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THE IMPACT OF LANGUAGE GAMES ON CLASSROOM INTERACTION

IN AN IRANIAN EFL PRIMARY CLASSROOM

By

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<u>**ABSTRACT**</u>

The Impact of Language Games on Classroom Interaction in an Iranian EFL Primary Classroom

BY MONA MOHABBATSAFA

The present study was conducted based on the assumption that using a language game-based approach in an Iranian EFL primary classroom was likely to provide more interaction opportunities for pupils through creating a more enjoyable learning environment (Betteridge & Buckby, 2005). The study involved an Iranian EFL primary classroom located in a small town named Karaj which was 12 miles away from the Capital Tehran. There were twenty eleven-year-old pupils who were learning English as a foreign language and one English language teacher involved as participant.

The main purpose of this research was to investigate the nature of interactions between the teacher and pupils and among pupils to find out how these interactions are affected by the use of language games. Therefore, two different teaching methods of traditional and language game-based approach were employed by the teacher to compare the nature of teacher's and pupils' interactions within the lessons. Another purpose of the study was to discover the teacher's perception about using language games with the learners in the classroom, to find out whether she thinks that language games are useful and should be used in English language classrooms or that there are barriers to using language games in Iranian EFL classrooms.

A multi-method research design based on a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches was employed and data was gathered over six weeks by means of observations and video-recordings as well as semi-structured interviews with the teacher. The overall findings of the study revealed that the use of language games changed the nature of classroom interaction towards being more pupil-centred and the dominance of the teacher in the classroom was reduced. In terms of teacher's perceptions towards the use of language games, it was found that the

teacher developed positive perceptions towards the use of language games and she agreed that the use of language games motivated pupils to become more involved in classroom activities and the teacher was less dominant in the classroom. However, the teacher believed that informing pupils' parents of the pedagogical values of the language games is something important to be considered. She believed that due to the cultural beliefs in Iran, the learning environment should be strict and solemn; therefore the idea of using games in the classroom may not be acceptable to pupils' parents. However, the main message was that the school and teachers should look for ways to educate parents about the pedagogical values of the language games and inform them that their use in language classrooms can develop pupils' language learning through increasing their interactions with their peers and their teachers in the classroom.

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Author's Declaration

I, Mona Mohabbasafa, declare that the thesis entitled: The impact of language games on classroom interaction in Iranian EFL primary classroom is my own work and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research. I confirm that:

- This work was done wholly while I was in candidature for a research degree at Southampton University;
- Where any parts of this has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at any other institutions, this has been clearly stated;
- Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is clearly attributed;
- Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given, with the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
- I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
- None of this work has been published before submission

Signed ………………………………………………………

Date ………………………………………………………

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ABBREVIATIONS

L1   FIRST LANGUAGE

L2   SECOND LANGUAGE

EFL   ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

ESL   ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

SR   STIMULATED RECALL

TPR   TOTAL PHYSICAL RESPONSES

CLT   COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING

ZPD   ZONE OF PROXIMAL DEVELOPMENT

Chapter 1: Introduction

The Impact of Language Games on Classroom Interaction in an Iranian EFL Primary classroom

1.1. Introduction

This thesis reports a study with a main focus on teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil interaction in an Iranian EFL primary classroom. The purpose of the study was to investigate the nature of interactions between the teacher and pupils and among pupils, and to find out how or in what ways the teacher's and pupils' interactions would be affected by the use of language games. Therefore, in order to investigate this matter, it was essential to closely look at the teachers' and pupils' interactions and behaviour during the teaching and learning process in the classroom. This required attending six English lessons in an Iranian EFL classroom to observe and video record the verbal interactions exchanged between the teachers and pupils and among pupils to find out what exactly was going on in the classroom.

The reason why I decided to conduct this study in the Iranian context was because I had studied and taught English to young language learners at the primary level in Iran for about fifteen years, and therefore I was familiar with the Iranian educational system and the existing teaching methods in the Iranian EFL classrooms. The fact that I was familiar with the cultural norms and the spoken language in Iran was an advantage for me, as it allowed me to have a better connection with the social context and therefore have a better understanding of what was happening during the course of the study. As it is argued by Pinnegar & Hamilton (2009), familiarity with different aspects of the social context such as norms, culture, and language enables the researcher to have a better comprehension of certain behaviours and actions of the participants, as the researcher can reflect on those behaviours when analysing the data and deliver a more comprehensive overview of what occurred during the course of the study in the research context.

However, apart from my background knowledge as a teacher and learner of the English language and my cultural roots in Iran, there are specific reasons as to why this research matters to me and why I found this study so important for investigation in this particular context. The following section provides detailed information about

the history of the English language in Iran which leads to a better understanding of the importance of this research.

1.2. Why this research matters

The English language has been recognised as an international and an intra-national language in Iran over the last 50 years (Saxena & Ominiyi, 2010). At the beginning of the 20th century, French was the most dominant foreign language in Iran; therefore France was the country of choice for those who were seeking Higher Education abroad. However, due to the presence of British companies, the British Army, and the Americans who developed a close relationship with the former King of Iran "Shah", and established a strong army in the country, English came to replace French and became the most significant foreign language in Iran (Tollefson, 1991). Many of the Americans came to Iran to teach English and many language schools were opened that recruited native speakers of English. There were also two main centres for the promotion of the English language at the time which were the Iran-America society (IAS) and the British Council (Saxena & Ominiyi, 2010).

However, the founding of the Islamic revolution in 1979 put an end to a 2500 year old Monarchy and replaced it with a religious government whose attitude towards the English language was profoundly negative as it was closely associated with the USA. Since the new government and the USA did not have a good relationship, anything associated with the USA was banned after the Islamic Revolution in 1979. Moreover, the attitude towards individuals who were fluent in English language was equally negative as they were perceived as secular liberals who did not adhere to their own religious heritage (Mehran, 2007).

Within such a climate, there was a heated debate between the members of the newly established party about what to do with the English language. Eventually in 1980 a decision was made and English remained in school curricula, yet with the goal of developing a home grown model of English which was free from the influence of English speaking nations. The government wanted to promote a model of the language which could be used to export the Islamic Revolution to the rest of the word, particularly Muslim countries. To achieve this aim several actions took place. First, foreign experts and teachers of English (the majority of whom were Americans),

were expelled from the country. Second, foreign-run and private-run English language schools were shut down and over time converted to state-run language institutes. Third, the socio-cultural aspect of the foreign languages was regarded as unwanted and undesired and thus were all eliminated from school text books and curricula and instead there was more of a focus on vocabulary and the grammatical structure of the language. Fourth, a state-run publishing house was established to produce home grown textbooks for local use (Borjian, 2012).

As a result of these changes serious problems occurred. The first problem was that since many of the foreign professors and native speakers of English had left the country, there was serious shortage of English instructors (Ashraf, 1979). The number of foreign instructors who had departed was so high that the number of instructors in some educational institutions had to be doubled (Yarmohammadi, 2005). On the other hand Iranian liberals and secular teachers and professors who were fluent in a foreign language had been purged after the revolution in Iran and those who had stayed were not entirely approved of by government (Borjian, 2013).

In response to the problem of a shortage of English instructors, the Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution promoted a strategy. A wave of religious instructors who had neither proper educational background, nor prior experience in teaching a foreign language entered schools and Universities to teach English as a foreign language (See Regulation No8, in effect from 1 April 1985, issued by the Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution). Moreover, since the government had changed the text books into a home grown type in which the communicative aspect of the English language was completely neglected, English grammar and vocabulary in state schools was taught via the Grammar Translation and Audio-lingual method (see literature review section 2.1 for more details of this method) with no reference to the socio-cultural or communicative aspects of the language (Saxena & Ominiyi, 2010).

However, as time passed the climate began to change and since 1991 private language schools started to open. These private language schools were permitted to offer their own curricula and text books as longs as they followed certain rules and regulations set by the state. In spite of many obstacles created by the authorities and strict rules imposed by the government, these language schools could import Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) English text books (e.g. Headway by Soar (1986) and Interchange by Richards (1991)), and to some extent they could match

their teaching methods with the English Language Teaching (ELT) models practiced abroad. The aim of these language schools was to promote the communicative aspect of the English language which learners did not have opportunities for in the state schools (Mehran, 2007).

Gradually Iranian language learners started to show interest in private language schools and the schools started to attract more and more students over time. Unlike the country's politicians, Iranian youth showed an enormous interest in communicating with the outside world, which required a type of English that would consider the communicative aspect of the English language and not the type that was enforced by the government. Therefore, they joined these private schools to fulfil their needs which were not responded to in the state schools. However, the only downside to these private schools was that, unlike the state schools which were available to all students for free, the enrolment fees for these private schools were expensive and not everyone could afford to pay the tuition fees, and this limited the number of students who could benefit from the English lessons at private schools (Borjian, 2013).

In spite of the fact that the emergence of private language institutes in Iran made a great contribution to introducing Communicative Language Teaching, English teaching methods and the text books in state schools remained the same. State schools are still not paying attention to the communicative aspect of the English language and the text books are excluded from communicative activities. Moreover, after so many years of practicing Grammar Translation and Audio-lingual Methods in the state schools, teachers are used to these methods and strongly believe in them. Most of these teachers are not even familiar with the Communicative Language Teaching approach, as they have never been trained or exposed to any other form of language teaching (Kariminia & Salehi, 2007). As a result, pupils who are learning English as a foreign language in Iranian state schools do not have opportunity for interaction with their teacher and/or their peers in the classroom and do not have the chance to participate in classroom activities and use the target language communicatively (Kiany & Shayestefar, 2010).

My teaching experience in state and private language schools in Iran gave me a profound and enduring insight into the importance of classroom interaction and the active role of students in classroom activities. I found that those students who were

learning English at private language schools and had opportunities for interaction in the target language, were more fluent in speaking skills compared to those students who were only learning English at the state school. This is in line with Gear (2006) who says that speaking practice helps language learners to build fluency in speaking. She refers to fluency as speaking with accuracy and natural speed.

Apart from fluency in speaking that these students had achieved, I found that they had also developed better language skills and achieved higher scores in their exams. Although I could not find any external research showing this impact, the improvement was evident from my students' annual exam results which showed their progress in the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. As Ellis (1999) argues, second language learners are likely to achieve better levels of comprehension of the second/foreign language input in their effort to communicate through interaction. Similarly Watanabe and Swain (2007), inform us that interaction induces comprehension and cognitive development.

These factors added to my interest in this area of research and made me curious to know how pupils' interactions and participation in classroom activities could be improved in the Iranian EFL classrooms of the state schools. In fact, I was particularly thinking of those students who could not afford to pay the expensive fees for private language schools where they could have the opportunity to practice the English language communicatively. However, my motivation to undertake this research was professional as well as personal. I wanted to enhance my understanding of the role of classroom interaction in the development of students' language learning and approaches that could enhance interaction and communication of language learners in the target language so that the approach could eventually become embedded in my teaching to young learners. Therefore, I decided to look at the stated problems from an educational perspective and undertake this research with the aim of introducing some new ideas and approaches such as using language games with learners in hopes that their use can contribute to solving the existing problems in these classrooms.

1.3. The Aims of the Research and the research questions

The core purpose of the research was to investigate the nature of interactions between the teacher and pupils and among pupils in an Iranian EFL primary classroom to see how and in what ways language games can change the interactions. Whilst it is acknowledged that the introduction of language games can create an interactive learning environment in a classroom (Ersoz, 2000), I wanted to find out whether the introduction of language games in the Iranian EFL primary classroom can create more interaction opportunities for the Iranian EFL learners. In other words, I wanted to introduce some new approaches to language teaching and see to what extent teachers and pupils would respond to these opportunities differently and whether there would be a qualitative shift in interactions towards a more pupil-centred classroom environment. Moreover, since teacher beliefs were crucial to the uptake and implementation of the new ideas that were introduced, I wanted to explore these views in depth with the teacher taking part in the study and see whether she would be convinced about the benefits of the language games and/or whether there would be problems or barriers that she raises. The research aims can be broken down into three main research questions as follows:

1. What is the nature of interaction between the teacher and pupils and among pupils in an Iranian EFL primary classroom?
2. How are these interactions influenced by the introduction of language games in the classroom?
3. What are the teacher's perceptions towards using language games with young language learners in the classroom?

1.4. Description of the school and the participants

The school in which the study took place was an Iranian state primary school located in a small town named Karaj which was 12 miles away from the capital Tehran. The setting was a single sex (female) primary school which had about 300 pupils and 16 teachers. The participants in this study were twenty 11 year old pupils who were learning English as a foreign language at the primary level of education in an Iranian EFL classroom. The teacher of this classroom, who was another participant of this study, was a 29 year old teacher who had a Bachelor's degree in English language

teaching and had 5 years of English teaching experience at primary level in the Iranian state schools.

1.5. Methodology

A multi-method strategy was adapted in this study which means two methods of classroom observation and interviews were combined to answer the research questions. Classroom observation was employed to explore the nature of interaction in the classroom and how it was affected by the implementation of language games. Semi-structured interviews were used to supplement the data gathered by classroom observation and to give further interpretation of certain behaviours taking place in the classroom. The semi-structured interview was employed with the teacher to discover her perceptions about the use of language games in the classroom and to see how her thinking about language games would change after using games in the classroom. In order to analyse the data obtained from classroom observation, a mixed method strategy was employed to analyse the data both quantitatively and qualitatively. A mixed method approach was applied because this leads to greater validity and reliability than a single methodological approach (Bryman, 2004), and it can also provide more detailed data about the phenomena under investigation (Yin, 2002). (See section 3.2 for more details of the methods adapted).

1.6. Expected outcomes

This study was conducted based on the assumption that using a language game-based approach in the Iranian EFL primary classroom can change the nature of classroom interaction towards being more pupil-centred. One of the research problems that I wanted to address in this study was the dominance of the teacher talk in the Iranian EFL classroom and lack of interaction between the teachers and pupils and among pupils (Kiany & Shayestefar, 2010). Therefore, by introducing a new teaching approach, which involved language games, I was hoping that a qualitative shift in interactions would be made towards being more pupil-centred and more interaction opportunities would be created for the Iranian language learners. The literature on language games emphasises that using language games can create an interactive learning environment (Ersoz, 2000), which can help pupils to develop their

language learning (Mitchell and Myles, 2004). In regards to the importance of social interaction and learning development, a theory has been introduced by Vygotsky (1978) known as the socio-cultural theory. This theory emphasizes on the importance of talk, communication and social interaction. It says that through talk and communication learners can express themselves and share their knowledge and through sharing knowledge their learning can be developed (Lantolf, 2004). Therefore, by introducing language games I was hoping that the findings of the study would contribute to the socio-cultural theory of Vygotsky (1978) and by creating interaction opportunity for the Iranian EFL learners in the classroom they can develop their language learning (Mitchell and Myles, 2004).

Moreover, the study was conducted in hopes that the introduction of language games would create meaningful communication among learners (Ersoz, 2000). In regards to meaningful communication a theory has been introduced by Long (1983) which says that interaction among learners provides opportunity for them to produce and practice what they possess of the target language in a communicative and meaningful way. The theory says that the meaningful communication among learners will enable them to negotiate the meaning of the language items and also enable them to adjust the new input to their level of competence (Ellis, 1999). This will increase the chance of their comprehension and facilitate their learning process (Gass, 1997; Long, 2006). Therefore, by introducing language games I was hoping that the findings of the study would contribute to the Long's (1983) hypothesis theory of interaction and create meaningful communication among the Iranian EFL learners through which they can develop their language learning (Long, 2006).

Furthermore, the study was conducted with the cautious expectation that the findings of the study would change the atmosphere of the Iranian EFL classroom towards a more fun, exciting, and enjoyable environment, as the literature on language games says that using language games in a classroom can bring fun and excitement in a classroom and therefore motivate pupils to participate more in classroom activities (Moon, 2000). In addition, I was expecting that the teacher involved in this study would develop positive beliefs and perceptions about the use of language games. According to Kariminia and Salehi (2007), Iranian EFL teachers believe in traditional teaching methods such as the Grammar translation and Audio-lingual methods. Since the literature on teacher's beliefs says that the way the teachers practice is a reflection of their beliefs (e.g. Lump and Chamber, 2001), I was hoping that by

introducing a new approach the teacher would develop a positive perception about using language games which would lead into improved pedagogical practices.

Finally, I wished that the findings would bring new knowledge which can be used to pave the way for the development of more effective teaching methods and materials in the Iranian EFL classroom. As discussed earlier in section 1.2, the text books that are designed for teaching English as a foreign language in the Iranian state schools are excluded from communicative activities (Kariminia & Salehi, 2007). Therefore I was hoping that the findings of the study would encourage the text book designers and curriculum planners to include language games in the text books for the Iranian language learners.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1. Second or foreign language learning and the relevant theories

Second or foreign language learning is an important topic which has received great attention over the past two decades. Second language learning refers to any language that is learned in addition to the learner's first language and is used as a means of communication among people in the society who speak some other language as their mother tongue (Cameron, 2001). In contrast, a foreign language refers to a language that is learned in a community where the language does not play major role and is primarily learnt in the classroom (Ellis, 2003). For example, English as second language learning is learnt in countries such as the United Kingdom, United States, and some parts of Africa where English is the means of communication among the members of the community and hence plays major roles in the society. By contrast, English as a foreign language is learnt in countries such as France and Japan where English does not play a major role in the society.

