Exploring Palestinian and Spanish Teachers' Perspectives on Using Online Computer Games in Learning English Vocabulary

Explorando las perspectivas de los profesores de palestino y español sobre el uso de juegos en línea con computadoras en el aprendizaje del vocabulario de inglés

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Abstract

In recent years, the use of online computer games has become more wide spread among students and this has helped many of them to learn and practice the English language but teachers' opinions on using this tool is still unclear. This study aims to discover EFL teachers' perspectives toward using online computer games in learning English, and evaluate whether teachers' perspectives are affected by their nationality and the independent variables: gender, age, academic qualification and number of years teaching. In order to achieve the research aims Mixed methods were used: a questionnaire and an interview. The questionnaire was distributed among 20 teachers, 10 teachers from Granada, Spain and 10 teachers from Salfit, Palestine and the interview was conducted separately with the same teachers.

It was shown that there is an apparent contradiction since teachers a have positive opinion on using online computer games, but they do not use them in their classrooms.

Keywords: English as a Foreign Language; gamification; teachers' opinion

Resumen

Recientemente, los juegos en-línea han tenido una gran difusión entre los estudiantes y esto les ha ayudado en el aprendizaje del inglés pero la opinión de los docentes sobre su uso no está clara. Así, este estudio pretende averiguar la perspectiva de los docentes con respecto al uso de juegos de ordenador en el aprendizaje del inglés, y ver si estas perspectivas están afectadas por la nacionalidad y las variables independientes: género, edad, calificación académica y la experiencia docente. Para alcanzar los objetivos de este trabajo se ha utilizado un método mixto: un cuestionario y una entrevista. El cuestionario fue aplicado a 20 docentes (10 de Granada, España y 10 de Salfit, Palestina). Adicionalmente, también se les entrevistó. Los resultados exponen que hay una contradicción entre las respuestas que avalan el uso de los juegos en-línea para aprender idiomas, y la realidad del aula donde no tienen cabida.

Palabras clave: Inglés como Lengua Extranjera; gamificación; opinión de los profesores

Introduction

In the twenty-first century, English has become a universal language and the most widely spoken language in the world. It is the language of technology, research and science (Hasman, 2000) and hence, it may be termed as a lingua franca. In Spain, it has been popularized in the educational system and the number of bilingual schools has increased rapidly in the last decade (British Council, 2011). In Palestine, English is also very important for a prosperous future and a worthwhile career, so the Ministry of Education has tried to increase Palestinian English levels and have incorporated English as a school subject from the first grade as opposed to the fifth grade (Dajani & Mclaughlin, 2009).

Spanish and Palestinian teachers both teach English as a foreign language using their mother tongue. Klein (1986) stated that learning a foreign language means to learn it by teachers' instruction and in non-native environment. Both Spanish and Palestinian learners only learn English in the class and they normally speak their native languages in their everyday lives (the Arabic language in Palestine and the Spanish language in Spain). Therefore, learning English for the Palestinian and Spanish learners is very

convoluted since the new language is different from the language of instruction and they have no chance to practice it in their day to day lives.

According to Nation (2011), vocabulary is the basic foundation for learning any language. Furthermore, vocabulary and the four language skills are connected with each other and hence, without vocabulary students would not have the ability to listen, speak, read or write (Richards & Renandya, 2002). Similarly, Nation (1990) stated that without vocabulary nothing can be learned, echoing Wilkins' words (1972, p. 111) *"Without grammar, very little can be conveyed; without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed".*

Palestinian students are like the Spanish students in the sense that they do find many obstacles in learning and memorizing English vocabulary and using it in a real context. This is because learning vocabulary means learning the lexis, phonology, syntax and semantics as well as the word spelling, pronunciation and the multiple meanings a word can have (Al-Khatib, Abdel Malak, Sleiman, & Zadorian, n.d.). Madrid (1999) found that most students from Granada (Spain) have difficulties with pronunciation. Similarly, Arab students like Palestinians have problems with lexis, phonology and spelling as they have a different alphabet and language family (Al-Khatib et al., n.d.).

So, it is a very complex process that needs a great deal of attention. Many researchers such as Jayalath and Esichaikul (2016), Kalyuga, Mantai, and Marrone (2013) and Zhang, Lin, Zhang, and Choi (2017), found that teachers should try different ways of teaching students indirectly through the use of online computer games. The burgeoning of online computer games and their popularity among students at different ages meant that it was important to implement them as learning tools in English classrooms (Yip & Kwan, 2006).

Sütheő (2004) and Turan, Avinc, Kara, and Goktas (2016) demonstrated that online computer games proved their effectiveness in education because they attract students' attention and create a fun and relaxed atmosphere which helps students to learn better. In addition, Baniabdelrahman (2013), Kalyuga et al. (2013) and Yip and Kwan (2006) asserted that online computer games have lots of advantages when learning vocabulary; they help students to memorize vocabulary and recall the words and they stimulate students' motivation to practice the words in the classroom.

