the learning atmosphere to be stress-free and student-centric. If the learning atmosphere is stress-free, the students try to involve in the learning process and they acquire the knowledge. The results also show that 5% of the students have responded stressful and only 1% of the students have responded that the language games make them feel bored.

Findings and Conclusion

The findings of the study reveal that 85% of the students have agreed positively about the vital role being played by language games in learning vocabulary. The analysis of the data indicates that 51% of the students rely on dictionaries to refer to the unknown words, while only 12% of the students have guessed the meaning in the context. The analysis of the data shows that 70% of the students are interested to learn vocabulary through playing word games. The findings proved that 60% of the students get highly motivated when language games are used to teach vocabulary. The findings also reveal that 94% of the students feel relaxed when they take part in language games. The majority of the students respond that they are curious to learn vocabulary in a congenial atmosphere. The article suggests to all the language teachers of engineering colleges that are a high need to make use of language games in the classroom to teach vocabulary.

References:

- Bell, N. D. 2005. "Exploring L2 Language Play as an Aid to SLL: A case study of Humour in NS-NSS Interaction". *Applied Linguistics*.26:2. 192-218.
- Carter, R., & Nunan, D. (Eds.). 2001. *Cambridge Guide to Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Claxton, N. 2008. *Deliberating across the curriculum: using deliberative techniques in English as a foreign language classroom*. New York, NY: IDEBATE Press.
- Peregoy, S. F., and Boyle, O. F. 1993. *Reading, Writing, & Learning in ESL*. White Plains, New York, NY: Longman Publishing Group.
- Lewis, G. and Bedson, G. 1999. *Games for Children*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Rasinski, Timothy., Padak, Nancy., Newton, Rick Mand Newton, Evangeline. 2008. *Greek & Latin Roots Keys to Building Vocabulary*. United States: Shell Education.
- Rohani, M., & Pourgharib, B. (2013). The Effect of Games on Learning Vocabulary. *International Research Journal of Applied and Basic Sciences*, 4: 11, 3540-3543.
- Thornbury, Scott. 2002. *How to Teach Vocabulary*. England: Pearson Education Limited.