Due to the importance of the second or foreign language learning topic, numerous studies have investigated the learning process of the second or foreign language learning and have discussed how it can be learned by young learners. A review of the literature reveals that there are different opinions about the learning process of the second or foreign language learning. For example, researchers such as Lado (1964) and Skinner (1957), believe that the learning process of the first and second language learning is the same and language learners follow similar patterns that they followed in the first language process, whereas some others (e.g. Cameron, 2001; House, 1997; McLaughlin, 1984), believe that the learning process of the first and second language learning is different, as they believe that since learners have already acquired their first language, they have become cognitively mature and their first language will influence their second or foreign language learning (Bates et al, 1984).

However, the literature shows that there are different methods for teaching a second or foreign language; but certain types of teaching methods do not necessarily provide interaction between the teacher and learners in the classroom and, as a result, are not appropriate for the discourse analysis of classrooms (Moon, 2004). A teaching method refers to the principles and methods used for instruction by the teacher (Arends, 1988).

One of the language teaching methods that I reviewed was the grammar translation method; I found that it does not develop interaction between the teacher and pupils, and among pupils in the classroom (Howatt, 2004). This language teaching method mainly concentrates on the reading and writing skills and gives little attention to the speaking skills and the use of the target language in the classroom. In the grammar translation method, the teaching is mostly done in the native language and very little teaching is done in the target language. The readings are done in the target language and then translated and discussed in the native language which often includes an in-depth comparison between the two languages (Brown, 2006). In this method, conversation in the target language is not stressed and there is little attention given to speaking skills and interaction among learners in the classroom which is something that some researchers (e.g. Corden, 2000; Foster 1998; Storch 2007) believe can enhance language learning (Richards and Rodgers, 2001).

Another language teaching method that I reviewed was the Audio-lingual method. Although this teaching method focuses on speaking, it does not provide independent communication in the target language in classroom (Brown, 2000). This approach is similar to another teaching method called the direct method which advises that learners should be taught a language directly without using the student's native language to explain new words or grammar in the target language. The main activities in using this method are repetition of modelled sentences and drilling language items modelled by the teacher (Brown, 2000). Therefore the main focus in the classroom is on the correct imitation of the teacher by the students with correct pronunciation. Although this method expects pupils to use grammar correctly, no specific grammatical instruction is given by the teacher (Brown, 2000).

However, after I reviewed numerous second or foreign language teaching methods, I found that one of the most effective teaching methods which mainly concentrates on independent and meaningful communication in the classroom is the communicative language teaching (CLT) method. The CLT teaching method is based on the socio-cultural theory which was originally introduced by Vygotsky and describes learning as a social process and emphasizes that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition (Vygotsky, 1978). The socio-cultural theory is described in more detail in the following section.

2.1.1. Socio-cultural Theory

The socio-cultural theory is a psychological theory which considers the contributions made by society to help with individual development. One of the key principles of the socio-cultural theory asserts that learning takes place through interaction or mediation (Lantolf, 2000; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Vygotsky, 1978), as "external socio-cultural activities are transformed into internal mental functioning" (Basharina, 2007:84). Therefore, in his socio-cultural theory, Vygotsky (1978) gave great attention to talk, social interaction, and communication as he considered talk as major instrument of the learning process in the classroom through which learners can express themselves and share what they know, understand and can do to others (Lantolf, 2004).

However, the work of Vygotsky does not suggest a specific classroom methodology but rather is a conceptual approach that offers justification for certain methodologies (partly for CLT) and is particularly suitable for analysis of classroom discourse. Although his original work did not include any detailed analysis of classroom discourse, Vygotsky's theory has the ability to deal with two most central features of classroom life: "talk" and "teacher". Therefore his work is a good conceptual framework for examining teacher-pupil discourse and is also a valuable source of ideas for guiding observations and shaping analysis of that discourse.

In Vygotsky's (1978) view, there is a relationship between speech and action and he believes that when speech and practical activity come together, an intellectual development occurs. He states that initially when speech has not developed it follows action and is dominated by activity, but at a later stage when speech develops and reaches the starting point of activity, the relationship between speech and action changes and then speech dominates the action. Therefore he suggested that in order for the researchers to investigate processes of cognitive development, they should look at verbal interactions between people (Vygotsky, 1986).

One of the approaches to language learning which one might naturally see in contrast with the theory of Vygostky is the Piagetian theory. Piagetian theory says that cognitive development is a gradual process which occurs as a result of biological maturation and experience (McLeod, 2009). It says that children are constantly interacting with their environment, including objects and humans and as they grow they organize, interpret and learn from the gathered information (Santrock, 2008).

Although some of Vygotsky's followers argued that interaction was not important to Piaget (Karpov, 2005), interaction was crucial to his theory in terms of how children accommodated new knowledge through their interactions with others. However, Vygotsky's emphasis was more on social cultural transmission between people and the role of more experienced actors in supporting development.

A primary difference between the two theories was that Piaget's theory focused more on biology and adaptation of humans, but Vygotsky concentrated on how people transform their world rather than adapt to it, therefore, the main difference is the primacy of individual versus society (Vianna, 2006). Vygotsky believed that humans have innate basic functions that should be expressed in social circumstances, whereas Piaget's stages of learning were hierarchical in nature and he believed that each stage should be completed prior to the next stage in order to move forward. Therefore, another difference between the two theories is that Piagetian theory was more dependent on time (maturation) and Vygotsky's theory more on social interaction (Mitchell and Myles, 2004).

Although the theories had some different priorities, they both agreed that learning is a cognitive adventure and social interaction plays an important role in human learning and development (Kim and Baylor, 2006). The theories of Vygotsky and Piaget both contributed to children's language learning development, however the main critique of Piagetian theory, as Santrock (2008) states, is that it does not consider the social factors in cognitive development, whereas Vygotsky's theory places considerably more emphasis on the role of society in the language development of a learner. Vygotsky's model of teaching and learning has significantly influenced language classrooms in terms of providing interactive learning environments and developing talk and communication between learners and teachers and among learners themselves (Wertsch, 1991).

The importance of interaction and talk in second or foreign language classrooms has also been emphasized by Corden (2000) who argues that through interaction learners can use and practice what they possess of the language and they can have discussions and benefit from listening to their fellow peers. Similarly Mitchell and Myles (2004) have argued that classroom interaction can facilitate learners' language development through providing an opportunity for learners to practice the target language. In regards to the role of interaction in second language learning, Long

(1983) introduced the interaction hypothesis theory which says that the language input that is created within interaction can be facilitating in explaining linguistic forms that learners found difficult to understand. This means that the modified input that is created through interaction by interlocutors facilitates comprehension (Ellis, 1999). According to Mackay (1999), throughout the process of interaction, the second language learners have an opportunity to create the input they need to understand the new information better and also they are likely to have more chances to receive additional input and produce new output out of it (Mackay, 1999).

The interaction hypothesis of Long (1983), confirms that the collaboration between the interlocutors in an effort to adjust the new input to their level of competence, increases the chances of comprehension and that is because during the process of collaboration the interlocutors negotiate the meaning of the new input and facilitate the learning process (Ellis, 1999; Gass, 1997; Long, 2006). The negotiation of meaning within the theoretical frame of interaction hypothesis is considered as "the conversational exchanges that arise when interlocutors seek to prevent a communicative impasse occurring or to remedy an actual impasse that has arisen" (Ellis, 1999:3). Moreover, as Long (1983), confirms when interlocutors negotiate the meaning of the information, they will be able to check their comprehension and the clarification of the new information during a conversation as there are cases where the learners pretend to have understood the new information and by negotiating the meaning of the information it is likely to signal that they need more assistance in understanding (Ellis, 1998). Furthermore, when learners negotiate the meaning of the new input, they will have chance to correct each other's mistakes and hence they are likely to obtain better level of L2 comprehension (Ellis, 1998).

From the above discussion, it is understood that interaction among language learners plays an important role in their language development and hence it is important for them to be provided with opportunities to interact with each other. According to Storch (2007), pair work and group work are two strategies that promote communication in language classrooms and provide an opportunity for learners to talk and communicate in the target language. These techniques are particularly beneficial in contexts like Iran where pupils do not have chance to speak in the target language outside of the classroom and for them the language classroom is the only place to use the language items that they learn (Borjian, 2013). Based on my teaching experience in Iran, group work can be extremely helpful in Iranian EFL

language classrooms, as it can increase interaction among learners and can also provide an opportunity for the shy students, who are usually quiet and do not participate in classroom activities to become more active and be able to put what they have learned into practice. This has also been supported by Storch (2007), who states that group work provides an opportunity for the more inhibited students who do not feel comfortable to express themselves in front of a large number of students to talk in small group of their peers. Moreover, Foster (1998), states that group work has this distinctive feature that can create a relaxing and stress-free learning environment where pupils can collaboratively interact with each other.

Vygotsky also emphasized the role of children's interaction with the people around them and stated that with the help of more knowledgeable people, such as their parents and teachers, or even less knowledgeable ones, such as their peers, they can understand and do things much better than on their own (Vygotsky, 1978).The following section discusses how children's language learning can be developed through interaction with more and/or less knowledgeable language partners.

2.1.2. *Scaffolding and the zone of proximal development (ZPD)*

According to Vygotsky (1978), children's cognitive development can be promoted through interaction with more knowledgeable people around them who can teach and guide them; a process known as "scaffolding". Scaffolding comes from the word scaffold which refers to a temporary skeletal structure enabling workers to work on a building or a bridge in order to construct a more permanent structure. According to Vygotsky's theory, the assistance and support that the teachers and parents provide for the children works just the same as the temporary skeletal structure for children to enable them to complete a task or understand a concept. "Once a task has been mastered, scaffolds are removed and the learner is left to reflect and comment on the task" (Walsh, 2006:35). A more comprehensive definition of scaffolding is provided by Berk (2002) who describes scaffolding as:

> A changing quality of support over a teaching session, in which a more skilled partner adjusts the assistance he or she provides to fit the child's current level of performance. More support is offered when a task is new; less is provided as the child's competence increases, therefore fostering the child's autonomy and independent mastery (Berk, 2002:171).

As it is argued by Mitchell and Myles (2004), a mature and skilled individual, is capable of functioning and completing a task without the help of others, however, a child or an unskilled individual needs to be under guidance of an adult or a more skilled individuals such as caregivers or teachers. This is also argued by Vygotsky (1978) that children learn and understand things better when interacting with more skilled individuals than when they try to think and understand things on their own.

In regards to this, a study was conducted by Clark-Stewart and Beck (1999) who observed and video-recorded the interaction of 31 five-year-old children with their mothers while their mother was telling them stories. The children talked about the story with their mothers and then retold the story to the researcher. The findings revealed that those mothers who asked their children to talk about the story and tell their feelings about the characters told better stories than children whose mothers did not discuss the story. The discussion of the stories was considered evidence of scaffolding because those children whose mothers used a scaffolding strategy with them were better able to connect with the story and remember it (Rathus, 2010). Taking that into a classroom context, the assistance and support that the child receives from the teacher to complete a task until he/she is able to manage the task on his/her own will help the child to understand the lesson and complete the tasks better than a child who does not receive such support from the teacher (Bruner, 1983; Seedhouse, 2004).

However, it should be noted that not all kinds of adult support are considered as scaffolding. In order for an adult support to qualify as scaffolding, the teaching and learning process should meet the following criteria:

- enable the learners to carry out a task that they were not able to do without the help and support of the teacher
- bring the learners to a level of competence which will enable them to complete a task without any help and support
- show that the learners have acquired a greater level of independent competence

(Lantolf & Thorne, 2006).

It is important for those using scaffolding in their teaching to keep in their mind that scaffolding should not be misused. For example, some authors see the metaphor of

scaffolding as a one-way communication process which is different from what has been defined for the notion of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) which focuses on negotiation and collaboration between teacher and learner (Rasmussen, 2001). In other words, the metaphor of scaffolding can be seen as an adult-child interaction in the classroom which is one-sided in nature and the teacher is dominant and always in control of the classroom. Therefore to avoid misusing it, it is important to emphasize the collaboration between the teacher and the learner where the *quality of interaction* is a priority (Stone, 1998).

The idea of providing appropriate support for the learner and withdrawing it when the learner shows that they are able to complete the task independently is linked to the concept of ZPD. This was defined by Vygotsky as a cognitive 'area' in which a child can perform an action or a task with the help of a more skilful person. He stated that the ZPD is "the distance between the actual developmental levels as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky 1978: 76).

As Figure 1 displays, In everyday classroom contexts, ZPD can simply be defined as the gap between a child's capability to perform a task confidently on his/her own and a task which is out of reach for the child and cannot be performed without the support of someone who is more knowledgeable and skilful such as an instructor, a more experienced learner or a peer (Donato, 1994; Lantolf, 2000; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). The ZPD can provide a valuable conceptual framework in educational contexts as it can situate the level of challenge in tasks and activities that may be suitable for children and are also achievable, which will allow for success and eventually develop the children's learning (Vygotsky, 1978). From Vygotsky's point of view, working within the ZPD is a useful starting point for learning as it allows individuals to consider those things that the child already knows and those areas that need to be worked on in order to help them progress.

Figure 1: Zone of Proximal Development

According to Mercer (1988), the application of scaffolding and ZPD originally referred to an individual being taught, so the application of the concept can be problematic when it comes to classrooms where teachers have to deal with groups of learners who have multiple ZPDs. This is because the teachers may not be able to control and manage their help and guidance in a way that suits each individual ZPD to ensure that the level of their support meets the learner's ZPD and help them to progress. This is particularly challenging when the number of students in a classroom is high and the teacher has to respond to so many different ZPDs. A possible solution to this problem as Ohta (2001) and Van Lier (1996) suggest is to have learners help each other. This is known as peer scaffolding and it is believed that this can create opportunities for second or foreign language learning (Kitcha, 2004; Mitchell and Myles, 2004).Therefore it is important that teachers provide interaction opportunities for learners to talk and interact with each other in pairs and groups.

In the Iranian language classrooms in which I have been a learner and teacher, learners tend to be deprived of opportunities for collaborative work in the target language. Based on my teaching experience in Iran, I can say that most of the Iranian language teachers are guided by foreign language teaching approaches which rely on individual learning, such that the relationship with social context is neglected. The learners are not provided with interaction opportunities and rarely work in pairs or groups. Therefore, in my opinion, an appropriate learning environment needs to be provided for the language learners in Iran where they can

socialize and work together collaboratively. For example the teacher can assign classroom activities that require the language learners to work in pairs or groups**.**

Although studies have shown that pair and group work have many advantages, some educators (e.g. Harmer, 2001; Rixon, 2000) have argued that they can have disadvantages also. One of the problems with pair and group work is incorrectness. For example, when students are working in pairs or groups the teacher usually does not interrupt them and lets them speak freely even if he/she notices that the students are making mistakes and therefore as Breen (1989) states, there is a risk that the learners learn each other's mistakes or errors. However, it is important to remember that making errors or mistakes are an important part of the learning process too (Midgley et al, 2000). Besides it is more likely that the learners correct each other's mistakes than learn the mistakes (Harmer, 2001). One of the advantages of having learners speak to each other is to help them boost their confidence and reduce their anxiety that is often found in purely teacher-centred classroom (Westwood, 2008).

The other disadvantage is that shy or weak students may be excluded from the practice and they may feel left out because of the more confident students who may tend to dominate and take over the activity. However this is more likely to happen in group work and what the teacher should do is to assign roles for students to avoid some students taking over the activities and the others remaining as passive observers (Barkley, 2005). Educators should remember that there are different types of characters in a classroom, some students are extroverts and some are introverts. Extrovert students usually do not have any problem with pair and group work in classroom and teachers also have no problems with extrovert students who like to actively participate in classroom activities. The problem is with introvert students who are shy and prefer to work alone (Brown, 2001). However, in real life it is not common to allow one to work in isolation. Through pair and group work in a classroom children will learn how to work with other people cooperatively in real life and understand that cooperation is an important life skill (Martine, 2005).

Another problem with using pair and group work in a classroom is connected with the noise that it creates in the classroom and it is usually more problematic for the teacher than for the students (Ellis, 2005). Participants are normally not aware of how much noise they are making and this could cause problems for the other classrooms especially if the walls are thin. According to Doff (1998), if the activity is well

organised then the teacher should not be concerned about learners making noise as it is productive noise, however, he suggests that one way of reducing the noise is to arrange seating so that learners in a group are closer to each other and they will not need to shout to hear each other (Doff, 1998).

As noticed, it seems that there are many advantages and disadvantages with pair and group work in a classroom; however, the disadvantages should not prevent the teachers from using it in their language classrooms as they are beneficial and develop pupils' language learning (Brumfit, 1984; Gutierrez, 2008). With proper management and good organisation the teacher can minimize the problems and get the most benefit of its use with the learners.