It is worth mentioning that students' learning is affected by three factors. First of all, teachers' actions which could have an impact on the learners' approach towards learning. The second is the teaching strategies that teachers use which should focus on attracting students' attention. Finally, class atmosphere which motivates students and stimulates their imagination and creativity through activities to learn better (Al-Laqni, 1994; Cakir, 2004). However, Al-Laqani (1994) indicated that teachers are the main element for success or failure in educational process. Also, their perspectives on technology influence their use of it, as Simpson (2005, p. 19) stated that *"Teachers, many of whom have never shared these [game] experiences, face a deep chasm when trying to communicate with this generation in their classroom population."*

Because of this, many previous studies have investigated students and teachers' perspectives on using video games. Most of the studies focused on students' opinions (Bourgonjon, Valcke, Soetaert, & Schellens, 2010) who studied only students' attitudes towards using video games in their classes and they found that learners like to use them. However, some of them compared the students and teachers' opinion (Markopoulos, Dossis, Fragkou, & Kasidiaris, 2016) who indicated that learners and teachers both have positive attitudes toward using video games in classroom. Other studies

investigated teachers' opinions (Ray, Powell, & Jacobsen, 2015). However, this study focuses on teachers' opinions on applying online computer games in their classes to enhance vocabulary according to the country of teaching. So, the present study sheds light on Palestinian and Spanish teachers' perspective on using online computer games in learning English vocabulary and exploring whether teachers' opinions in one country are different from the other. The following sections will investigate previous research into the use of online computer games in learning English vocabulary and the teachers' attitudes towards it, the research aims, methodology and the results of the study. Finally, discussion and recommendations will be given.

Literature Review

Online Computer Games and Learning English Vocabulary

According to Easterbrook (2013), without vocabulary nothing can be learned. The strategies that English teachers use to teach vocabulary affect students' learning. However, Farjami and Aidinlou (2013) expounded that learning vocabulary is the most difficult task for teachers and students. Students have many obstacles in learning English because they do not have enough vocabulary; Schmitt (2007) likewise concluded that students need to familiarize themselves with at least 2,000 word families in order to understand and comprehend a text in English. In addition, Yip and Kwan (2006) claimed that learning English vocabulary is uninteresting for students and that teachers should work hard and use different teaching strategies to attract students' attention and help them to learn vocabulary effectively. Besides, Verliyani (2016) believes that students are unsatisfied in learning English since teachers are more concerned with completing lesson plans and do not utilize teaching strategies to teach English vocabulary and this affects students negatively. Therefore, teachers recommended the use of different strategies such as pictures, games, songs, stories and technology to motivate students to learn.

Zhang et al. (2017) supposed that the importance of vocabulary in learning English and the difficulty in learning vocabulary creates the need to use a new way of teaching that will catch students' attention, help them learn more effectively and increase students' motivation to participate. Also, vocabulary acquisition is very complex because knowing a word implies knowing its pronunciation, syntax and semantics. The use of online computer games can reduce this complexity (Kalyuga et al., 2013).

According to Cakir (2004), teaching EFL to young learners is one of the most difficult tasks, unless teachers have enough information about students' age, gender, interest, level, knowledge, intelligence and their physical condition in the classroom. Young learners learn by hearing, seeing and doing. Moreover, to draw students' attention, teachers should use attractive activities and new strategies to increase their motivation. The appearance of the Net Generation brings a new cohort who prefers to learn through new ways that depend on technology, especially computers and online games (Dudeney & Hockly, 2007).

Jayalath and Esichaikul (2015) used the term gamification in reference to using games in non-game contexts to motivate students. Turan et al. (2016) also used this term, and they claim that online games positively affect language proficiency and that teachers should use them in the classroom.

In the twentieth century, not only did a technological revolution happen but also an educational revolution which shifted from a teacher-centered to a learner-centered approach. Learners have become active and learn by themselves, whereas teachers have turned into facilitators and helpers which encourages students to participate and use English more in the class (Hismanoglu, 2000). Also, the use of computers and on-line computer games play a crucial role in the learner centered approach and they attract students' attention which makes them appropriate for students' individual needs and interests (Yip & Kwan, 2006).

Griffiths (2002) advocated the idea that teachers should use online computer games carefully to address specific problems or to teach certain skills because the inaccurate utilization of them may lead to incorrect performance, and hence bad results. Moreover, students might become addicted to online computer games. Furthermore, the most important thing in teaching using online computer games is to opt for the games which are created for educational purposes because using them in the classroom is likely to stimulate students to learn and may build a positive relationship between the teachers and their students who will feel that their teacher is interested in their development (Qteefan, 2012).

The most important reasons for using online computer games for teaching and learning vocabulary are to foster the learning of vocabulary and to help students memorize and recall words easily (Baniabdelrahman, 2013). Yip and Kwan (2006) added that online computer games are the best way to learn English vocabulary and students can acquire it easily while having fun. Kalyuga et al. (2013) argued that online games improve students' achievement in vocabulary and students who learn vocabulary through online computer games are more active. They also explored the fact that allowing students to choose the games that suit them may have a very positive effect on the learning process itself. In addition, Uzun (2009) stated that online games give students the opportunity to learn new words and learn their correct pronunciation and spelling.

Teachers' attitude toward using online computer games in education

In order to utilize online computer games in education and to have positive results, teachers' opinion should be taken into consideration. So, many studies were conducted to investigate teachers' opinion toward game-based learning (Alabbasi, 2018; Lee & Hammer, 2011; Noraddin, 2015; Ray, Powell, & Jacobsen, 2015).