From the discussion in the preceding paragraphs, it can be concluded that effective learning takes place in learning environments where there is independent and meaningful interaction between the teacher and pupils and among pupils. Therefore, it is important that pupils are provided with interaction opportunities where they can talk, share their ideas and have more control over their learning which will develop their language learning (Smith, 2005; Storch, 2007).

However, now that the importance of providing interaction opportunities for developing language learners has been discussed it is important to understand the learning opportunities that can be provided through classroom interaction. The following section is devoted to defining interaction in the classroom before moving on to discuss its impact on language development.

2.2. Classroom interaction

A review of the literature revealed various definitions of classroom interaction, for example, Cazden (2000) defined classroom interaction as a practice among learners which allows them to think critically and share their ideas and develop their listening and speaking language skills. Similarly, Ellis (1990) defined interaction in the second language learning context as a process through which learners can interact with each other and their teacher and this way they are exposed to the target language and can practice different language samples available for them in an interactive way. From the given definitions it could be said that classroom interaction refers to any interaction that takes place between teachers and learners and among learners themselves (Pinter, 2006). According to Alexander (2000), interaction in classroom

may be a partial sequence containing initiation and response (IR) or may be a complete sequence containing initiation; response and feedback (IRF). In the following section, patterns of classroom interaction are described in more detail.

2.2.1. The IRF interaction pattern

Teacher-learner interaction has been mostly described as a three part sequence exchange between the teacher and the learner. It is known as the (IRF) pattern and consists of teacher's initiation, learner's response, and teacher's feedback on the response including assessment, correction and comment (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975). Similarly, Silverman (1985:131), describes the basic logic of classroom conversational exchange as "teacher: question; Pupil: answer; teacher: evaluation". In this interaction sequence, the teacher tightly controls the content and structure of the interaction by posing questions and students are expected to provide a brief answer to the question and once the student has responded to the question, the teacher finishes the interaction sequence by giving feedback on the students' response with such phrases as "Good", "that's right", or "NO, that's not right" (Hall and Walsh, 2002:189). One of the advantages of this interaction pattern is that it will allow the teacher to check on the students' comprehension and give immediate feedback on their response (Candlin and Mercer, 2001). This interaction pattern which is characterized by fixed patterns such as asking questions or correcting students' mistakes is more common in traditional teaching classrooms where the teacher has control over the topic and pupils' contribution in class (Ruby, 2008).

However, the IRF pattern was criticized by Markee (2007:71), who claimed that "this speech exchange is characterized by unequal power relationship". He states that the pattern is different from everyday conversation in that it does not give a chance to students to take turns or contribute without restrictions. It is the teacher who decides who participates, when students take turns, how much they can contribute and whether or not their contributions are worthy and appropriate (Hall and Walsh, 2002). A similar criticism was made by Mercer (1998), who argued that a classroom based on the IRF pattern enables the teacher to control the students' talk and their turn-taking in the classroom which again will not allow the students to contribute and answer as they like. Dalton-Puffer (2007), also states that the type of questions asked in the IRF pattern limits the "R" phase unduly. She states that there are questions asked in the IRF pattern which are considered as communication

breakdowns which appear in the form of comprehension checks, clarification requests and confirmation checks by both learners and teachers.

The value of the IRF pattern sequence has also been questioned by Van Lier (2001), who considers this interaction pattern a pre-planned lesson structure through which the teacher can control the classroom interaction and does not allow the learners to present their ideas and thoughts. He believes that this pattern of interaction may hinder the development of the learner's conversational skills as it does not allow them to practice the target language freely without restrictions. It is the teacher who does all the initiating and closing and student's work is done exclusively in the response slot and this limits the kind of language that can be used and practiced by the student (Candlin and Mercer, 2001).

According to Long (1983), the teacher-learner interaction pattern is a kind of approach to education that leaves little opportunity for the learners to practice the target language in a full range of functional moves communicatively or to negotiate for meaning. Allwright (1988), also believes that learning is better achieved when a teacher and his or her learners taken up verbal roles in the classroom almost evenly. Researchers such as Nunan (1987), Pinter (2006) and Van Lier, (2001) have found that the derivatives of the IRF pattern (teacher's initiation, learner's response, teacher's follow-up) have similar restrictive effects on learner's language learning opportunities. In this pattern, the learner's utterances are ambiguous and syntactically reduced and happen merely in the response slot. Moreover, turn taking, topic development, and activity structuring work are also severely limited. The pattern does not allow the learners to negotiate the direction of instruction; it is a one-sided control pattern in which the learner's role is largely passive.

According to Nunan (1989), research is more concerned with the quality of teacher talk than its quantity. It has focused on how effectively IRFs are able to facilitate learning and develop communicative interaction in language classrooms through the types of questions that the teachers ask, the speech modifications they make when talking to learners, or the way they react to learner's errors. As Wells (1993) states, the quality of the IRFs may differ depending on the type of the question asked by the teachers. Similarly Brock (1986), states that the type of questions that the teachers ask can have a significant effect on the quantity and quality of learner interaction and the learning opportunity generated in the lesson.

According to Mercer (1995), teachers use talk to do three things: 1) eliciting relevant knowledge by using cued and direct elicitations through which they can find out what students already know and understand; 2) responding to what is said by students, not only because they can provide feedback on their attempts but also they can use the students' responses to build more generalized meanings. Teachers can respond to the students' sayings by the use of confirmations, rejections, repetitions, elaborations, and reformulations; and 3) describing those shared experiences with students in the classroom in a way that the significance of the joint experiences is emphasized. Basically, Mercer (1995) argues that in order for a teacher to have effective talks in a classroom he/she needs to investigate the scope of a learner's existing knowledge. This can be achieved through eliciting knowledge from students, responding to what students say, and describing the classroom experiences that they share. What the teacher needs to do is to follow the students' line of thinking in order to be able to stimulate their thinking further.

According to Nassaji and Wells (2000), the IRF pattern has a potential value in supporting and promoting student interaction in language classrooms. This pattern of interaction in language classrooms is considered as a typical form of interaction between a teacher and a learner and has some advantages for classroom learning as it can provide a predictive structure of classroom interactions for participants to follow (Giordan, 2004). Thornborrow (2002) states that one reason for adopting the IRF pattern in language classrooms is perhaps because it is unconsciously perceived as a powerful pedagogic device for transferring and constructing knowledge. It is believed that this pattern can provide predictable lesson structures allowing both the teacher and the learners to pay careful attention to the academic content of lessons. In this sequence the teacher knows exactly what answers he/she seeks and learners try to provide answers that the teacher expects them to know (Breen, 2001).

Furthermore, this pattern has potential value in language classrooms to provide talk opportunities in a strictly controlled way which can encourage structured participation in the target language in the classroom (Wright and Bolitho, 1993). The structured participation in the target language is particularly beneficial for the beginner language learners and can develop their language learning (Boyd and Maloof, 2000). The advantage of using the IRF pattern in second or foreign language classroom has also been discussed by Garton (2002), who argues that this pattern of interaction provides a useful framework for creating meaningful communication between the teacher and

pupils in a controlled way that can develop their language learning. However, since in the IRF pattern is a pattern of interaction where the teacher both initiates and ends the verbal exchange, the students' output is restricted to the response in the second turn of verbal exchange and the talking time for the teacher and students are unequal (Cazden, 1988; Seedhouse, 2004). The following is a typical example of such pattern in classroom which is taken from the book "teacher talk" by Sinclair and Brazil (1982: 65).

Example 1:

Teacher: What kind of word is "always"? (Initiate)

Student: an adverb (Respond)

Teacher: Good (Feedback)

As it is shown in the above example, the teacher initiated the conversation with a question and then provided pupils with feedback to their answer. This form of interaction as Van Lier (1996:152) states is a "closed rather than an open discourse format". Therefore this pattern of interaction makes the lesson less communicative. In order to provide more interaction opportunities and make the communication less restrictive the teacher can utilize the third turn and leave the conversation open for the students. This can be done by providing feedback and including another question that helps generating more opportunities for learners to practice the target language (Hall and Walsh, 2002). The following example from Mehan (1979: 90) is an example of the pattern for further interaction:

Example2:

Teacher: Is this a solid, liquid, or gas? (Initiate)

Student: It's a liquid (Respond)

Teacher: Yes, it's a liquid. It takes the shape of its container (Evaluate)

Teacher: What about this one? Is it a solid, liquid, or gas? (Initiate)

Student: It's a liquid too. (Respond)

Teacher: No, this one is a solid. (Evaluate)

As it is shown in the above example, the teacher initiates the conversation by asking a question and then evaluates the students' response but does not end the conversation and initiates the next cycle by asking another question and this can go on. This kind of IRF pattern supports and promotes interaction more effectively (Hall and Walsh, 2002). In the following sections, each element of the IRF pattern (teacher initiation, pupil talk and teacher feedback) is discussed.

2.2.1.1. Teacher initiation

Teacher talk plays an important role in foreign language classrooms as it is through the teacher's talk that knowledge is exchanged between the teachers and students. Therefore, the way the teacher talks and the amount of talk that is produced by the teacher determine how well students learn a foreign language (Seedhouse, 2004). Because of the importance of teacher talk, most of the classroom observation schemes such as Chaudron, (1988); Flanders, (1970); Moskowitz, (1971); Sinclair & Coulthard, (1975) or; Spada & Frohlich, (1995) have included categories that give great attention to the teacher talk. Although there have been some recent observation schemes designed (e.g.Hardman et al, 2003, Walsh, 2011), the old ones have been tried and tested in traditional classrooms like the ones that I partly work with in Iran; therefore they are more relevant to the purpose of the current study.

The main reason for giving specific attention to teacher's talk is due to the assumption that the teacher's utterances determine the course of interaction (Edward and Westage, 1994). Moreover, as Nunan (1989) reports, the purpose of developing these schemes was to indicate the teacher-dominant role in classroom at that time. According to Allwright and Bailey (1991), in traditional classrooms, talk is one of the major ways of transferring information to learners and is also one of the main means of controlling learner behaviour. Similarly, Nunan (1991) states that teacher talk play an important role not only in organizing the classrooms but also in the process of language acquisition.

According to Hardman (2001), the findings of numerous studies in different contexts have shown that the teacher dominates classroom talk in second language classrooms and teacher talk has been found to be most dominant in the classroom. For example, a study conducted by Pontefract and Hardman (2005) in Kenya was designed to investigate the discourse strategy of 27 teachers of English language, mathematics and science in primary schools. The study employed discourse

analysis, semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire in order to explore teachers' perceptions of classroom discourse practices. The findings revealed that the classroom discourse was led by the teacher talk and the teacher's repetition and recitation were the most dominant acts performed by the teacher.

Similarly, a study conducted by Hardman et al (2003) investigated the nature of classroom interaction in 70 primary schools in north-east, north-west, and south-east of England. The study employed a computerized observation schedule and discourse analysis system and the findings of the discourse analysis revealed that the majority of discourse exchanges were made up of teacher's explanation, teacher-directed questions and answers (accounting for 83% of the total teacher's talk). Based on the research findings, it could be said that most of the classroom talk is dominated by teachers, and so this raises a question that how this teacher talk can create an interactive language classroom initiated by the teacher.

As Nunan (1991) argues, questioning is one of the main aspects of teacher talk which plays an important role in second language classrooms. In second language classrooms, learners do not have sufficient tools to initiate talk; therefore teacher's questions provide necessary stepping stones to communication (Brown, 1994). However, one of the important factors that the teacher should consider when using question strategy is wait time, as Chaudron (1988) states that a lot of wait time can hinder communication in the classroom and may also make it difficult for the teacher to get back to the conversation or the lesson.

Another important factor that a teacher should consider when using a questioning strategy is to consider the type of questions that he/she uses with the learners. According to Long and Sato (1983), there are two main types of questions used by teachers in the classroom which are known as 'display questions', which is a question to which the questioner already knows the answer and 'referential questions' which are questions that the questioner asks because he/she does not know the answer. Referential questions can create more interaction opportunities than display questions as they allow learners to produce lengthier utterances and use the target language communicatively in a meaningful way (Dalton-Puffer, 2007).

Another type of question that can be used to encourage verbal responses in the classroom and could lead to teacher-pupil interaction is 'cued questions'. In this type of question, the teacher repeats what he/she has presented but omits the final

word(s) which is usually the target word with a rising intonation (Pontefract and Hardman, 2005). The purpose of this kind question is to reinforce the information given by the teacher and also to keep the learners' attention rather than requiring an answer to a question (Pontefract and Hardman, 2005). The following example shows how a cued question, can be asked by teachers from pupils in a classroom. The transcription convention used in the following example is displayed by '^' which shows a cued question and is taken from Pontefract and Hardman (2005).

Example3:

Teacher: What do we mean by the word parallel?

Pupils: The two lines will never meet

Teacher: The lines will never^

Pupils: Meet

(Pontefract and Hardman, 2005:95)

Overall, previous research has shown that teacher talk is the most dominant speech in language classrooms and it plays an important role in determining the course of interaction in the classroom. Questioning is one of the main aspects of the teacher talk through which the teacher can create interaction and maintains control over classroom interaction (Walsh, 2006). The type of questions that are widely used in the classroom are display, cued, and referential questions among which referential questions lead to creating more interaction opportunities compared to display and cued questions as it allows pupils to produce lengthier utterances and communicate in a meaningful way. The following section provides a discussion on pupils' talk which is another important aspect of classroom interaction and ways of promoting it in language classrooms.

2.2.1.2. Pupils' talk

Pupil talk is another important aspect of classroom interaction which refers to different patterns of initiation and responses on the part of the pupils. As mentioned earlier, based on the socio-cultural theory of Vygotsky (1978), learners' talk makes a great contribution to language learning. Vygotsky believed that it is through talk that

students learn the structural elements of the target language and learn how to use the language communicatively (Boyd and Maloof, 2000). Therefore, it is emphasized that in order for the language learners to obtain a good level of second language competence, they should put what they learn into practice through communicating and talking with either their teacher or peers in the classroom. This means that it is important to provide opportunities for the language learners to communicate and interact with each other and thereby practice the target language and correct each other's mistakes (Boyd and Maloof, 2000).

With reference to the Iranian context, pupil talk is limited to reading aloud from the course books or blackboard when asked by the teacher or choral responses to the teacher's questions. Although choral responses may encourage students to participate, especially the shy ones who usually do not participate in the activities, they do not necessarily make students interact with the target language and produce lengthy utterances for a meaningful interaction (Pontefract & Hardman, 2005). It is apparent that the patterns of interaction and the length of utterances produced by learners depend on the extent to which the teacher controls the talk. For example, in a teacher-centred classroom where the teacher dominates the interaction in the classroom, one right answer is often predetermined by the teacher for all the students (i.e teacher asking all the students to repeat one single word in chorus); whereas in a learner-centred classroom, there could be a different right answer for each learner as the teacher asks each student to produce a different utterance (Dillon, 1994). When learners' utterances are restricted to predetermined answers, there will few meaningful learning interaction opportunities available (Tsui, 1995).

However, in line with a socio-cultural perspective, the value of students' talk and its important role in language learning development has been increasingly recognised (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006). Therefore, numerous teaching methods have tried to increase the amount and quality of student talk in the classroom. For example, task-based teaching methods which support pair and group work ensure that each student has the chance to talk as much as possible. This is unlike some other teaching methods such as listening-based teaching methods which give more importance to student gaining information from what they hear rather than talking and use the information they have obtained (Cook, 2001).

Through talk students not only learn the structural elements of the target language but also their communicative application (Boyd and Maloof, 2000). Therefore, it seems to be important for language learning development that teachers find ways of promoting pair or group work between pupils through which they can interact with each other in the target language and improve their language learning. The following section discusses the third element of the IRF patter (Teacher feedback) and explains how it can have an impact on classroom interaction.

2.2.1.3. Teacher feedback

Teacher feedback is another important factor affecting classroom interaction and is an important part of any learning process (Slavin, 2003). In everyday classrooms the term "teacher feedback" means teachers using their judgements of children's knowledge or understanding to determine the children's understanding of the lessons so that they can find out whether they should re-explain the task/concept, give further explanation on it, or move on to the next stage (Pica, 2000). According to Ellis (2009), teacher feedback is a way of accepting and providing information to learners by giving comments on their responses. The main advantage of this is to increase the amount of classroom talk by extending the conversation and also providing an opportunity for students to participate more in classroom activities (Nassaji and Wells, 2000).

It is argued by Slavin (2003) that language learners should be given the chance to see their progress before any assessment through providing feedback. He states that learners should be able to see the connection between the performed task and the feedback provided on their performance; otherwise if the learners make a mistake and the teacher does not correct or inform them about their mistakes, they will make the same mistakes repeatedly in future (Slavin, 2003). Moreover, by providing positive feedback on learner's performance, the teacher can motivate and encourage students to participate more in classroom activities (Smith and Higgins, 2006).

Second language acquisition (SLA) research on feedback shows that teachers have a wide variety of strategies available for providing feedback on students' performance (Seedhouse, 1997). The type of feedback that teachers apply in a classroom can be either positive or negative/corrective. Positive feedback is a kind of feedback demonstrating that the learner has comprehended the instruction and confirms that learner's language production is acceptable in the target language and also it helps

learners to strengthen linguistic knowledge they have already acquired. According to Smith and Higgins (2006), providing positive feedback and praising pupils for their correct responses can motivate and encourage learners to participate more in classroom activities. Also, Brophy (1981) reports that, providing positive feedback from the teacher can increase the student's self-esteem and build a closer relationship between the students and their teacher. Furthermore, a warm and affective teacher-student relationship can create a positive classroom environment which makes students feel more positive towards school and engagement in the school environment (Birch and Ladd, 1997).

On the other hand, negative or corrective feedback is a kind of feedback used by the teacher as an indication that certain features of the learners' language production are not correct and acceptable in the target language, showing lack of comprehension of the instruction by the teacher (Gass, 1997). In this case the teacher has to point out the mistake and inform the learner about what exactly was wrong and let them know how to correct it. Treatment of error may simply refer to "any teacher behaviour following an error that minimally attempts to inform the learner of the fact of error" (Chaudron, 1988:150). The feedback information provided by the teacher on students' errors can help them to identify those areas of their weakness to improve them which will help learners to enhance their learning and achievement. The information on students' errors can also provide information to teachers about where students are experiencing difficulties and where to focus their teaching efforts. In other words, this information helps teachers to realign their teaching in response to the learners' needs. When an assessment serves these purposes it is called "formative assessment" (Black and William, 1998). Formative assessment aids learning by generating feedback information that is of benefit to students and to teachers.

Another definition of corrective feedback is by Lightbown and Spada (1999), who define this kind of feedback as any indications to learners that their use of target language is incorrect. The corrective or negative feedback that the learner receives can be explicit which means that the teacher clearly and directly points out the error, or it can be implicit meaning that the teacher points out the error indirectly (Lyster and Ranta, 1997; Lyster, 2004). For example, when a language learner says, "He go to school every day", the teacher can provide an explicit corrective feedback and say "No, you should say he goes to school every day", or the teacher can provide an

implicit corrective feedback and say, "Yes, he goes to school every day". The teacher can also provide a corrective feedback without including metalinguistic information, for example, "Don't forget to make the verb agree with the subject" (Lightbown and Spada, 1999: 171-172).

The value of corrective feedback is more in its informative function than for its corrective-reinforcing function which is considered as a channel to provide learners with information to assist them in reaching their objectives by reporting their mistakes to them (Cohen, 1985). According to Cashin (1979), negative feedback is very powerful and can create a tense and stressful atmosphere, therefore it is very important that when the teacher identifies a student's weakness, he/she makes it clear that the comment relates to a particular task or performance and not on the student as person. Moreover, the teacher should protect the negative comments with a complement about aspects of the task in which student succeeded (Cashin, 1979).

As noticed in the preceding paragraphs, both positive and negative feedback from the teacher can help the learner's language development and have influence on their motivation to participate in classroom activities, but research consistently indicates that students are more affected by positive feedback and success (Lucas, 1990). As a result, it is very important for the teacher to provide students with feedback that is motivating and makes learners feel that their contributions are appreciated. By providing positive feedback the teacher can create a warm social learning environment where the learners feel comfortable to contribute in classroom activities and are not worried about receiving negative feedback on their responses (Elhram 2006).

Given the importance of classroom interaction and the impact of patterns of interaction on pupils' language development, it is now time to discuss how interactions between the teacher and pupils are like in Iranian EFL classrooms before making an argument about how language games can help children's language learning. The following section will make statements about the existing problems regarding teacher-pupil interactions in Iranian EFL classrooms and will reveal why conducting this study was particularly important in the Iranian context.

2.2.2. Classroom interaction in Iranian EFL classrooms

2.2.2.1. Statement of the problem

Teacher's dominance in language teaching environments has been criticized as an oppressive educational practice (Giroux, 2004). Studies have shown that in language classrooms where the teaching and learning process is dominated by the teacher and language learners are kept as passive receivers of knowledge, an unequal student-teacher power relation is created in the classroom. This means that the teacher dominates much of the learning/teaching classroom process to the extent that the learner's active involvement becomes harmfully limited (Nunan, 1993). Such a limitation is usually imposed on the learners by restricting their contributions as discourse participants in terms of their rights about what to say, what not to say, when to talk and how much to get involved in the classroom. This kind of practice in language classrooms tends to impact the outcomes of the language learning in a negative way (Bailey & Servero, 1998; Pace & Hemmings, 2007; Walsh, 2008).

While studies have shown that the dominance of teachers in language classroom does not help with learner's language development, some language teachers in different parts of the world still continue to use such strategies that keep the classroom talk in control (Sawyer, 2004). Iran is among one of those countries where most EFL teachers dominate the teaching/learning classroom process (Kiany & Shayestefar, 2010). Having trained as a teacher of young language learners in Iran and taught there for about ten years, I can say that most Iranian EFL teachers dominate the teaching/learning process and pupils do not have the chance to participate in classroom activities. In such classrooms pupils are expected to remain in their seats silently and listen to their teacher while giving the instruction and they are not allowed to initiate talk without the teacher's permission. Pupils' talk is limited to asking questions from the teacher about the instruction (when parts of the instruction are not clear and they ask for clarification), or asking for permission to leave the classroom for any reason. In each case pupils are expected to raise their hand and wait until the teacher allows them to ask their questions.

The teacher's dominance in Iranian EFL classrooms has created a very formal and dry learning environment which Gardner (2010) believes can have a negative effect on pupils' motivation and their attitude towards learning a foreign language. This kind of atmosphere is created due to the strict and unfriendly relationship existing

between the teacher and pupils, which fails to provide a pleasant and supportive classroom atmosphere. According to Gardner (2010), a friendly teacher-student relationship and a pleasant classroom atmosphere can facilitate pupils' language learning, as learners become motivated to participate more in classroom activities. However, this is something that pupils do not appear to have opportunities for in Iranian EFL classrooms. Moreover, due to the formal and strict relationship existing between the teacher and pupils, Iranian teachers do not provide pupils with enough rewarding words and positive feedback in the classroom (Nahavandi and Mukundan, 2013), which as Brophy (1981) reports, can increase students' self-esteem and build a closer relationship between the teacher and pupils.

In terms of teaching methods, based on my teaching experience in Iran, teaching English in Iranian EFL classrooms tends to be based on memorization of vocabulary and grammatical rules. The teaching process is highly dominated by the teacher's questions and nomination of pupils to respond to questions. The teachers introduce the new language items to pupils by writing them on the blackboard and then asking them to repeat the language items chorally to practice the lesson. Pupils are not provided with opportunities to work collaboratively to practice the language items in a communicative way and they usually work individually (Kiany & Shayestefar, 2010).

Due to the significant lack of interaction and talk opportunity for the Iranian EFL learners in the classroom, the learner's speaking competence in English language is low and they can hardly use their English knowledge to express themselves and communicate in English language (Nahavandi and Mukundan, 2012). There have been a lot of complaints made by the University professors in Iran about the weakness of school graduates in English language when they have joined Universities to study English as a subject (i.e English language teaching, English literature, English translation, etc) (Kariminia & Salehi, 2007). Although these students may have passed the entrance exam of the University which requires good knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary, most of them could not even have a basic conversation in English which has disappointed many of the University professors in English Language departments. These professors believe that the students' weakness in speaking skills could be due to the teaching methodology in EFL classrooms which fails to provide an opportunity for the pupils to use the target language communicatively (Kariminia & Salehi, 2007).

Another reason for the language learners' weakness of communication skills in English language could be due to their lack of exposure to the English language outside of the classroom, as English is not an official language in Iran and it is not spoken in wider society. In Iran English is used only as an academic subject that is taught in school or University and is not used in real life situations (Sadeghi, 2005). It hardly ever happens that language learners encounter a situation where they are obliged to use English as a medium of communication; as a result, the EFL classroom is the only place for the language learners to speak and practice the English language.

According to Halliday (1984), oral mastery of a foreign language depends on practicing and repeating the patterns of a foreign language. However, it seems that Iranian EFL learners practice the English language items such as vocabulary and grammatical rules in isolation (i.e. repeating language items chorally) and not through the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach which stresses the importance of teaching vocabulary items in context in a meaningful way. With reference to Littlewood (1981) and Mitchell (1994), the CLT method can provide fluency, purposeful communication, and student-student interaction (pair work and group work) and so on. This is unlike the traditional teaching methods such as Audio-lingual and Grammar translation methods that are practiced by the teachers in Iranian EFL classrooms and do not provide meaningful communication in the classroom. The reason why Iranian EFL teaches apply these methods in their classrooms could be due to certain beliefs they have which prevents them from practicing the CLT method. In the following section it will be discussed how teachers' beliefs could have an impact on the way they practice in their classroom.

2.2.2.2. Teachers' beliefs about language teaching

According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), teachers possess assumptions about language and language learning and these assumptions provide the basis for a particular approach to language instruction. Similarly, Lump and Chamber (2001), state that the way teachers practice in classroom is a reflection of their beliefs and since most Iranian EFL teachers believe in Grammar Translation and Audio-lingual method, they practice these methods in their classrooms. Although these methods are easy to apply and save a lot of time because of explaining meanings of the language items in pupils' native language, the method neglects speech and does not

provide opportunity for language learners to speak and practice the target language communicatively (Howatt, 2004).

Based on my teaching experience in Iran, Iranian teachers do not usually provide pupils with any kind of activities outside of the course book to create interaction opportunity for pupils in the classroom. The teachers introduce the new vocabulary and/or grammar rules and then refer pupils to their course book to repeat the language items chorally. They do not recognize the value of communicative activities and the importance of pupils' talk and their active involvement in the classroom, as their background in teaching methodology is limited and they have not been exposed to recent approaches to teaching English as second or foreign language (Kariminia & Salehi, 2007).

Iranian EFL teachers may be aware or unaware of the appropriateness of their pedagogical belief, but since most teachers have formed their pedagogical beliefs and instructional routines over a long time, these beliefs and practices may seem resistant to change. However, as Richardson (1990) states there are some reasons for this resistance to change which could be due to lack of training new teaching methods or lack of exposure to alternative methodologies.

In order for the Iranian teachers to change their beliefs and practices, they need to be provided with opportunities to reflect on their own beliefs and practices and detect the areas of improvement, so they can make efforts to enhance their instruction (Davis, 2006). To make this happen, teachers need support and contributions from others through alternative ways of thinking. According to Heck and William (1984), teachers understand a new practice or program better when they are involved in the development process as their understanding allows them to make good decisions on how to implement the new practice successfully. Moreover, they can provide feedback for bettering the existing school environment to support the new practice (Bitner & Bitner, 2002; Blumenfeld et al, 2000).

However, what is important as Richardson (1990) states is that in order to effectively implement an innovation, teachers' beliefs should be in line with the theoretical foundations of the proposed practice. Moreover, Richardson (1990) states that in order for an innovation to make change in teacher's beliefs, teachers should be provided with concrete examples of successful implementation of an innovation which are connected to the theories of learning, otherwise if an innovation is

successful but is not in line with the theories of learning it can confuse and frustrate teachers.

Given the existing problems in the Iranian EFL classrooms and lack of opportunities for Iranian language learners to talk and interact with each other in the target language, I wondered whether introducing the new idea of using language games in Iranian EFL classroom would make a qualitative shift in interactions towards a more pupil-centred model or not, and to what extent teachers and pupils respond to these opportunities for learning differently. Moreover, since teacher beliefs are crucial to the uptake and implementation of new ideas, I wanted to explore these views in depth with the teachers taking part in this study to find out whether they would be convinced about the benefits of the use of language games, and /or are there problems or barriers that they raise.

Even though this subject may have been dealt with in other countries, there is significant lack of any research that has taken place in the Iranian EFL classrooms to investigate whether and in what ways learning strategies developed in other contexts (western primarily), could be effective, acceptable and enjoyable in the Iranian context. The following section is devoted to defining language games and then followed by that the rationale for their use in language classrooms is discussed.

2.3. Language games

2.3.1. Definition of language games

Language games are any fun activities which can provide an opportunity for language learners to practice or learn a foreign language in a relaxed and enjoyable environment (Khan, 1991). Language games are not activities mainly aimed to break the ice between students or to kill time as some teachers or students may think. They are activities with an element of fun, set of rules and a goal through which children can socialize and interact with each other in pairs or groups in an enjoyable and stress-free environment (Betteridge & Buckby, 2005). What distinguishes language games from other communicative activities in a primary EFL classroom is the visible presence of a set of rules, clear language learning goals, and an element of competition which makes learners want to take turns, or stay in the games (if this is one that involves elimination), or to be the first to guess correctly. They make efforts

to gain points whether for themselves or their team in order to win the game (Byrne, 1995).

As has been mentioned earlier, learners do not have to always receive support for learning from their teacher. There are other ways that learners can be assisted to achieve learning goals such as assistance from more capable or even less capable peers or adults through interaction and sharing of knowledge (Van Lier, 1996). This has also been confirmed by Vygotsky (1978) who stated that interaction among peers helps to activate the ZPD through which they can assist each other in learning. He believed that the context of play can create the ZPD of a child where he/she can learn and practice the target language meaningfully in an interactive and stress-free environment.

It is difficult to give a precise definition for the term play as it is a very complex and broad phenomenon, however in view of Wood and Attfield (1996) play refers to different types of activities for both children and adults that are not necessarily designed for learning purposes. Activities can be highly purposeful and designed to motivate students and improve their learning or they can be designed for fun purposes to make pupils feel more positive about learning English and less anxious about using a foreign language. However, it is very important that the teacher clearly demonstrates the rules of the games as it can help the learners to understand the game and help them follow the rules; otherwise they can misunderstand the purpose of the games and may not get the benefit they should from them.

There are different types of language games that language teachers can use in their classrooms. Some of the language games are very simple and straightforward and some are a bit more complicated which need further explanation; whether the teacher uses a simple or more complicated game with the learners depends on the level of his/her students (Langran and Purcel, 1994). One way of categorising language games, following Hadfield (1999: 21), is dividing them into three categories of "cooperative games", "competitive games", and "individualistic games". In cooperative games learners work together and they have a common goal. In competitive games learners, whether working in team or individually, compete with each other or another team to win the game and finally in individualistic games learners work on their own and whoever finishes the game is the winner. Although these games fall into different categories, they have one thing in common and that is

they are all motivational and have educational purpose. For example, when children play a word game or puzzles, the fun element of the game motivates learners to actively participate in the game and it also develops their language skills like spelling.

Another way of categorising language games, based on Bedson and Gordon's (2000) definition, is to divide them into ten different types of games as follows: guessing games, role play games, dice games, singing games, drawing games, movement games, board games, word games, card games, and team games. Hadfield (1999) states that although these games are different from one another the elements of fun, motivation, and goals are common in them. All the named games can encourage and motivate learners to learn the target language especially at a young age; these games can provide motivation to learn the target language (Brewster et al, 2004).

According to Nguyen and Khuat (2003), cooperative and competitive games are more beneficial for language learning as they are in line with the socio-cultural theory of Vygotksy which says that interaction among learners or between learners and teachers can increase the chance of successful language learning. They also argue that the competitive element of language games enhances effective learning as they keep learners interested. Moreover, cooperative and competitive language games provide a stimulating and motivating learning environment where learners are encouraged to interact with each other and work together towards the same goal. The language games can create a ZPD in which learners can assist and scaffold each other in learning in a playful and enjoyable environment. The learning environment that language games create is very different from the environment of traditional language classrooms in which children work individually and teacher is the only one who provides the necessary scaffolding which can cause anxiety for the learners.

2.3.2. Rationale for using language games

In Iran, there is a common perception that the learning environment should be solemn and serious and if there is hilarity, fun, and laughter involved, then there is no learning taking place (Sorayaei, 2012). However, literature on language learning shows that it is possible for learners to learn, enjoy and have fun at the same time and one of the best ways of doing this is through language games (Brewster et al, 2004). As it is argued by Betteridge and Buckby (2005), language games have great

educational value and they have many advantages if selected properly based on the students' level and also if the instructions of the games are well explained.

Another advantage of using games in language classrooms is that they can create a learning environment for pupils to learn without realizing that they are actually learning. This can reduce a learner's fear of being negatively judged in front of other students in class which is one of the main reasons preventing learners from using the target language in front of other students (Hadfield, 1999). Moreover, when language learners are playing games they are not worried about making mistakes or punishments from the teacher, therefore the anxiety and pressure is reduced and learners can concentrate more on the target language (Schultz & Fisher, 1988). Games can also provide an opportunity for real communication among students and they can bring the real world into the classroom. When pupils are communicating with each other in the classroom they are actually learning how to communicate in the real world and they build a bridge between their real lives and school which makes them feel more secure and confident about their participation in the activities (Hadfield, 1999). Therefore, language games allow learners to use language in a meaningful and useful way which is used in real contexts (Ersoz, 2000).

Furthermore, it has been found that language games keep pupils motivated and interested in what they are learning which makes them want to continue their participation and engagement in the activity (Moon, 2000). According to Philips (2001), if children continue with an activity without losing their interest it will give them more exposure to the target language and it also gives them an opportunity to practice what they have learned and to enjoy the activity at the same time. Since children are having a pleasant experience during playing games it will be something memorable for them which will also help them in the language learning process.