A study conducted by Chik (2012) found that very few teachers use online computer games in the classroom as only 2 out of 34 teachers play games and just 5 of them own game consoles. Also, non-gamer teachers claimed that games are violent, non-educational and they are for commercial purposes. Gamer teachers however, were motivated to use games in education as they are of the view that when players enjoy the game, they will be motivated to play and consequently improve their English. Similarly, Noraddin (2015) claimed that teachers' positive opinions come as a result of their belief that learners learn better when they are motivated and game-based learning encourages students to learn and to participate in class.

Online computer games not only have many advantages for learners, they are also very useful for teachers. Markopoulos, Dossis, Fragkou, and Kasidiaris (2016) pointed out that video games help teachers to organize their class easily, decrease teachers' efforts since teachers become facilitators and helpers and student-teacher relationships

improve. Besides, Lee and Hammer (2011) stated that gamification helps teachers to guide and to compensate their students in the classroom.

On the other hand, many teachers have mixed feelings about using video games in education. Ray et al. (2015) argued that a great number of teachers believed that video games can support learning, but many are still unsure about their advantages in the classroom, and they are uncertain if they can utilize them in their own classrooms effectively. This is also clear in a study carried out by Alabbasi (2018) in which in-service and pre-service teachers showed that most teachers had a positive attitude toward gamification in the classroom although, some teachers thought that games impacted some students negatively.

It is clear that using online computer games may also have downsides which affect teachers' perspectives. For instance, teachers may not be informed about computer games and how to use them. They may lack class time, or be unable to afford to buy expensive games or be unable to persuade parents and stockholders of the importance of using online computer games in the classroom (Ellis, Kirriemuir, Krotoski, McFarlane, & Heppell, 2006; NFER Teacher Voice Omnibus, 2009). Furthermore, Pavlou and Vryonides (2009) claimed that teachers who have no experience in using computers at home will not be able to use them in class; teachers' age and gender might affect their attitude toward using computer games: older teachers use computers less frequently than younger teachers and female teachers, more than male teaches, prefer to use computers in the classroom. Markopoulos et al. (2016) added that the success in using online computer games in the classroom depends on three main elements: technological "Computer access", learning procedure and human nature.

Aims of the Study

This study aims to explore Palestinian and Spanish English teachers' opinions on using online computer games in learning English vocabulary and to discover whether or not nationality affects their perspectives. This study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What do teachers think about using games in vocabulary teaching?

2. Are there significant differences in the means in teachers' use of online computer games due to the independent variables: gender, age, academic qualification, teaching experience, the school at which the teacher works and the number of years teaching?

3. Are there significant differences in the means in teachers' use of online computer games due to teachers' nationality?

Methodology

Researchers used mixed methods, quantitative and qualitative approaches, explained by Creswell and Plano Clark (2006), to achieve the main goal of the study and to answer the research questions.

Research Participants

20 Spanish and Palestinian teachers participated in this study since in both countries English is taught as a foreign language. The researchers tried to overcome the issue of the small sample size by choosing purposive sample character e.g. for each nationality, the same number of teachers with similar gender and level stage of teaching were used. The teachers were 10 EFL teachers from the Salfit district and 10 EFL teachers from the Granada district who teach English at different school levels in private and state-run schools and with different variables. In addition, the number of female and male teachers was equal, 10 males and 10 females. The teachers' ages range from 26 to 55 as shown in figure 1. English teachers also answered a questionnaire and, the same teachers were interviewed individually by the researcher to support the findings of the questionnaire.

Table 1

Distribution of sample according to different variables

Independent variables		Frequency	Percentages %
Age	26-35	6	30.0
	36-46	7	35.0
	Over 46 years of age	7	35.0
Academic qualification	Diploma	6	30.0
	Bachelor	7	35.0
	Master	7	35.0
Teaching experience	Less than 5 years	2	10.0
	5-10 years	8	40.0
	More than 10 years	10	50.0
School type	Private school	2	10.0
	State-run School	18	90.0
Level stage of teaching	Elementary classes	10	50.0
	Both elementary & secondary	5	25.0
	Secondary classes	5	25.0

Research Instrument

The researcher used two instruments to answer the research questions: a questionnaire and an interview. Both tools were developed by the researcher. The first tool was the questionnaire. It was used in order to elicit teachers' beliefs about the effect of online computer games on learning English vocabulary. It consisted of two parts: the first part recorded personal information (teachers' age, gender, academic qualification, teaching experience, the school at which the teacher works and the number

of years teaching). The second part consisted of thirty-three items distributed into three sections: the first focused on the teachers' perspective of using online computer games with elementary students in Palestine and Spain. The second focused on students' attitudes towards using online computer games in learning English vocabulary. And the last focused on the effect of online computer games on the learning of English vocabulary in terms of gender. The researcher used 5-Likert scales to measure the responses of teachers by answering: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree beside each item.

Subsequently, the interview was conducted and consisted of 12 questions: 10 open and 2 closed questions to collect more data about teachers' perspectives and to triangulate the information provided by the first instrument and to provide confidential data. The first and second questions inquired about personal information to support the questionnaire "Are you working at a state-run or a private school?" and "Which classes do you teach?". The third and fourth questions were used to collect information about the vocabulary problems that Palestinian and Spanish students encounter "Do your students find difficulties in learning English vocabulary?" If yes, teachers should answer the next question "What are the main problems that you face while teaching English Vocabulary?". The fifth question delved into teachers' knowledge on technological tools "What technology do you use to teach Vocabulary?". The next two were about online computer games "Have you ever used online computer games to teach English? Why?"; "What are the online games that you use in the classroom?". Questions eight to eleven looked into teachers' opinions about online computer games "What is your opinion about using online computer games to teach English vocabulary?"; "How do your students feel when you use online computer games to teach them?"; "What are the advantages of using online computer games to teach vocabulary?"; "What are the disadvantages of using online computer games to teach English?". The last question inquired about the name of the games to know how many teachers knew which games they use in the classroom "What are the names of the online games that you use to teach English vocabulary?".

Finally, SPSS statistical software program version 17 was used to analyse the data of the questionnaire.

Research Procedure

The questionnaire was administered to 20 EFL teachers in the Granada district in Spain and the Salfit district in Palestine.

A separate interview was conducted with 20 teachers, 10 Palestinian teachers and 10 Spanish teachers.

The results of the final test in all groups are expressed as means ± standard deviation and were statistically compared using the independent sample t-test with the SPSS statistical software V.17. Significance sat as $p \leq 0.05$. statistical Comparison methods (T-test) used analysis of variance to make a comparison between the gender variable (male and female).

Then the questionnaire and the interview results were collected and compared to determine the results.

Results of the Study

To find the results for each question, the questionnaire and interview data was gathered and compared.

Results related to the first question

"What do teachers think about using online computer games in vocabulary learning?" To answer this question, the researchers analysed the questionnaire items and the interview answers.

Although 19 out of 20 teachers had a positive attitude towards using online computer games and their importance in learning and teaching vocabulary, only 60% of interviewees agreed that they actually use online games. One Spanish teacher finds online computer games useless as they are *Too time-consuming for little result* (participant 9).

Teachers believe that using online computer games has a positive effect on teaching vocabulary and this is clearly shown since a great majority of teachers (90%) agreed that English teachers should use new ways to teach vocabulary like online computer games. However, only 55% of teachers agreed that they actually use online computer games to teach English and 20% of teachers neither agreed nor disagreed. Similar results indicated that teachers prefer revising vocabulary using online games rather than worksheets as half of the teachers agreed that this was the case, while only 15% disagreed and the others answered with neutral responses.

These results also correlate with the interview results for the question: "What is your opinion about using online computer games in teaching English vocabulary?"

Teachers agreed on utilizing online computer games in education as they are a very good tool in learning vocabulary. Respondents said*, It is very good technique to use in teaching vocabular*y (Participant 1), some other explained that *I believe computer games are a great resource for language learning* (participant 10), and they are *Useful for both teacher and student* (participant 12). However, some teachers claimed that although online computer games are a very beneficial tool, teachers should be careful when using them. A sample response included *It is a good idea, but I think these games should be carefully pre-planned to fit in with the decided text (the curriculum)* (participant 11).

Teaching with online computer games

Teachers do agree that online computer games are very important tool in teaching for many reasons as table 2 below shows:

The previous table indicates six reasons that mean online computer games play a very significant role in learning. The highest percentages are for motivating students, attracting students' attention, fostering autonomous learning, stimulating students' interest, and this tool gives students the chance to view and edit their answers. Encouraging group work was rated least important when it comes to online computer games and learning.

In the interview, all the interviewees, including those who do not use online computer games in the classroom, stated that students prefer to learn through online games and they highlighted many advantages of using them. The most important trait of online computer games is that they motivate students to learn vocabulary unconscious-

ly as a sample of respondents indicated, *(online computer games) motivate students to learn, make them learn without even feel that they are learning and learn new words quickly* (participant 1); *It motivates students to learn especially who grew up in the digital age* (participant 15). They engage students so they are more willing to participate and use the language *Amusing, encourage the spirit of team (groups), stimulating, improves using the IT skills, strengthen the social relationship* (participant 11), *Involving all students, they like to practice and compete, increase students interest in school* (participant 12), *Using games in the classroom will engage the learners as well as create an environment for experimental learning* (participant 14).

Table 2

Teachers' rating on the reasons for using online computer games in terms of importance for learning

Reasons	Mean	Percentages
Motivate students to learn	4.55	91%
Attract students' attention	4.30	86%
Foster self-learning	4.25	85%
Stimulate students' interest	4.20	84%
Enable students to view and edit their answers easily	4.05	81%
Encourage cooperation and group work	3.65	73%

This comes as a result of the fun and interesting environment that using online computer games creates as most teachers explained*, May be more fun and encourage students more, being a new way of teaching* (participant 13), *It is funnier than worksheet* (participant 2), *They learn vocabulary easier and in a funnier way* (participant 4), and *They are very interesting and funny* (participant 5). Also, what gives this tool a very significant role in education is its impact on students. Online games attract students' attention to play and learn. A sample of responses state that they use online computer games in teaching English *To get the attention of pupils* (participant 7); *It attracts students' attention* (participant 3); *It can be a useful and attractive tool for students, and they may find it funny too* (participant 8).

Both Palestinian and Spanish teachers indicated that online computer games are not only important for students, but they are also important for teachers. One Respondent said, *Students will be more interested in learning the material and teachers don't need to explain too many material* (participant 15), and other response included, *It's such useful way in teaching it makes the students more interactive in the class and both the teacher and the students feel the amusement of learning* (participant 17).