Another advantage of using games especially in Iranian EFL classrooms is that it helps teachers explore alternatives to traditional teaching methods where the classroom is teacher dominated and the teacher is the only source of knowledge and controls who should participate in classroom activities. This could involve a shift towards changing the teacher's role from a more controlling position into a position of an organiser and facilitator who can watch the students while they are playing but also encourage and motivate them through providing feedback. Moreover, such a

shift would give some more responsibility to learners in the classroom and make them more involved in the learning process (Hadfield, 1999).

The use of language games in EFL classrooms will also provide an opportunity for the teacher to involve the four basic language skills namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. A game often involves a number of these skills but the games should be selected based on the age and level of the students, for example, the teacher cannot use a game with reading or writing skills with the very young learners (Lee, 1979). Studies on the use of language games in EFL classrooms have shown that language games have been an effective instrument for learning language items such as vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation not only in presenting new language items but also in retaining and retrieving the materials that the learners have already been taught (Uberman, 1998).

A study carried out by Smith (2006) in the UK provides further evidence about the value of language games. This study was conducted in a primary school in UK and involved 18 small groups of bilingual pupils aged seven to ten who were learning English as a second language. Pupils were video-recorded while playing a board game without the presence of the teacher and the researcher and then the recordings were transcribed and qualitatively analysed by the researcher. The findings of the study revealed that language games provided an interactive and supportive learning environment where pupils could actively participate, interact, and support each other through providing critical feedback on each other's responses. The study proved that peers were able to scaffold each other without the help of the teacher and were also able to construct knowledge through interacting with each other, for example, they could make sentences based on one another's utterances.

Even though studies have shown that language games are beneficial for language learning and many educationalists have recommended language games should be employed in language classrooms, there are some researchers who believe that language games techniques can be problematic and cause difficulties for teachers. For example Rixon (1988) states that using language games in large classrooms may cause problems for teachers as he believes that the high number of students in a classroom may not allow all the students to participate; it is also difficult for the teacher to organize the classroom in a way that everyone can get a chance to

participate. This is likely to be even more difficult in classrooms where students sit in rows as in Iran.

Based on my personal teaching experience most of the Iranian language teachers are concerned with the level of the sound that will be created by pupils during language games which could disturb other teachers who are teaching in the next door classrooms. Rixon (1988) states that no one wants a class playing games that disrupts what is going on in other rooms, but this is something that applies to other aspects of teaching too. He states that children must be trained to play at a necessary rather than a deafening volume, however it should be considered as a compliment if they get excited enough by language games to want to make a noise. In cases where there is a thin partition between one class and the next door, or if it is too hot that the windows have to be kept open, the teacher can use language games that do not make much noise such as pen and pencil paper and Bingo games.

Another difficulty that teachers might face when using language games in their classrooms is that children sometimes do not understand the rules of the game or they may misunderstand the purpose of the game, therefore they may not get the benefit they should from the language game. For example, if students do not understand the rules of a drawing game and just draw without following the instructions, then it is just a fun activity they are doing without any language aim. However, as Byrne (1995) states demonstrations can be very helpful as it will help students to understand the game and help them follow the rules.

 It is also said by some researchers such as Brumfit (1991) that using language games may hinder learning of the second language (L2) due to the fact that children resort to their first language (L1) when playing games. However, some sociocultural researchers such as Anton (1999) and DiCammila (2000) argue that the use of L1 does not hinder the L2 learning but it actually facilitates it, as the use of L1 in peer interaction helps learners support and scaffold each other's L2 use and hence develops their understanding of the L2 (Tognini, 2008). A similar claim has been made by Cook (2001) who argues that the use of the L1 in language classrooms does not cause any difficulty for L2 learning. He believes that the use of first language can actually be beneficial for the learners. For example, he states that when the teacher is teaching difficult grammar rules or new vocabulary he/she can

use the L1 language to explain and clarify the grammar rules and meaning of the new vocabulary.

A further problem is that if the selected language games are not appropriate and not selected properly based on numerous factor such as pupils' age and level, they can discourage pupils. In fact a language teacher should pay careful attention to numerous factors while planning the use of language games such as classroom space, materials necessary for the game, amount of time needed for the game, pupils' level, their culture, and even the characteristics of pupils. Any of these factors could cause problems if the teacher does not pay attention to them (Carrier, 1990). However, with careful planning the teacher can overcome these problems.

In this study a range of styles of games were selected to meet the needs of a range of learners who may benefit from learning in different ways. For example, some games were selected to encourage pupils to speak out loud in the classroom (for those who are comfortable with doing so), and some games were selected for those pupils who are shy or do not feel comfortable to speak out loud in the classroom and they need to respond differently. However, one of the main criteria for selecting the language games was to choose the types of games that could create opportunities for the Iranian language learners to use the English language in a communicative and meaningful way. This is because Iranian language learners tend to be deprived of opportunities to use the English language communicatively outside of the classroom (Kiany & Shayestefar, 2010). As argued by Ersoz (2000), role-play games can connect pupils to the world outside of the classroom in real life situations. Therefore, role-play games were selected to provide opportunity for the Iranian EFL learners to practice the English language in a communicative and meaningful way as if they were using it in real life situations in the society. According to Long's (1983) theory of interaction this would help pupils to develop their language learning because the interactive nature of the communication means that the language used is more meaningful to learners.

Moreover, selecting games that were suitable for the Iranian EFL learners' age and beginner English level was also an important consideration in terms of encouraging pupils to play the games. For example, Total Physical Response (TPR) games are particularly beneficial for beginner language learners as this type of game does not require oral responses (Freeman, 2000). Also, as discussed in the preceding

paragraph, I wanted to use type of games that would respond to the needs of pupils who do not feel comfortable to speak out loud in the classroom. Therefore, I found that since in TPR games pupils do not require to give oral responses (Freeman, 2000), it was a good selection of game for learners who do not feel comfortable to speak out loud in the classroom. Furthermore, I found that TPR activities could provide continuous application of scaffolding strategy (Vygotsky, 1986), as the person who provides the commands has to provide comprehensible input so that receivers of knowledge are able to comprehend the information and respond to the commands appropriately (Cantoni, 1996). In addition, in TPR activities pupils can assist each other during the task and as it is reported by Vygotsky (1978), children's cognitive development can be promoted through interacting with people around them who can assist them and provide them with scaffolding. Therefore, I decided that TPR games could be beneficial for the Iranian language learners and can develop their language learning.

Another criterion for selecting the language games in this study was choosing the type of games that can provide opportunities for pair and group work in the classroom. According to Storch (2007), pair work and group work are two strategies that can promote communication in language classrooms and provide opportunities for learners to talk and communicate in the target language. Therefore, by choosing language games such as drawing games, matching games, and guessing games I could provide opportunities for the Iranian language learners to work together collaboratively in pairs and groups. This was particularly important to be provided for the Iranian language learners as they can be deprived of opportunities to interact with people around them in the target language inside and outside of the classroom in the society (Kiany & Shayestefar, 2010).

Furthermore, I wanted to introduce games with specific language aims that would allow pupils to practice the four language skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. For example, the TPR games (i.e. pantomime and movement games), were specifically focusing on the listening skills as in this type of game one has to produce a language item and give a command, and the other has to listen, comprehend and then physically respond to the command (Freeman, 2000). Also by playing role play games pupils could practice the language items that they had learned and by using them in meaningful sentences they could practice their speaking skills (Brewster et al, 2004). In drawing games pupils were able to practice their reading and speaking

skills as they had to read the words, produce them and then draw the picture for the word. Also, in guessing game pupils could practice their reading, writing, and speaking skills as they had to read the words and then guess the missing letters for the word which would help with their spellings and then produce it which would help them to practice their speaking skills. Finally dictation games were specifically focusing on pupils' spelling and writing skills as well as their speaking skills. In this type of game pupils had to ask each other questions regarding the spelling of the words and for example ask each other "does it have a K?" and pupil had to respond "yes it has a K" or "No, it does not have a K" which would create meaningful interaction among pupils.

Finally, after reviewing the literature on language games and becoming familiar with the rationale behind using them with language learners, I decided to introduce language games in the Iranian EFL classrooms to answer the following questions:

1. What is the nature of interaction between the teacher and pupils and among pupils in an Iranian EFL primary classroom?
2. How are these interactions influenced by the introduction of language games in the classroom?
3. What are the teachers' perceptions towards using language games with young language learners in the classroom?

2.4. Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview about the process of language learning based on the socio-cultural theory which highlighted the importance of classroom interaction in the development of language learning involving two main aspects of classroom interaction (teacher and learner talk). Based on the review of the literature, it was found that classroom interaction provides learning opportunities for development of language learning through the use of the target language in a communicative way. Therefore, providing opportunities for learners to interact with each other in the target language through the use of pair and group work in the classroom was found to be important for the teachers to consider.

Since Iranian young language learners are usually deprived of interactive learning opportunities in the classroom where they can work together collaboratively and use the target language in a meaningful way, it was important to look for ways to enhance classroom interaction in Iranian primary EFL classrooms. Therefore, it was argued whether introducing language games in Iranian EFL primary classrooms can create interaction opportunities for young language learners to practice the English language through pair and group work, through which they can exchange information, and negotiate meaning of the language items. One of the considered points in regards to the use of language games was that it can create a relaxed and motivating learning atmosphere which could enhance the course of interaction in the classroom (Langran and Purcel, 1994). Therefore, it was discussed that the introduction of language games in the Iranian primary EFL classroom could create opportunities for the young language learners to become actively involved in the language learning process and could enhance the classroom interaction. In the next chapter the methodology and the design of the study will be presented.

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1. Design of the study

There are numerous types of research designs which can be applied in second language research and the most popular ones were found to be case studies, surveys, experiments, archival analysis, and multi-method research (Bell & Opie, 2002; Bryman, 2004). Each research design has its own characteristics and is appropriate for specific situations (Bell, 2005). For example, surveys are more suitable for descriptive research, experiments are more appropriate for explanatory research, and multi-method research design is appropriate to be used when research is conducted to investigate a problem and requires to be looked at from different perspectives (Cohen et al, 2007).

In order to decide which research design was appropriate for this study, I had to determine the type of the study first. In my view this study seemed to be mainly exploratory and the reason is that exploratory studies are those that investigate little-known phenomena for which a library search fails to reveal any significant examples of prior research (Kumar, 2012). With regards to this study, although we know a lot from the literature, for example, on the fact that language games change the nature of teacher-pupil interactions in particular ways, we know so little about the Iranian context from the research literature and no research was found that has investigated this particular subject in the Iranian context. Therefore, I needed to answer some questions to which the answers were unknown.

Knowing that this study was exploratory, a multi-method research design seemed to be more appropriate for the purpose of this study. A multi-method research design allows the researcher to use two or more methods of data collection (Creswell, 2007), and this study required more than one method of data collection to provide answers to the research questions. For example, in order to provide an answer to the first question of the study concerning the nature of classroom interaction in the Iranian classroom, it was important to examine the context and interactions in detail, thereby necessitating an in-depth observational approach. In other words, I needed to be present in the Iranian EFL classroom and observe the teacher's and pupils' behaviours and communicative acts. Also, in order to provide an answer to the third question concerning the teachers' perceptions about the use of language games; I needed to interview teachers to find out about their views about the use of language

games and their reasons for the performance of certain behaviours as well as their use of certain teaching methods.

However, the study required to be looked at from two different worldviews (qualitative and quantitative). According to Creswell (2007), a multi-method research design is restricted to a single world view which requires the methods to be from the same worldview (e.g. qualitative or quantitative). It is the mixed-method strategy which essentially requires multiple world views combining qualitative and quantitative methods together (Tashakkori, 2003).

Creswell (2007) argues that a mixed-method strategy is an approach in which both quantitative and qualitative methods are involved in the process of collecting and analysing data within a single study. Combining quantitative and qualitative methods seemed to be essential for the purpose of my study as there was a requirement for comparison between the teacher's and pupils' communicative acts within each type of lesson and between the two types of traditional and language game-based lessons (Uberman, 1998; Yip and Kwan, 2006). Therefore, it was essential for me to measure the communicative acts to be able to compare them with each other. This kind of analysis that explains phenomena by numerical data analysed through mathematically based methods is known as quantitative analysis (Aliaga and Gurderson 2003).

Although the quantitative data allowed me to code and quantify the discourse acts that occurred in the classroom and the numerical data obtained from quantitative analysis helped in giving an overall picture of the interactions between the teacher and pupils and among pupils in the classroom, the numerical data could not provide any detailed information about what actually went on in the classroom. Therefore it was required to complement the quantitative findings through qualitative analysis which is "a strategy that usually emphasizes words rather than quantification and analysis of data" (Bryman 2008a: 366). Qualitative analysis also aims at discovering how human beings understand, experience, interpret, and produce the social world (Sandelowski, 2004).

However, combining quantitative and qualitative data supplemented and supported each other to serve the purpose of the study. Adopting a mixed-method strategy in this study also helped to provide more detailed data which leads to a better understanding of the research problem (Creswell, 2003). Moreover, as Bryman

(2004) argues, using a mixed-method strategy can increase the validity of a research as he believes that the approach permits in-depth description, and analysis of processes and patterns of social interaction. In addition, these integrated approaches provide the flexibility to fill in gaps in the available information and provide different perspectives on the phenomena being studied and hence it can increase the validity of the study (Tashakkori, 2003).

Further to the above reasons, employing a mixed-method strategy in this study was also justified because of its successful application in numerous contexts for investigating the nature of classroom interaction and discourse analysis. One example of a successful study in which both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed is Smith's (2005) study on classroom interaction and discourse analysis in privately funded schools serving low-income families in Hyderabad India. In this study one hundred thirty eight lessons were analysed using computerised systematic observation system including 138 teachers and 559 pupils from 15 schools. The average age of these teachers was 28 years old and the average age of pupils was 10 years old. For quantitative analysis of the data, certain acts and behaviours performed by the teachers and learners were measured and converted to percentages. In order to provide a more descriptive and detailed information of how things worked in the classroom, a qualitative method was adopted also which included giving examples of the verbal interaction exchanged between the teacher and pupils. The study found that the classroom was dominated by the teacher-led recitation, rote, and repetition and there was not much attention given to securing pupils' understanding.

Another successful study on classroom interaction in which mixed-method strategy (observations and stimulated recall interviews) was applied is a doctoral study by Aldabbus (2008) conducted in Tripoli, Libya. This study was a very important and relevant source for me for two reasons. First, because of the limited research about using language games in EFL classrooms in general and second, the study was carried out in a middle-eastern country to investigate the impact of language games on the nature of interactions in Libyan EFL classrooms. According to the Aldabbus (2008), due to the use of Grammar translation and Audio-lingual methods in the Libyan EFL classrooms, classroom talk is dominated by the teacher and pupils do not have chance to interact with each other. Therefore, the researcher wanted to find out whether the introduction of language games could reduce the amount of teacher

talk in the classroom and create more interaction opportunities for pupils or not. Moreover, Aldabbus (2008) wanted to find out what Libyan EFL teachers think about using language games in their classrooms. The study involved 100 eleven year old pupils and four Libyan teachers for observations as participants in this study. 24 Lessons were observed and video recorded and then analysed quantitatively and qualitatively based on a coding scheme which was adopted from the work of Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) coding scheme. Then the video-recordings were used in the interview sessions with teachers to ask about their views on using language games with learners and also to clarify certain behaviours which were observed during the observation sessions. The findings of the study revealed that the use of language games works in the Libyan context in terms of reducing the amount of teacher talk and increasing pupils talk in the classroom. Teachers also responded positively to the use of language games and did not raise any issues or barriers to continue to use the games in the Libyan context.

After reviewing this study and considering the existing problems in the Iranian EFL classrooms which are a lack of pupil-pupil interaction, dry atmosphere of the classroom, lack of communicative activities in the text books, lack of teachers' awareness of the benefits of communicative activities, and neglecting the socio-cultural aspect of the language by the educational authorities (Borjian, 2013), I decided to use the combination of classroom observations and interviews with the teacher. As it is argued by Bryman (2008) and Finn (2000), there are three main types of interviews that are widely discussed in educational and social research which are: structured interview, unstructured interview and semi-structured interview. Therefore, I had to review each type of interview to find out which type of interview was more appropriate for the purpose of my study.

I found that in structured interview, interviewees are usually asked specific questions and respondents give fixed range of answers. Therefore the interview is highly controlled by the researcher which gives little flexibility in variation of responses and does not allow for generating relevant answers to the research questions (Patton, 2002). By contrast, unstructured interviews are entirely participant-led, which means that the participants are allowed to tell their own stories and give answers to the interview question in their own words with little direction or interference of the researcher (David and Sutton, 2004). In spite of the fact that unstructured interview could provide me with great amount of data, I found that the method was time

consuming as I needed to transcribe and analyse all the obtained data, which also required specific set of skills for conducting this type of interview (Kajornboon, 2004).