Learning English vocabulary with online computer games

Teachers do believe in the advantages of online computer games in learning and teaching vocabulary as they answered in the questionnaire in the following table:

Table 3

Table 3

Teachers' opinion of the benefits of online computer games in learning English vocabulary

The advantages of online computer games in learning English vocabulary	Response			Mean	SD
	Agree	Neutral	Disagree		
Help students to remember new words easily.	95%	5%	0%	4.35	.75
Increase students' ability to use and learn vocabulary.	95%	5%	0%	4.20	0.52
Encourage students to recall vocabulary.	90%	10%	0%	4.20	0.62
Increase students' productivity in vocabulary.	90%	10%	0%	4.15	0.59
Improve students' ability to learn English vocabulary effectively.	90%	10%	0%	4.20	0.62
Students prefer to learn English vocabulary by using online computers games.	85%	15%	0%	4.15	0.59
Playing online computer games a lot help students improve their English.	85%	15%	0	4.10	0.64
Connect students with learning vocabulary at home.	70%	25%	5%	3.80	0.77

The advantages of online computer games in learning vocabulary are listed above from the highest to the lowest percentage of responses. The most important benefit that teachers indicated was that using online games fosters students' learning of vocabulary as the games help students to remember new words, and enrich students' knowledge to learn and use vocabulary (95%) They also increase vocabulary production and improve students' ability to learn vocabulary (90%), lead to better English (85%) and students like to learn with them (85%). Interestingly, a quarter of teachers did not agree nor disagree that online computer games connect students with learning English vocabulary at home while 70% agreed that they keep students connected with vocabulary at home.

Online computer games help to solve some problems that students face in learning vocabulary. Table 4 shows three main problems in learning: slow learning, weakness in learning and shyness which teachers can overcome with online computer games.

Table 4

Learning problems that online computer games can find solutions for

Learning Problems	Mean	Percentages
Help slow learners to learn better.	4.15	85%
Help shy students to participate.	4.25	85%
Solve students' weaknesses in vocabulary.	3.80	76%

From this table it can be seen that online computer games help students who face different obstacles in learning vocabulary to learn better, such as slow and shy learners. Notably, 25% of teachers neither agreed nor disagreed that online computer games can address students' weaknesses and 76% think that this way will indeed improve students who have some weakness in learning vocabulary.

Online computer games are shown to improve students learning of vocabulary as responses included, *Children learn vocabulary easier* (participant 4), *It will facilitate the process of memorizing the words only if it is applied in a useful way* (participant 18), *Guess the meaning of the words. Match the pictures with the correct words in easy way* (participant 19), *Help student to focus and remember the words and connect them with the game* (participant 20), *Help students how spell words and rise their concentration* (participant 8).

Some negative statements were also used in the questionnaire to compare teachers answers and understanding.

Table 5

Teachers responses for the negative statements about online computer games

Negative statement about online computer games	Response			Mean	SD
	Agree	Neutral	Disagree		
Students will not learn more vocabulary if they play online games.	15%	10%	75%	2.35	0.99
Online computer games are not the appropriate technique to teach vocabulary.	15%	25%	60%	2.40	1.23
Online computer games have a negative effect on students' proper learning of vocabulary.	15%	30%	55%	2.50	1.05

Since these items are negative, a high percentage of the respondents disagreed with the statements. The strongest disagreement was that students will not learn more vocabulary if they play online games with 75% in disagreement, which shows that just over three quarters of teachers agreed that online computer games help students to learn more vocabulary. Few teachers (15%) agreed, while the majority (60%) disagreed, and 25% didn't either agree or disagree that online computers games are not the appropriate technique to teach vocabulary. In addition, a small number of teachers (15%) agreed while the majority (55%) disagreed that online computers games have a negative effect on students' proper learning of vocabulary, but 30 % of teachers neither agreed nor disagreed with this item which is notable.

Gender and online computer games

A great number of teachers gave neutral responses to gender and online computer games statements as explained in table 6.

Male and female use of Online computer games

Gender and online computer games	Response			Mean	SD
	Agree	Neutral	Disagree		
Female students will be more active in learning using online computer games.	25%	45%	30%	3.05	1.17
Male students will be more active in learning using online computer games.	55%	20%	25%	3.45	1.32
Male students have access to online computer games more than females.	40%	40%	20%	3.30	1.22

The statements which are related to gender have close results as they got the highest number of neutral responses. 45% of teachers were neutral on the statement that female learners will be more active in learning using online computers games, and 40 % gave a neutral response that male students will be more active in learning using online computers games. However, only 20% of teachers gave neutral answers and 55% of teachers agreed that male students have access to online computers games more than females. Overall, teachers agreed that male students play online computer games more than female students, but they do not know how online games will affect students' learning.

Obstacles to using online computer games for teaching

Slightly more than half of English teachers use online computer games (55%), and this may be as a result of the limited Internet connection and computer laboratories in their schools affecting their use of online computer games in the classroom as shown in figure 1.
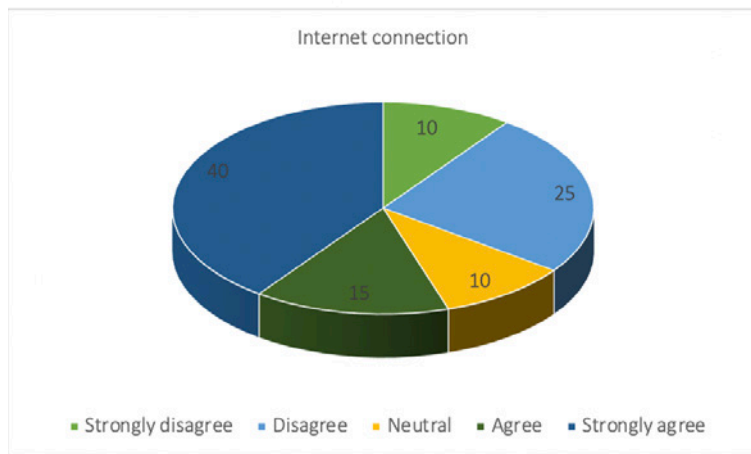

Figure 1. The availability of Internet connections and computer labs are limited

This result correlates with the information provided by the interview where teachers agreed that there are some issues that limit their use of online computer games. Most of responses included that they don't have time to use this tool *I don't use them. They need lots of time,* (participant 1). *Too time-consuming for little result* (participant 9), and *There is not enough time to use them* (participant 5). And other teachers mentioned that this was affected by internet connection. A sample of responses included, *Sometimes because it depends on Internet availability. Most of the time doesn't work* (participant 2), and *There was no internet access* (participant 11).

Other respondents claimed that not only is it the Internet connection that makes their use difficult, but also teachers' previous experience and knowledge as one response included, *We don't have internet access and we need to know how to programme the game* (participant 18). Moreover, other teachers answered that they don't use them because they have a limited knowledge about them. Approximately half of teachers mentioned that*, I have never used them because I haven't had much experience with video games* (participant 8), *I never try but I think they will be useful* (participant 14), and other teacher answered that *I don't use them because I need specific vocabulary games related to my lessons* (participant 16). Whereas, some teachers don't like to use ICT as one respondent said, *I don't use them I prefer the traditional way in teaching* (participant 13).

Teachers still have a positive attitude toward utilizing online games, despite the issues mentioned above.

Results related to the second question

"Are there significant differences in the means on teachers' use of online computer games due to the research independent variables: gender, age, academic qualification, teaching experience, the school at which the teacher works and the number of years teaching?" In order to answer this question, different statistical analysis was used. The results revealed that there are no significant differences at α=0.05 in the use of online computer games on learning English vocabulary due to the research independent variables (gender, academic qualification, the school at which the teacher works and the number of years teaching) as indicated in tables 7, 8 , 9 ,10 ,11 and 12.

To find if gender affect teachers' opinion on using online computer games T-Test for independent samples was used. The following table shows the total score for the questionnaire:

Table 7

T-Test for independent samples of the influence of using online computer games in learning English vocabulary due to teachers' gender

Gender	Frequency	Mean	S.D	T-value	Sig.*
Male	10	3.71	0.36	1.083	0.293
Female	10	3.87	0.32		

* Significant at (α= 0.05), D.F = 124.

Table 7 indicates that the significant difference for gender is 0.293 which is higher than 0.05, and the means the male and female responses are almost the same. This proves that gender doesn't affect teachers' opinion. On the other hand, the interview results found that the gender variable affected teachers' application of online computer games as 70% of female teachers and 50% of male teachers use games in their teaching.

In addition, academic qualifications for the total score was investigated by One Way ANOVA as table 8 shows.

Table 8

One Way ANOVA to test the differences of the influence of using online computer games on learning English vocabulary due to teachers' academic qualification

Source of variation	Sum of Squares	D.F	Mean Squares	F	Sig.*
Between groups	0.077	2	0.039	0.310	0.737
Within groups	2.112	17	0.124		
Total	2.189	19			

*Significant at (α= 0.05)

As explained above, the significant difference for the teachers' academic qualification is 0.737 which is higher than 0.05. This indicates that academic qualification does not affect teachers' opinion.

Teachers' opinions were also compared between the schools in which they work (private or state-run schools). T-Test for independent samples was applied to see whether this affects teachers' attitude as stated in table 9.

Table 9

T-Test for independent samples of the influence of using online computer games on learning English vocabulary due to teachers' school of teaching

School of teaching	Frequency	Mean	S.D	T-value	Sig.*
Private school	2	3.64	0.43	0.669	0.512
State-run School	18	3.81	0.34		

* Significant at (α= 0.05), D.Fw = 124.

Table (9) clearly shows that teachers who teach in private or state-run schools have the same attitude to using online games. The sig =0.512 (p >0.05) and the private school has (M =3.64) which is close to the mean of state-run schools (M=3.81).

Moreover, One Way ANOVA was used to find if teachers' length of service influences their attitude to applying online computer games in their classes as indicated in table 10 below.

Table 10

One Way ANOVA to test the differences of the influence of using online computer games on learning English vocabulary due to teachers' professional experience

Source of variation	Sum of Squares	D.F	Mean Squares	F	Sig.*
Between groups	0.419	2	0.209	2.010	0.165
Within groups	1.770	17	0.104		
Total	2.189	19			

*Significant at (α= 0.05)

The last results pointed out that teachers' experience does not affect their opinion as the sig= 0.165 (p> 0.05). Moreover, teachers' age was investigated by One Way ANOVA as shown in table 11.