On the other hand I found that Semi-structured interviews combine the use of open-ended and close-ended questions. In this type of interview the questions are planned, but they are flexible and open-ended which Silverman (1993) states that it allows for the emergence of topics and themes which may not have been anticipated when the investigation began. Silverman (1993), also argues that this type of interview will lead into obtaining richer information about the topic especially if the participants are allowed to use their mother tongue. Therefore, by using semi-structured interview in teacher's mother tongue, I would allow the teacher to reply to my questions based on her own world-view and this way I could be open about her views on any raised questions. (For more detailed information about the type of questions asked from the teachers see Appendix 3 of the study).

The use of mixed methods combining observations and semi-structured interview was similarly applied in Aldabbus' (2008) study, to explore what was happening in the Libyan EFL classrooms. As one of the few studies that has been carried out in the Middle East on the use of language games in EFL classrooms this provided a helpful research strategy that I could use. Despite Iran and Libya both being Middle Eastern countries, it should not be assumed that the context in which the methods would be deployed, or the findings of the research, would be similar. This was something that needed to be investigated empirically to demonstrate whether or not this would be the case.

The following figure shows the overall design of the study and then the following section provides description of the methods as well as their procedures.

Figure 2: Design of the study

Methods	Procedures	Time
Semi-structured interview with the teacher	asking questions from the teacher to find out her pereption about using language games	interview was conducted three days before carrying out the study and it lasted for 50 minutes
Initial prepration with the teacher	conducting rehearsal session with the teacher (showing video clips , discussing and selecting games)	rehearsal session was conducted one day before conducting the study and it lasted for 90 minutes
Classroom observation	observing and video recording the teacher's and pupils' behaviuors and their interactions	Observations were conducted for two hours every wednesdays over the period of six weeks
Semi-structured interview with the teacher at week three of the study	asking questions from the teacher for claryfying particular aspects of her practice (questions were from week 1,2,3 of both traditional and game lessons)	interview lasted for 50 minutes
Semi-structured interview with the teacher at week six of the study	asking questions from the teacher for clarifying particular aspects of her practice (questions were from week 4,5,6 of both traditional and game lessons), and her views about using language games classroom after she applied them	interview session lasted for 60 minutes

3.2. Methods

3.2.1. Classroom observation and the procedures

Classroom observation was the main data collection instrument that I utilised in this study. One of the advantages of using classroom observation as a data collection instrument was that it allowed me to look directly at the teacher's and pupils' behaviours and their interactions while it was naturally occurring in the classroom rather than relying on second-hand reports (Merriam, 2009). Moreover, the use of observations allowed me to obtain valid and authentic data compared to other data collection methods such as questionnaires and interviews. The reason is because in Iran people are very sensitive towards research and they are not open to say or write what they really think when they are asked questions especially by strangers (Akbari & Tajik, 2008). Therefore, if I had merely relied on the data from questionnaires and/or interviews, chances were that I would not obtain valid and authentic data from the participants. This is also confirmed by Bryman (2004) who argues that people are not always willing to write their views on a questionnaire or tell a stranger what they really think in an interview. Therefore, he confirms that observations can provide more valid and authentic data compared to interviews and questionnaires.

Observations tend to be categorised in two main ways: participant and non-participant (Cooper and Schindler, 2001). In order to decide which observation type was more appropriate for the purpose of my study, I reviewed each type of the observations along with their advantages and disadvantages. As Creswell (2007) noted, selecting participant observation requires participating in the activities and getting involved with the participants. This type of observation as Breakwell (2000) reports could provide great amount of data not only about the participants' acts and behaviours being observed but also about their feelings and attitudes. However, participant observation as Simpson and Tuson (2003: 14) argue is the most "subtly intrusive" form of observation since it requires the researcher to become a member of a group and participate in the activities that participants are involved in so that he/she can access participants' behaviours and activities whilst still acting as a researcher with a degree of detachment.

Similarly Merriam (2009), states that participant observation can be a bit challenging for the observer as he/she should get involved with the participants in the activities to absorb the situation but with sufficient detachment to be able to analyse and observe

it in a more objective way. She also informs us that participant observation can be time consuming as not only the observer has to spend a long time with the group, but also has to write up field notes away from the activity itself. Furthermore, participant observation can be subjective especially when the participants being studied are known to the observer (Bell, 2005).

In contrast to participant observation, non-participant observation does not require participating in the activities and the observer watches the events and activities from a distance (Seligar and Long, 1983). One of the advantages with selecting this method is that not being involved with participants in the activities saves a lot of the observers' time, and instead of spending time on doing the activities with pupils, the observer could spend that time on video-recording the observation sessions and taking notes of the observed incidents. Moreover non-participant observation allows the observer to be more objective and prevents his/her feelings affecting the results (Bryman, 2004). However, like participant observation non-participant observation has some disadvantages, for example not being involved in classroom activities could prevent the observer from seeing or hearing everything that happens during the course of observation and also it could be difficult to clarify what pupils do or say unless completely engaged in the activities with them (Creswell, 2003). Moreover, in non-participant observations, participants usually know that the observer is there and the presence of the researcher can affect the participants' behaviour (Merriam, 2009).

After reviewing the advantages and disadvantages of the participant and non-participant observation, I finally decided to conduct a non-participant observation, as it would save a lot of time and would also allow me to be more objective about what I was going to observe and what pupils were able to achieve. In addition, I needed to empirically demonstrate what the patterns of interaction are in a 'typical' classroom and my involvement as a participant-observer would have influenced that more than through being a non-participant observer (Bell, 2005).

However, there were some validity issues that I had to deal with to strengthen my observation data. It is also reported by Bryman (2004), that a researcher should consider the validity issues when conducting an observation as there are some factors that could influence observations and make them less authentic. He argues that in order to strengthen the validity of observations, the researcher should

minimise the biasing effect by which he means that the researcher should prevent bringing his/her preconceived ideas about what will occur in to their work to achieve their desired results (Cohen et al, 2007).

The fact that I was taking part in the process of game selection and conducting a rehearsal session with the teacher as well as showing video-clips was challenging for me in terms of maintaining my position as a researcher and preventing any biasing effect. I shared my own teaching experiences with the teacher in the Iranian EFL classroom and discussed the type of games that I had applied with learners (See section 3.6). I also introduced some language games to the teacher and showed a video clip on how language games are practiced by EFL teachers in Japan (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EtwDhKso2No). I found that the video clip that I had selected was a good example of how language games are applied by a non-English speaking teacher in a different country. The video clip could clearly illustrate how the Japanese EFL teacher was giving the instruction of the game and how she divided pupils into pairs and groups to play the language games. It was also shown how pupils were playing the games in groups collaboratively and assisting each other during the game. Therefore, the video clip could cover the important points that I wanted to share with the teacher such as the procedures of using games, and the change of atmosphere in the classroom.

However, I believed that helping the teacher in selecting the language games and showing a video clip on how to use language games was essential as I was bringing a new teaching method from a western country into the Iranian context and the idea of using language games was new to the teacher. Moreover, many Iranian EFL teachers may not have been exposed to any other teaching methods except the traditional methods (Kariminia & salehi, 2007). Therefore, I found that it was important to guide the teacher and show her how language games are practiced in a different country, but through showing her a video clip as an example of a practice. This would prevent me from telling the teacher directly what to do and how she should be applying the language games. In other words by showing a video clip as an example of practice I was trying to minimize the potential biasing effect of my own expectations.

Apart from familiarizing the teacher with the procedures of the language games, there were other reasons as to why I conducted a rehearsal session with the teacher.

For example, if I had not conducted a rehearsal session with the teacher, she may not have known how to introduce the language games to pupils and use them as a teaching device for the first time. Also if I had not taken part in the selection of language games and did not communicate with the teacher, the teacher could have faced difficulty in selecting appropriate games. I found it important to familiarize the teacher with some of the theories behind the suggested games (i.e. TPR and role play games), so that she would understand the importance of applying these games with language learners. I told the teacher that the TPR games are suitable for the beginner language learners who have not developed their speaking skills in the target language as they do not require oral responses and therefore suitable for beginner language learners (Freeman, 2000). I also talked to her about the Long's (1983) hypothesis theory of interaction which emphasizes on providing meaningful communication for developing pupils' language learning and I explained that role play games can create meaningful interaction (Brewster et al, 2004), which helps pupils develop their language learning (Long, 2006). The teacher was very eager to know about these theories and that encouraged me to carry on the conversation with her.

However, in spite of the fact that I participated in the selection of language games and conducted a rehearsal session with the teacher, I gave her the option to agree or disagree with the games and in fact she made some changes to the suggested games. Therefore, my role was not to dictate to the teacher what to do but to guide her and help her with understanding the purpose of the games and how to use them appropriately. Therefore, it can be argued that these aspects of my approach (showing video clips and discussion with the teacher), strengthened reliability and validity of the implementation of the games because the teacher had a better understanding of what the games were designed to do and how they could be taught in the classroom. On balance then, the potential biasing effect of my own expectations may have been counteracted by strengthening reliability and validity in the ways described in the preceding paragraphs.

In terms of my relationship with pupils, I tried to maintain my position as a non-participant observer and not to be involved in the teaching process or any of the classroom activities. However, I talked to pupils about my position in the classroom and told them that I would be attending their lessons for the purpose of the research. I told them that they will play language games in the classroom and I will observe and video-record their lessons. Some pupils asked a few questions in regards to using

language games which I answered, for example they wanted to know whether the language games should be played in English or Farsi, or they wanted to know whether the games should be played individually or with their peers. I told them that the language games are in English and they can play the games with their peers, but also told them that they should follow the instructions of each game given by their teacher.

In order to further minimize the biasing effect and strengthen the validity of the observations in this study, several actions were undertaken. Firstly, I decided to take field notes to provide detailed information of the setting, participants, and my impression on any incidents observed during the teaching and learning process. The fact that I was not participating in the activities was an advantage for me in regards to taking field notes as I was able to take notes while the observation was going on. As it is suggested by Bell (2007), field notes should take place as soon as the events takes place because when there is interval between observation and writing, details may get lost and what seemed clear with only few key words an hour after the event or conversation is much less clear a week later. Moreover, taking notes immediately after the observations allows the observer to write his/her first impression on the observed scenes and he/she will not be affected by any other factors such as others' opinion and/or feeling so there is less chance that the observer's opinion is biased (Bryman, 2004).

Secondly, I decided to video-record the observation sessions so that I could transcribe the verbal interactions between the teacher and pupils and thus have a more precise analysis of the obtained data from the observations (Bell, 2007). The video-recordings helped with strengthening the validity of the observation data because if there was anything missed out during the observation sessions, I could play back the videos and review the scenes repeatedly as necessary. This is the advantage of video-recordings that offers a cheap and semi-permanent record allowing the observer to play back the scenes repeatedly to review the behaviours and communicative acts for in-depth analysis (Breakwell, 2000). Moreover, video-recordings allow capture of both the verbal and non-verbal communicative acts which enables the observer to look at the behaviours more closely from a qualitative point of view (Breakwell, 2000).

Apart from making sure that I was able to capture the teacher's and pupils' communicative acts, I also had to make sure that I was precise in the selection of the communicative acts to reduce the biasing effect. This is suggested by Bryman (2004) who argues that in order to minimise the biasing effect, observers should spot the target behaviours or acts and this can be done through preparing a behaviour checklist which should be prepared by the observer beforehand. He informs us that by giving clear and precise definition of the observed acts or behaviours, the observer can reduce the biasing effect. Therefore, I decided to use an observation coding scheme which I adapted from the work of Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) (See section 3.2.1.1. for the description of the coding scheme and the rational for its use), enabling me to spot the specific teacher's and pupils' communicative acts planned *a priori*.

After selecting the teacher's and pupils' communicative acts, I decided to provide a detailed explanation on the performance of the communicative acts, the way the teacher and pupils behaved in the classroom, and the verbal interactions exchanged between them, which were the qualitative part of the analysis. In the qualitative analysis, the video recordings were watched numerous times and then the verbal exchanges between the teacher and pupils and among pupils were transcribed (Smith, 2005). In order to capture the teacher's and pupils' utterances and be able to write what exactly they were saying, the video recordings had to be paused and replayed repeatedly. Due to the small size of the classroom, the teacher and pupils were not very distant from the camera and the microphone, therefore their utterances could easily be captured by the camera. However, there were times when due to background noise and low volume of pupils and the teacher it difficult to capture some utterances and therefore they were not included in the transcriptions. Consequently, the transcriptions include the utterances that the teacher and pupils which were clearly captured by the camera.

After I transcribed the video recordings, I labelled the teacher's and pupils' utterances based on the Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) observation framework. For example, when the teacher asked pupils to model a language item and said "repeat after me, cat", I labelled this utterance as modelling which was one of the categories of the observation framework. Also I labelled the pupils' responses to the modelled language item/s as choral repetition which was another category of the observation

framework (See section 3.2.1.1. for the description of the observation framework and Appendix 1 for illustrations of each category).

After I transcribed and labelled the teacher's and pupils' utterances, I selected some examples from the transcriptions to describe how the communicative acts were performed by the teacher and pupils. I selected those examples from the teacher's and pupils' utterances that could present the communicative acts relevant to my discussion. Also, in cases where I could present more than one example to describe a specific communicative act, I selected the ones that did not include the communicative acts I had already discussed in other examples. Moreover, due to the word limit of the thesis, I selected those examples which could present the communicative acts in short extracts.

The following section provides a complete description of the Sinclair & Coulthard (1975) coding scheme and the rationale for its use in this study.

3.2.1.1. Observation framework

As a researcher and an observer, the first point that I had to consider was to carefully determine the goals of my research and the specific things that I wanted to look for during the observation procedure. In other words, I had to prepare a schedule or a coding scheme which Gass and Mackey (2005:230) define as "a set of pre-determined factors that are counted or rated during the observation". Most observation schemes include some categories which consist of specific behaviours or events allowing the observers to target them and mark their frequency (Gass and Mackey, 2005). For example, in a language classroom, the observations may be made of the teacher's questions, explanation of grammar points, student's questions, answers, and interactions with other students.

Observation coding schemes can be designed or adapted from the existing coding schemes that have been used in previous studies (Gass and Mackey, 2005). In this study I decided to adapt a coding scheme by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975), which was originally designed for traditional classes such as those in Iran. The original coding scheme of Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) was based on the work of Halliday (1961), who developed a description of grammar based on a rank scale and the ranks in the model were named as lesson, transaction, exchange, moves, and acts.

Hardman (2006), argued that a lesson is a series of transactions which is made up of a number of exchanges and exchanges are made up of moves and moves are made up of acts. This theory was used by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) to create a model for spoken discourse analysis, of which its main focus was on three elements of exchanges: Teacher initiation, pupils' response and teacher's feedback (IRF), which Silverman (1985) believes is the basic logic of classroom conversational exchange. In this model, the act was given the lowest rank of the discourse structure which was the smallest unit and the functions of teacher's and pupils' utterances produced in the classroom were classified by this small unit known as act.

I found that applying the Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) coding scheme at the act level where it concentrates on the teacher's and pupils' utterances and performances was suitable for the purpose of this study. I wanted to look for patterns of interactions between the teacher and pupils based on the IRF pattern which required me to concentrate on the teacher's and pupils' utterance and any form of communicative acts exchanged between them and this model of observation framework could serve the purpose. Moreover, with this model I could give equal attention to all three elements of exchanges of the IRF pattern, while not all coding schemes that are designed for investigating interaction in second language classrooms could provide this. For example, the coding scheme by Flander (1971), which was originally developed for the analysis of interactions in language classrooms only considered the teacher talk and pupil talk and neglects the third element of the IRF pattern which Slavin (2003) reports is an important part of any learning process. Moreover, this coding scheme is heavily biased towards the teacher's talk and only suggests two ways for classifying pupils' talk (Walsh, 2006). Therefore, I did not find this observation frame work suitable for the purpose of my study as I wanted to give equal attention to both teacher's and pupils' talk.

In 1971, an extended form of the Flander's (1970) coding scheme was revealed by Moskowitz. This coding scheme was also designed for foreign language interaction analysis (abbreviated to Flint). I found that just like the original coding scheme by Flander (1971), the Flint system was also biased towards the teacher talk including two main categories for teacher behaviour: direct influence (e.g the teacher gives direction and information) and indirect influence (the teacher jokes, praises, or encourages) but only three ways for classifying pupils talk was suggested by this system which were: responses by specific students, choral responses and student-

initiated responses. Therefore this coding scheme was also not appropriate to be applied in the current study given that the main focus here was to give equal attention to pupils and teachers, and describe the interactions between them.

Another coding scheme that I reviewed was the Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (Spada and Frohlich, 1995), which was designed for describing classroom activities and analysis of verbal interactions in communicative language classrooms. The coding scheme consists of two sections. The categories of the first section describe classroom activities in organizational and pedagogical terms and their main focus is on the use of authentic materials in which extended texts are dominant, as they are considered to be more communicatively oriented. This section consists of five major categories which are: Activity Description, Participant Organization, Content, Student Modality, and Materials. The second section of the coding scheme focuses on learners' talk and is used to analyse classroom activities at the level of verbal interactions measuring different aspects of pupils' talk, for example, to what extent learners are given opportunities to produce the second language without the teacher imposing linguistic restriction, to what extent they exchange unknown or relatively unpredictable information, and to what extent they initiate discourse. The second section has also categories to measure teacher talk, for example, the extent to which teachers ask display versus referential questions, and how they respond to students' utterances in terms of comments, repetitions, paraphrases, and incorporations (Nunan, 1990). Although this observation instrument is considered as a powerful approach for discourse analysis in language classroom (Nunan, 1989b), I did not find this coding scheme appropriate for the purpose of my study as its main focus is on materials and classroom activities which was not the focus of my study. I also found it to be biased towards pupils' talk and no categories included for the teacher feedback which is part of the IRF pattern and was essential to my study.

Based on the discussion in the preceding paragraphs, it can be concluded that the Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) coding scheme which was originally developed to investigate the discourse in traditional classes, seemed to be more suitable for the purpose of my study in terms of focusing on the teacher's and pupils' communicative acts based on the IRF pattern.

3.2.1.2. Piloting the classroom observation

Before the main study was conducted, a pilot study was carried out to make sure of the appropriateness of the coding scheme and to test the adequacy of data collection instruments. The term "pilot study" is used in two different ways in social science research. It can refer to "feasibility studies which are small scale version(s) or trial run(s), done in preparation for the major study" (Polit et al, 2001:467). However, a pilot study can also be the "pre-testing or tying out of a particular research instrument" (Baker, 1994:182-3). The main advantage of conducting a pilot study is that it might give advance warning about where the main research project could fail, or whether the proposed methods or instruments are inappropriate or too complicated (De Vaus, 1993).

In this study piloting the classroom observation as a data collection instrument was carried out in the same school where the main research project was going to be conducted. Ideally, the pilot study should have been conducted in the United Kingdom before I travelled to Iran for conducting the main research project, as this would have given me enough time to adapt or make changes as necessary. For example, if I found that the coding scheme or any of the data collection instruments were not appropriate, I would have had enough time to think about other alternatives. However since I did not have access to Iranian EFL classroom in the United Kingdom, I had to carry out the pilot study in the same school and classroom where the main research project was going to be conducted. The fact that I already had permission for accessing the school was an advantage for piloting the classroom observation in the same school, as gaining permission for accessing Iranian schools can be extremely challenging if one does not have personal connections in the school.

Piloting the classroom observation started two weeks before conducting the main research project. The observation took place during an English language lesson and lasted for about 30 minutes. The main purpose of the pilot study was to check the appropriateness of the coding scheme that I had selected and also to check the video-recording equipment, and to practice data transcription. Moreover, I wanted to find out to what extent pupils would be distracted by my presence in their classroom and the recording equipment.

What I found from the pilot study was that the coding scheme that I had selected was appropriate in terms of being able to focus on the teacher's and pupils' communicative acts, however, I found that the coding scheme needed some modifications to match the teacher's and pupils' communicative acts, as I found that the original model did not cover some of the behaviours present in this study. For example, modelling language items by the teacher and choral repetition of language items by pupils were two common communicative acts observed in the pilot study, but not included in the original framework and therefore needed to be added to the scheme. Conversely there were categories in the original observation framework which were not used in pilot study and had to be withdrawn from the framework. For example, 'Aside' which includes any elements of discourse to elicit a reply or reaction, such as the teacher thinking out loud or talking to himself (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975), was not used in the pilot study and therefore, it was removed from the coding scheme (See Appendix 1 for the full modifications applied to coding scheme).

The pilot study also showed that the recording equipment was adequate in terms of sound and picture quality but what I noticed was that classroom atmosphere was definitely affected by my presence and the recording equipment (see section 3.2.1.4 for more discussion of this).

3.2.1.3. Inter-rater and Intra-rater reliability of the coding scheme

Besides carrying out a pilot study which allowed examining the appropriateness of the coding scheme, the reliability of the coding scheme had to be assessed. The inter-rater reliability or inter-rater agreement refers to the degree of agreement among raters which gives a score of how much agreement there is in the ratings given by judges (Gwet, 2012). This is useful in determining whether a particular scale is appropriate for measuring a particular variable or not (Shoukri, 2010). Therefore, in order to examine the inter-rater reliability of the coding scheme, two extracts of 10 minutes from the original data transcription were given to two Iranian PhD students who were familiar with the Iranian EFL context. However, since the PhD students were not familiar with the Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) coding scheme, I provided them with full definition of each category of the coding scheme. Once they became familiar with the system, they coded the transcriptions and then their coding was

compared to mine to find out how much agreement there was between our ratings. As it is suggested by Scholfield (1995), the inter-rater reliability can be calculated by dividing the total number of acts agreed by all (the coders and the researcher) by the original number of acts coded by the researcher. Based on this calculation, it was revealed that there was a high degree of agreement (up to 92%), between our coding which is illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1: Level of agreement (inter-rater reliability)

Extracts	Total acts coded by the researcher	Total agreement between researchers and coders A and B	Differences
Extract 1	207	195	12
Extract 2	188	172	16
Total	395	367	28

Number of acts agreed by all researchers   367

--- = ---------= 0.92 (or) 92%

Original number of acts coded by the researcher   395

The intra-rater reliability of the coding scheme was also investigated. Two extracts of the transcripts which I had coded earlier were re-coded three months later to compare the degree of agreement between the two codings. According to Schofield (1995), intra-reliability can be achieved by dividing the total number of acts coded by the researcher's second coding by the total number of acts coded by the researcher's first coding as illustrated below.

Table 2: Intra-rater reliability

Extract	Researcher first coding	Researcher second coding
Extract 1	207	200
Extract 2	188	183
Total	395	383

Number of the acts coded by the researcher the second time   383
--- = ------------ = 0.96 (or) 96%Original Number of acts coded by the researcher the first time   395

As it is argued by Schofield (1995), we can say the intra-rater reliability of the coding scheme is perfect when the coefficient would be +1 which 100% is, however he says that in practice it would be between "0.6 to 0.9". As it can be noted above, the coefficient of the intra-rater coefficients of the coding scheme are satisfactory as they are both greater than 0.6 (i.e. 60%).

3.2.1.4. Observation Procedures

After dealing with the discussed validity issues before conducting the observations, it was important to consider any factors that could affect the validity of the observations while observation sessions were being conducted. This is also suggested by Macfarlane (2009), who states that a researcher needs to maintain integrity and vigilance whilst out in the field. The main validity issue that I had to consider whilst out in the field was the impact of my presence as an observer as well as the camera which was placed in front of the classroom. According to Bryman (2004), the presence of an observer and the recording equipment may have an impact on participants' behaviour; for example they may talk more, or talk less, or just talk and behave differently. Therefore, in order to minimise the impact of the camera and my presence in the classroom as an observer, I placed the camera in front of the classroom two days prior to the actual recording session so that pupils get

accustomed to its presence and I also attended two informal sessions of the lessons without recording. This provided an opportunity for the teacher and the pupils to get to know me better and get used to the presence of an outsider observing their lessons. Moreover, attending the informal sessions was an opportunity for me to talk to pupils and the teacher about what was going to happen in the following sessions and what exactly they were expected to be doing. I told the teacher and pupils that the study was going to be conducted for the research purposes and that I had to closely look at the behaviour of the teacher and pupils, record them and take note of their interactions. I also told them that the observation sessions would be held just like their usual sessions and the only difference in these sessions would be the use of language games. Moreover, I told pupils that each observation session should be recorded and permission for the recording is obtained from the class teacher, head of the school and their parents.

After dealing with the validity issues, observation sessions of language lessons started in October 2012. The data was collected every Wednesday over a period of six weeks and both traditional and game lessons were observed on the same day followed by one another. Each observation session lasted for 2 hours; 60 minutes of traditional followed by 60 minutes of game lessons always in the same order. The teacher divided the usual two hour session in two parts of 60 minute lessons and that was because of her limited time and her teaching schedule which prevented her from devoting two hours to each type of lesson. However, I should clarify that, although the usual teaching sessions were two hours of an English lesson, the second hour was usually devoted to pupils taking tests. Therefore, one hour of an English lesson was the usual length of time for teaching a lesson and hence appropriate for teaching each type of lesson.

Traditional lessons were taught from the course book as usual and the teacher applied the usual teaching methods (Grammar translation and Audio-lingual methods) to teach the language items. The teacher introduced the language items such as vocabulary and grammar rules, of which some were already known and others were new to pupils, by writing them on the whiteboard and pupils copied them down in their note books. After language items were introduced to pupils, the teacher asked them to repeat the language items which were modelled by the teacher chorally and then practice the activities of the course book individually. The activities required pupils to practice the language items that they had learned in written form,

for example by filling in the blanks to complete a sentence, writing the missing letter/s of a word, and activities to correct some mistakes. However, pupils were not able to practice the language items communicatively, as the nature of the course book activities did not require communication and also the teacher did not ask pupils to work in pairs or groups.

By contrast, the game-based lessons focused on language items including vocabulary and grammar rules, some of which were new and some already known to pupils. The activities in the course book were replaced by language games so that pupils could practice them with their peers collaboratively rather than working individually as they did in traditional lessons. The applied language games and the rational for their use are summarized in the following table:

Table 3: Type of games

Type of game	Rationale for its use
Total physical response (TPR) games (i.e. Simon says game, sit down stand up)	- creating opportunity for pupils to work together collaboratively in pairs/groups -providing interaction opportunity for beginner learners and those who do not feel comfortable to speak out loud in the classroom (Freeman, 2000) - providing opportunity for the learners to practice the language items in an interactive way without being required to give oral responses (Freeman, 2000)
Role play games	-creating interaction opportunity and meaningful communication among learners (Brewster et al, 2004) -Connecting pupils to the world outside of the classroom and providing real life situations for the learners to practice the target language in a communicative and meaningful way (Ersoz, 2000) -creating opportunity for pair/group work. -providing fluency practice and extending language use as well as developing pupils' social skills of interaction (Brewster et al, 2004) -providing competition among learners and hence creating an exciting atmosphere in the classroom which motivates learners participate more in classroom activities (Moon, 2000)
Guessing games (i.e. Alphabet games)	-rules of the guessing games are simple and therefore suitable for beginner learners (Webster, 1986)

Matching games (i.e. Pelmanism)	- providing opportunity for the language learners to practice and reinforce the language items communicatively in a way that they do not become bored (Richard Amato, 1988) -Providing opportunity for the learners to practice the target language in a fun and communicative way (-adding interest to what pupils might not find very interesting (Bettridge & Buckby, 2005). -creating opportunity for learners to work together collaboratively in pairs and groups
Drawing games	-Providing interaction opportunity among learners. - creating opportunity for pair and/or group work. -providing opportunity for the learners to practice and reinforce the language items; i.e. vocabulary -bringing excitement in the classroom and hence motivating pupils to participate in the activities (Webster, 1988)

However, my role as an observer in both types of lessons was to observe and video-record the lessons from the beginning to the end of each session and not to be involved in the teaching process. In the beginning of each type of lesson, I placed the camera at the back of the classroom to record until the end of the lesson and I was sitting at the back of the class, observing and taking notes of the incidents. Taking notes of the incidents and giving my impression on them while they were naturally occurring in the classroom would help me to give more precise and accurate information than if I would have waited until watching the video recordings later. This is also confirmed by Bell (2007), who argues that field notes should be made as soon as the events takes place as, when there is interval between observation and writing, details may get lost and what seemed clear with only few key words an hour after the event or conversation is much less clear a week later.

3.2.2. Semi-structured Interview for clarifying the teacher's practice

A semi-structured interview with the purpose of clarifying with the teacher particular aspects of her practice was another method of data collection that I used in this study in conjunction with the observation method. Seung and Schallert (2004) suggested that since classroom interaction is very complex and often automated with

information being difficult to assess, an interview for clarifying different aspects of a teacher's practice should therefore be used in conjunction with other data gathering strategies such as classroom observation. Therefore, I did not use a semi-structured interview as a separate method of data collection, but as an additional means of gathering data to explore the teacher's perceptions about the use of language games in Iranian EFL classrooms as well as asking her about specific things that took place during the observation.

This technique allowed me to use my video-recording from the observation lessons in the interview sessions with the teacher to recall her memory of what occurred during the lesson and therefore be able to ask her any questions I had in regards to her teaching methods, certain behaviours observed during the lesson, and most importantly her opinion about the use of language games. This method was initially developed by Benjamin Bloom in 1963 at the University of Chicago where he audio-taped lectures to help students recall different points within his lectures. He found that 95% of the students were able to recall points made within the lectures two days later. Bloom also found out that this method was very effective especially if the recalls were prompted a short period of time after the experience (Gass and Mackey, 2005).

Semi-structured interviews, with the purpose of clarifying teachers' practices, have successfully been used in numerous studies (e.g. Aldabbus, 2008; Plaut, 2006; Sime, 2006; Stough, 2001), to study classroom practice and interaction. Similarly, these studies video-recorded the interactions between the teacher and pupils in the classroom and then used the videos in semi-structured interviews with teachers to help them to recall their memories of what occurred during the class. For example, in Aldabbus' (2008) study, interactions of four EFL teachers and 100 pupils who were divided into four groups of twenty five were video-recorded. Then in the interview sessions the videos were played and paused at certain events to recall the teachers' memory of what occurred during the lesson. The purpose of the interview was to find out the teachers' perceptions about the use of language games with their students in classrooms. The main advantage of using interview with observation for clarification of teacher's practice, as Stough (2001) states, is that it enhances the findings of the research through providing more clarification and interpretation of certain events taking place during the observation.

However, as with the observation method, there are some limitations with interviews. One of the limitations as Lyle (2002) reports is that interviews can only provide information on how participants think but not how they behave and therefore there is a risk of bias if an observer merely relies on what they say they think. Therefore, to avoid this risk, I used observation primarily as a data collection instrument to observe how the participants behaved and once their behaviours were observed and captured on video, I used interview with the teacher to ask what she was thinking at certain times and why she did certain things. In other words, this was a powerful method for enabling me to be very precise when asking about particular behaviours as well as a method for exploring perceptions and beliefs about practice.

Another limitation is that the participants may censor or misrepresent their thoughts to present themselves more favourably and there is possibility of providing inaccurate reasons for their actions (Gass and Mackey, 2005). Therefore, in order to obtain valid interview data, it was important to build a good relationship with the teacher and make her feel comfortable, so that she would be more open and upfront about her answers to my questions. To make this happen, I had some informal conversations with the teacher about my personal experiences as a teacher of young language learners in the Iranian context and my learning experiences in the UK as a student and a researcher. As we were sharing our experiences and ideas, I noticed that the teacher became more comfortable and a closer relationship was built between us.

Further to the above limitations, interviews have the limitation that recall procedures should not take too long to occur after the task is completed otherwise, once the information is established in the long term, memory ceases to be recalled or give a direct report of the experience but rather reflection or a combination of experience and other related memories (Plaut, 2006). Therefore, to maximise the accuracy of the interview results, and thereby increase the validity of my interview data, I decided to divide the interview sessions in two parts rather than to wait for six weeks until the whole observation sessions were conducted. Due to the teacher's teaching schedule, I could not interview with the teacher right after observing each session. Also I wanted to obtain a reasonable amount of data to be able to use in the interview session, therefore, I decided to interview the teacher twice, once at week three and the second time at week six of the observations. The examples of the interview questions are included in the Appendix 2.

3.2.2.1. Interview procedures

The first interview session started three days before the study was conducted. I started the interview session with an informal conversation with the teacher to make her feel more comfortable. For example, I asked her about her educational background, teaching experiences, and her preferred age group to teach. Then a list of questions regarding the use of language games, which was prepared beforehand (see Appendix 3 to see the questions), was asked from the teacher to find out her perception about using language games. The whole conversation between the teacher and I including all the questions and answers were conducted in Farsi to prevent any language barriers and the whole conversation was audio-recorded and then transcribed from the beginning to end which took about 50 minutes.

The second interview session was conducted at week three of the study which gave me enough time to watch the video tapes and draw out data. After each observation session I watched the video tapes of both traditional and game lessons and wrote down the questions that I wanted to ask from the teacher about her practice and behaviour in the classroom. Once the questions were prepared, I invited the teacher for the second time to ask her for clarification of some aspects of her practice and behaviour in the classroom. I found that some aspects of the teacher's practice and behaviour needed more clarification and I wanted the teacher to explain them in the interview session. For example, in regards to her teaching practice I wanted the teacher to clarify why she asked pupils to repeat the language items several times or in regards to her behaviour I wanted her to clarify why she was more patient with pupils in game lessons compared to traditional lessons.

I focused on those aspects of the teacher's practice and behaviour that I was familiar with the theories behind them from reading the literature. For instance, from reading the literature on the Audio-lingual teaching method, I had learned that teachers model language items to provide opportunity for the language learners to practice the pronunciation of the words (Brown, 2000). Therefore, by asking the teacher why she modelled the language items I wanted to find out whether the teacher's respond would be in line with the theories in the literature or she would have a different reason for modelling the language items. During the interview I played some scenes from the teacher performing particular practices which I was asking questions about (in this example modelling a language item). This would allow the teacher to watch

the scene where she was modelling a language item and then paused the video at that event. The aim was to help the teacher to remember what exactly happened at that particular moment and hence enable her to provide me with a more precise answer (Sime, 2006).