Table 11

One Way ANOVA to test the differences of the influence of using online computers games on learning English vocabulary due to teachers' age

Questionnaire's Components	Source of variation	Sum of Squares	D.F	Mean Squares	F	Sig.*
Teachers perspectives toward using online computer games in teaching English vocabulary	Between groups	0.632	2	0.316	3.716	0.046*
	Within groups	1.445	17	0.085		
	Total	2.077	19			
Students attitudes towards using online computer games in learning English vocabulary	Between groups	0.213	2	0.106	.779	0.475
	Within groups	2.321	17	0.137		
	Total	2.533	19			
The effect of online computer games on the learning of English vocabulary with respect to gender	Between groups	0.009	2	0.005	0.011	0.989
	Within groups	7.393	17	0.435		
	Total	7.402	19			
Total score	Between groups	0.223	2	0.112	0.965	0.401
	Within groups	1.966	17	0.116		
	Total	2.189	19			

*Significant at (α= 0.05)

The previous table indicates that teachers' age affects the first component of the questionnaire "Teachers perspectives toward using online computer games to teach En-

glish vocabulary" with sig =0.046 (p <0.05). Therefore, Scheffe post hoc test was used to find which age group has the largest effect on the attitude (see table 12).

Table 12

Scheffe post hoc test to determine the resource of differences in the component of teachers' perspectives toward using online computer games in teaching English vocabulary due to teachers' age

Age	26-35	36-46	Over 46 years of age
26-35		0.311	0.432*
36-46			0.121
over 46 years of age			

*Significant at (α= 0.05)

The results prove that the teachers who are between 26-35 years old are using online computer games more than the other teachers. Similarly, young teachers in the interview agreed more on applying online computer than the older teachers.

Results related to the third research question

"Are there significant differences in the means on teachers' use of online computer games due to teachers' nationality?" This question was answered by T-Test for independent samples to find whether Spanish and Palestinian teachers have different attitudes toward using online computer games as indicated in table 13.

Table 13

T-Test for independent samples of the influence of using online computer games on learning English vocabulary due to Nationality

Nationality	Frequency	Mean	S.D	T-value	Sig.*
Spanish	10	3.76	0.34	0.430	0.673
Palestinian	10	3.82	0.36		

* Significant at (a= 0.05), D.F = 18.

This evidence shows that there is no significant difference at α=0.05 in the use of online computer games on learning English vocabulary in regard to teachers' nationality. The significance level of Palestinian and Spanish teachers is 0.673 (p ˃0.05) which means that the teachers' opinion was not affected by their nationalities. Moreover, both Spanish and Palestinian teachers have almost the same opinion about using online games in teaching vocabulary, since the mean of for Spanish teachers is (M=3.76) and for Palestinian teachers (M=3.82). However, teachers answer for the item in the questionnaire was also analysed to see whether the nationality of teachers influences their opinion. (see figure 3):
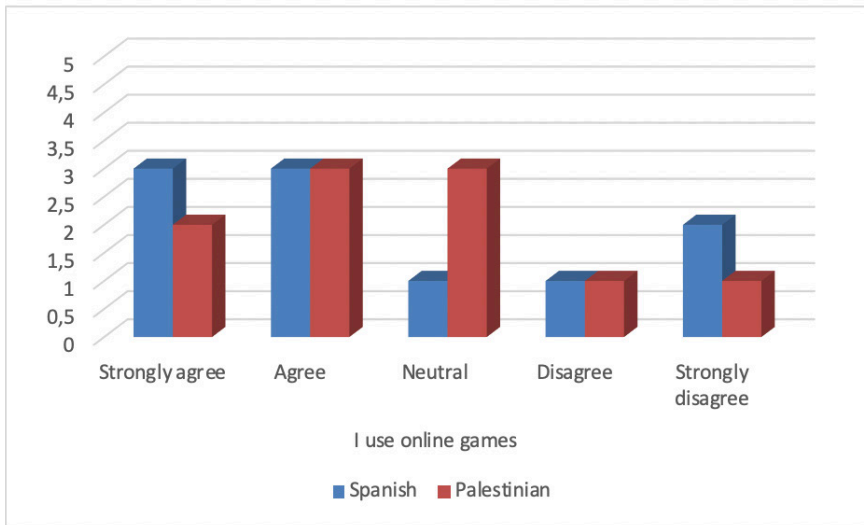
Figure 2. Teachers' Nationalities and their use of online computer games

This indicates that equal numbers of teachers answered agree and disagree that they use online computer games though the number of teachers differs slightly in the other responses. More Spanish teachers strongly disagreed whereas more Palestinian teachers neither agreed nor disagreed that they use online computer games. So, the interview showed that nationality does affect teachers' attitude to using online computer games as shown in figure 4 below:
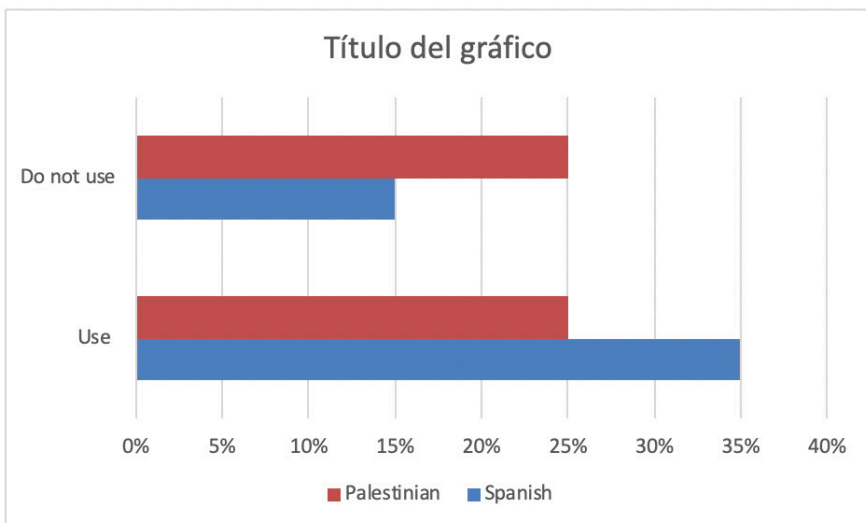

Figure 3. Interviewees' usage of online computer games in classroom

The previous figure indicated that 50% of Palestinian teachers and 70% of Spanish teachers use online computer games in their classrooms to teach vocabulary, which

showed that Spanish teachers use this method of teaching more than Palestinian teachers.

Discussion and Conclusions

The present research is one of the few studies that concentrates on the use of online computer games in learning vocabulary from Spanish and Palestinian EFL teachers' perspectives. The results showed that both Palestinian and Spanish teachers do believe in the positive effects that online computer games can have on students' learning of vocabulary. Online computer games have many advantages in learning English vocabulary since they increase students' motivation to learn, help students memorize new words, increase students' interest in using vocabulary, make students active and encourage them to learn independently. These results are very similar to those obtained by Baniabdelrahman (2013), Qteefan (2012) and Yip and Kwan (2006) who claimed that educational games are very important in learning English since they encourage students to participate and to learn, and they promote competition which motivates students to play and learn. The most important aspect of this strategy is creating a relaxed and fun environ that stimulate shy and slow learners to take part in classroom activities. Besides, Yip and Kwan (2006) agreed with the current research results in the sense that online computer games motivate students to learn vocabulary and they help them to acquire vocabulary easily.

It is worth mentioning that there is a contradiction between the teachers' answers as although they believe in the importance of online games on vocabulary learning, they do not actively use online games or they give a neutral response, which may show that they don't have enough knowledge about this teaching strategy. This contributes to the work of Ray et al. (2015) who find that teachers have a positive opinion toward using online computer games as they have positive effects but they are still unsure of their benefits in education and how they may be used.

The questionnaire results showed that academic qualification, teaching experience, the school at which the teacher works, and the number of years teaching do not affect teachers' use of online computer games. However, the interview results revealed that 30% of females and 50% of males do not use online computer games and 10% of males disagreed on the influence of online computer games on vocabulary. This result agreed with the study conducted by Pavlou and Vryonides (2009) with 293 female teachers and 157 male teachers in Greece. They found that female teachers believe more than male teachers in using computers in the classroom and their usefulness in teaching.

Additionally, the present results of the questionnaire and the interview revealed that younger teachers (26-35 years old) use online computer games more than those who are above 46 years of age. Furthermore, Pavlou and Vryonides (2009) agreed with this result, and they found that age affects teachers' attitudes toward using computers in the classroom; older teachers use computers less often than younger teachers.

Similarly, the nationality factor in the questionnaire did not affect teachers' perspectives, meaning that both Palestinian and Spanish teachers have the same opinion on using online games to learn vocabulary. On the contrary, the interview results pointed out that 50% of Palestinian teachers do not use online computer games in the classroom because there is no Internet connection. Whereas, 30% of Spanish teachers do not use online games. This comes as a result of a variety of factors, as the interviewees

stated, affecting teachers' use of online computer games in classroom such as: poor or no internet connection, limited class time, uncertainty about which games to use and how to apply them. This result matched with Ellis et al. (2006) in the sense that teachers may face many problems in using online computer games at schools in regards to the availability of Internet networks and computers. In addition, De Freitas (2006) and Routledge (2009) claimed that teachers face some obstacles when applying games in schools such as class time being limited, the technical facilities that schools have such as hardware, software licenses and support staff.

In addition, it is clear from the teachers' answers that they have little knowledge about online computer games as one respondent asked, *How can we apply it* (participant 17), and other one answered that *I have never used them because I haven't had much experience with video games* (participant 8). Awan (2011) explained that teachers don't use ICT in the classroom because they are not aware of it and they have not received any relevant training. As a result, they are not confident with employing them in the classroom effectively. Also, they are unaware of the games that suit the lesson content and curriculum purposes, and how to assess the learning outcome (De Freitas, 2006; Routledge, 2009).

Nevertheless, teachers confirmed that they use some educational online games in the classroom. Spanish online computer games which were mentioned are: *Kahoot, Clicknlearn, Hangman, Judo land, Crossword, Find the Words, Oup. com, Oxford rooftop.* Palestinian online computer games which were mentioned are: *Fun brain, Fast English, Spelling Bee, British council games, Fun English, Concentration game, Hang mouse, Match game, and Build words*.

The number of participants could potentially affect the representativeness of the sample. The reason that the sample in this study is limited is that it is difficult to reach a large number of teachers without passing through a variety of formal procedures (e.g. Ministry of education and the permission of school heads). Despite the small-scale study which employed 20 participants, it gives a hint about teachers' opinions in different countries. There is however, a contradiction between the interview and the questionnaire results on the effect of the independent variables in English teachers' perspectives, especially in relation to gender and nationality, which means that there is a need to further study this issue with a larger sample.

The research results suggest that teachers should use online computer games to activate their students' interest, and they should also be educated about the use of online computer games in order to raise their awareness about the right employment of these tools in the classroom. Training should be given for teachers on how to use online games for educational purposes. However, researchers are recommended to do further studies with different teacher populations and compare teachers' opinions based on their nationality.

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