Apart from the teacher's practice, I asked the teacher questions regarding her behaviour with pupils in the classroom. These questions were also selected based on my own knowledge that I had obtained from reading the literature. For example, I had learned from the literature that language games can create a relaxing atmosphere in the EFL classrooms (Schultz & Fisher, 1988). Therefore, by asking the teacher why she was more patient with pupils in the game lessons, I wanted to find out whether the teacher's answer would be in line with the theories in the literature and if she noticed the impact of language games on the classroom atmosphere, or she would give a different reason for the change of her behaviour in game lessons. However, in order to obtain a valid answer to my questions regarding the teacher's behaviour, I played the video tape for the teacher and paused it at the scenes where I had noticed there was a difference in her behaviour compared to traditional lessons (for example being more relaxed and not criticizing pupils for being noisy, or praising pupils for participating in the activities), and then asked the teacher to explain the reason for the change of her behaviour. Same as the first interview session, the whole conversation between the teacher and I was conducted in Farsi and audio-recorded for about 50 minutes from the beginning to end.

Finally I invited the teacher for the last interview session at week six of the study to ask her opinion about the use of language games in her classroom. I wanted the teacher to clarify again some aspects of her practice and behaviour in both traditional and game lessons at weeks 4, 5, and 6 of the study. The fact that there was three weeks interval between the second and the third interview sessions gave me enough time to watch the video tapes after the observation sessions and draw out some data and write down the questions that I wanted to ask from the teacher. Moreover, just as the first interview session that I had prepared a list of questions to find out about the teacher's opinion regarding using language games, I had prepared a list of questions to find out about the teacher's opinion about using language games after she applied them in the Iranian EFL classroom (See appendix 3 for the list of questions). Although a list of interview questions was prepared beforehand, there were some

additional enquiries based on the teacher's responses, as is usual in semi-structured interviews (McNamara, 2009).

These questions were also selected based on my knowledge that I had obtained from the literature on benefits of language games, teacher's beliefs and their practices in Iran. Also, same as the other two interview sessions the whole conversation between the teacher and I which was conducted in Farsi was audio-recorded for about 60 minutes and then transcribed.

3.3. Description of the school and participants

The school in which the study took place was an Iranian state primary school located in a small town named Karaj which was 12 miles away from the capital Tehran. The setting was a single sex (female) primary school which had about 300 pupils and 16 teachers (in Iran, primary pupils have different teachers for different subjects). Even though there were a few more primary schools in the town, this school was selected based on the personal contacts that I had in the school which made the access to school and getting permission for video-recording easier.

The participants in this study were twenty eleven-year-old pupils who were learning English as a foreign language as part of their curriculum. The reason for selecting this particular age group was because at this age and level pupils have already obtained sufficient knowledge of English language to be able to communicate in the target language while if they had just started studying the English language, they would not be able to interact with each other in the English language and this level of proficiency would not be suitable for the purposes of this study. Another reason for selecting this particular age group and level of education was because of having experience of working with pupils of this age and level when working as a language teacher in Iran and therefore I had sufficient background knowledge about how pupils are taught English at this level of education. In this school pupils were divided into groups of 20 at the beginning of the academic year based on the scores obtained in the previous year so there were pupils with mixed abilities in each class.

The other participant in this study was a 29 year old female EFL teacher with a bachelor degree in English Language teaching. According to her she had 5 years of experience in English language teaching at primary level in the Iranian state schools.

3.4. Ethics as a process

In order to conduct the designed research, several steps had to be undertaken ethically. The term "ethics" is defined by Cohen (2000) as a set of values or principles which is set by a community or a group to differentiate what is right from what is wrong, or what is legal from what is not. Therefore, the first step that I had to take was to send the research protocol to the Ethics committee of the University of Southampton for consideration and approval. The ethics protocol was reviewed and approved by the University of Southampton, School of Education Research Ethics Committee in October (2012). (Appendix 4, ERGO number 3898).

After gaining approval from the Ethics committee of the University, the next step was to approach the school and participants. With regards to the Iranian context, conducting academic research is very limited and people are very sensitive about participating in research especially when observations and interviews are involved (Akbri & Tajik, 2008). Therefore, the first ethical practice which had to be made was to obtain the participants' informed consent before conducting the research. Informed consent means that the participant should be given as much information as needed to make a decision whether they are willing to participate in the study or not (Scott & Mashall, 2009). Therefore, an information sheet along with the consent forms was sent to the teachers, head of the school, and pupils' parents. Although in an Iranian context it is not required to obtain parental permission to gain access to pupils' classrooms and the school administration is authorized to deal with such issues, it is ethically important to obtain parents' consent especially because video recording was involved and parents had to be informed of that.

The information sheet which was sent to participants introduced the researcher and explained the purpose of the research as well as the procedures for its conduction and possible risks and benefits that participants may experience as a result of their participation in the study. It was also mentioned on the information sheet that participation in the study was completely voluntary and participants could withdraw consent to participate at any time without any penalty. This was also clearly stated on the consent form which was sent to the participants, and was signed by the researcher and participants as an agreement before conducting the research (See Appendix 5 and 6).

Another ethical issue which had to be considered was to respect the participants' privacy and protect their anonymity. This meant that I had to make sure that the information provided by the participants stayed confidential and would not be used for anything other than research purposes. In regards to this Simons (2009), suggests that confidentiality can be protected through signing statements indicating non-disclosure of the research, restricting access to data which identifies respondents, and seeking the approval of the respondents before any disclosure about respondents takes place. Therefore, in order to maintain the participants' confidentiality, a statement was signed by the researcher and the participants which ensured that the information will be only used for the research purposes and the name of the school and the participants will not be mentioned anywhere in the study to protect their anonymity. It was also mentioned in the statement that the video-recordings from the observations will not be shown to external audiences unless separate permission is obtained from the participants (e.g. showing clips at conferences). However, the teachers and pupils' parents were informed on the information sheets and the consent forms that the teacher's and pupils' images from the video-recordings would be used in the thesis (See the information sheets and consent forms in Appendix 5 and 6)**.** The Permission letter for gaining access to the school is included in Appendix 7 of the study.

3.5. Format of traditional EFL lessons

The traditional lessons were taught based on the materials determined by the Ministry of Education which was designed for 11 year old pupils at the primary stage of education. The teaching program included some language items such as new vocabulary, phrases, simple idioms, and basic grammar. At this stage pupils were already familiar with some basic grammar rules and simple vocabulary and they were able to read and write simple texts. What they were expected to achieve at this stage was to learn some more advanced grammar rules and vocabulary and be able to read and write some more advanced texts. In order to assess pupils and find out whether or not they have achieved the target level, an exam is conducted by the ministry of education at the end of each semester which requires pupils to give correct answers to at least 50% of the questions. If pupils fail to achieve 50% of the total score, they are required to retake the module in the following semesters and will not be able to proceed to the next level.

In Iranian Primary schools, English as a foreign language is taught two sessions a week and each session lasts for about 60 minutes. The structure of the lessons and the course book is determined by the Ministry of Education and teachers are obligated to follow the determined structure and cover specific number of lessons which is usually about 20-25 lessons in one semester. In this study, the format of traditional lesson did not change and the only change that took place in the teaching program was including some language games.

3.6. Selecting language games

Although there are many advantages with using language games and it has been demonstrated that they are beneficial in language learning and they can promote interaction and communication in language classrooms (Lewes & Bedson, 1999), they can be very challenging when it comes to their selection in terms of their appropriateness for pupils' age and English level, especially for teachers who lack enough experience in using them. Therefore it is important for the teachers to be familiar with different types of language games as well as their purposes. It is also important for the teachers to be aware of different types of language items and the extent to which they can be developed through each type of language game.

In Iran English as a foreign language is taught through the course book and language games can be found either at the end of the book or they are included in each lesson as part of the activities for the session. The teacher can use the language games to supplement the core material or to replace activities which she/he does not like or does not feel comfortable to use with language learners in the classroom (Cakir, 2004). According to Bedson & Gordon (1999), language games can be used for different purposes such as introducing and practicing language items. In this study the language games were used for introducing, practising and revising the language items such as vocabulary, grammar rules, and phrases. The language games used in this study were carefully selected with the help of the teacher to make sure that they were appropriate to be used in the classroom and suited pupils' age and level.

Due to the sensitivity regarding the importing of Western educational ideas into the Iranian classroom and implementing new practices into the classroom which were culturally unfamiliar, it was important to familiarize the teacher with different types of language games and explain to her how language games are applied in Western countries as a teaching device in classrooms. Therefore, a day prior to the

application of the games, a list of language games which I had prepared beforehand (see appendix 3), was given to the teacher to see whether or not she would find them appropriate for the pupils' age and level. I described each category of the games to the teacher and explained why I believed that the games I had selected were beneficial to be used in the Iranian EFL classroom. The teacher agreed that the games were appropriate for the pupils' age and beginner level, however she made some minor changes to the games. For example, in the "Simon says" game, which belongs to the TPR category, she omitted "Simon says" when instructing pupils to touch different parts of their body and said for example "touch your nose" instead of saying "Simon says touch your nose" to make it easier for pupils (See appendix 8 for more description of the game). Also for the matching games I suggested that the teacher could write two sets of vocabulary on the two sides of the board and then bring two groups of pupils to the whiteboard and ask them to match the relevant words. However, the teacher preferred to have one set of vocabulary and one set of pictures for the pupils to match as she said it would make it more interesting for the pupils. She also preferred pupils to play the game in groups while sitting in their places because of the small size of the classroom. Moreover, the teacher combined two types of role play and guessing game in one occasion which means that she wanted pupils to play their roles in a role play game and then their peers guess what role they were playing as she said she wanted to make the role play game more exciting and interesting.

After the teacher and I agreed on the games, I invited her to a rehearsal session. I started the rehearsal session by explaining that she should teach the lessons through the language games instead of using the course book and I also told her that she can be flexible with the games and where she thinks that specific language item/s needs to be practiced by pupils she can include them in the game. Moreover, I told her that she should clearly explain the rules of the games to pupils and makes sure that pupils understand the games. Then the teacher and I went through all the selected games to make sure that the rules of the games are clear and the purpose of each game is understood by the teacher. Also, in order to help with the teacher's understanding of how language games are applied in other contexts by other EFL teachers, a video clip on the use of language games in a Japanese EFL classroom was played for the teacher.

3.7. Conclusion

Based on the discussion provided in this chapter, it can be concluded that there are several factors that a researcher should consider for conducting a successful research study. As discussed in this chapter, the most important factor that a researcher should consider is to make sure that the design of the study is appropriate for the purpose of the study. I found this study to be an exploratory research as it was an area of research that we knew very little about it and there was significant lack of knowledge on this particular subject in the Iranian context, therefore, mixed method was appropriate to serve the purpose, as the data obtained from quantitative analysis allowed comparing the communicative acts within and between the traditional and language game-based lessons and the exchanged verbal interactions between the teacher and pupils could complement the quantitative data.

Another conclusion I can make from the discussion in this chapter is that researchers should select appropriate methods to be able to obtain valid data and by appropriate methods I mean that they should be able to serve the purpose of the study and enable the researcher to obtain valid data. I found that using observations and stimulated recall interviews together was valuable in terms of enhancing the validity of the data as observations allows to obtain first-hand data rather than relying on second-hand data (Merriam, 2009), and stimulated recall interview uses the observations with the interviewees to recall their memory of what occurred so that they can provide more clarification and interpretation of certain events taking place during the observation which again helps with the validity of the data (Sime, 2006).

The use of an appropriate observation framework in this study was another important factor that helped with increasing the validity of the observations as it allowed to target specific behaviours and events which helped with reducing the biasing effect (Gass and Mackey, 2005). However, what I found important was that finding an appropriate observation framework that serves the purpose of the study is a key for obtaining valid observation data.

Chapter Four: Findings and Discussion regarding traditional lessons

4.1. Introduction

This chapter and the next are devoted to the analysis of the data obtained from the observation of traditional and game-based lessons and their aim is to answer the first and second research questions concerning the nature of interaction between the teacher and pupils and among pupils and the impact of language games on the interactions. The findings were obtained from the analysis of six sessions of two hours of which one hour was traditional lessons and one hour game lessons which were recorded, transcribed and coded based on the Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) coding scheme. The teacher's and pupils' communicative acts were selected based on the observation framework and the frequency of their communicative acts were counted and then calculated as a percentage of the total communicative acts.

In the process of calculating the communicative acts in traditional lessons, the 100% represents the total communicative acts performed by the teacher and pupils in 6 hours of traditional lessons, and in game lessons 100% represents the total communicative acts performed by the teacher and pupils in 6 hours of game lessons. Also, the Figures that are presented in chapter four and five show the mean percentage of each communicative act in traditional and game lessons and the amount of time devoted to each category of the teacher's and pupils' talk. The communicative acts are from those parts of the lessons where the teacher's and pupils' utterances were clearly captured by the camera and those parts of the lessons where the teacher's and pupils' utterances were not captured (due to technical issues, background noise, and teacher's or pupils' low volume) are excluded from the calculations and the excluded time is shown on the Figures.

In order to provide some detailed information about how the teacher's and pupils' communicative acts were performed and what exactly went on during the lesson, some of the teacher's and pupils' verbal interactions were selected based on the coding of the observation framework. The verbal interactions were selected from transcripts of different video-recorded lessons at different stages and then described in detailed form. For example, in order to describe how the teacher modelled a language item, an example of the verbal interaction between the teacher and pupils while the teacher was modelling a language item was taken from the video-

recordings and transcribed to illustrate how this was exactly performed. Similarly, some verbal interactions exchanged between the pupils were selected from the transcripts of the video-recorded lessons and then described in detail. For a better understanding of the discussion, the findings of the quantitative and qualitative analysis are integrated and presented one after another in sequence based on the IRF pattern (Teacher initiation, pupils' response, and teacher feedback). Moreover, in order to provide further explanations of certain behaviours that occurred in the classroom and complement the data obtained from observations, the teacher's responses to the interview questions are interwoven with the discussions of the observations. Furthermore, the teacher's responses to the third question of the study concerning teacher's perceptions towards using language games, are followed by the discussion of observations.

The transcription conventions used in this study are based on several sources (Du Bois, 1991; Jefferson, 2004, Pontefract & Hardman; 2005; Seedhouse, 2004; Tannen, 1984; Van Dijk, 1997), and represented in appendix 9 of the study. Pseudonyms are also used in transcriptions to label the pupils named by the teacher in order to anonymise their contributions.

4.2. Overview of traditional lessons

The findings from the analysis of observation sessions revealed that in traditional lessons pupils' interactions were highly controlled by the teacher and pupils did not have the chance to talk and practice the target language communicatively in the classroom. Observations showed that pupil talk was restricted to replying to the teacher's questions or repeating the language items in chorus. Pupils were supposed to sit in their places and listen to their teacher and they were not allowed to talk during the instruction unless they were asked to do so. Pupils were also not allowed to leave their seats unless they wanted to leave the classroom, in which case they had to seek the teacher's permission. In line with my own experiences, the classroom atmosphere was very dry and formal due to the teacher's dominance in the classroom, and this was even notable from the way the classroom was set up which represented the teacher's authority in the classroom. The teacher was standing in front of the classroom next to the white board and pupils were sitting in rows faced to the teacher and the board (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Classroom setting of traditional lessons

Observations also revealed that in traditional lessons there was no pair or group work involved and pupils were not actively involved in the learning process through interacting with each other or their teacher. According to Storch (2007), interactive learning can enhance the language learning and this was something that pupils did not appear to have opportunities for in traditional lessons.

Another significant feature of the traditional lessons was that the teacher only relied on the course book to teach the lessons and did not use any visual aids such as pictures, posters, or graphs to bring some fun and excitement into the classroom and create a more interactive learning environment. In regards to the use of visual aids in the classroom, Doff (2002) argues that using pictures, flash cards, real objects or any visual aids in general in classrooms can create an opportunity for the learners to interact with their learning, as they can see, hear, feel and in some cases touch the real objects which allows them to comprehend the information more effectively. However, I observed that the teacher mostly relied on the course book and the white board to teach the lesson which was again something that pupils missed out on while they could have benefited from it in order to enhance their language learning. The use of visual aids can not only help pupils to understand the lessons better, but also make them pay more attention to the lesson and keep them eagerly engaged in the activities which can develop their language learning (Doff, 2002). Figure 4 shows an image from a traditional lesson in which the teacher was teaching from the course

book and writing the language items on the white board and pupils were copying them down in their notebooks.

Figure 4: Teacher writing the language items on the board

4.3. Nature of classroom interaction in Iranian primary EFL classroom

Before describing the results, it needs to be clarified that the total counted number of teacher's communicative acts in 6 traditional lessons was 594 and the counted number of each communicative act is shown by "N" next to its percentage. Also, the total amount of time devoted to teacher talk in traditional lessons was 303 minutes which is shown by "T" next to the minutes.

4.3.1. Teacher Initiation
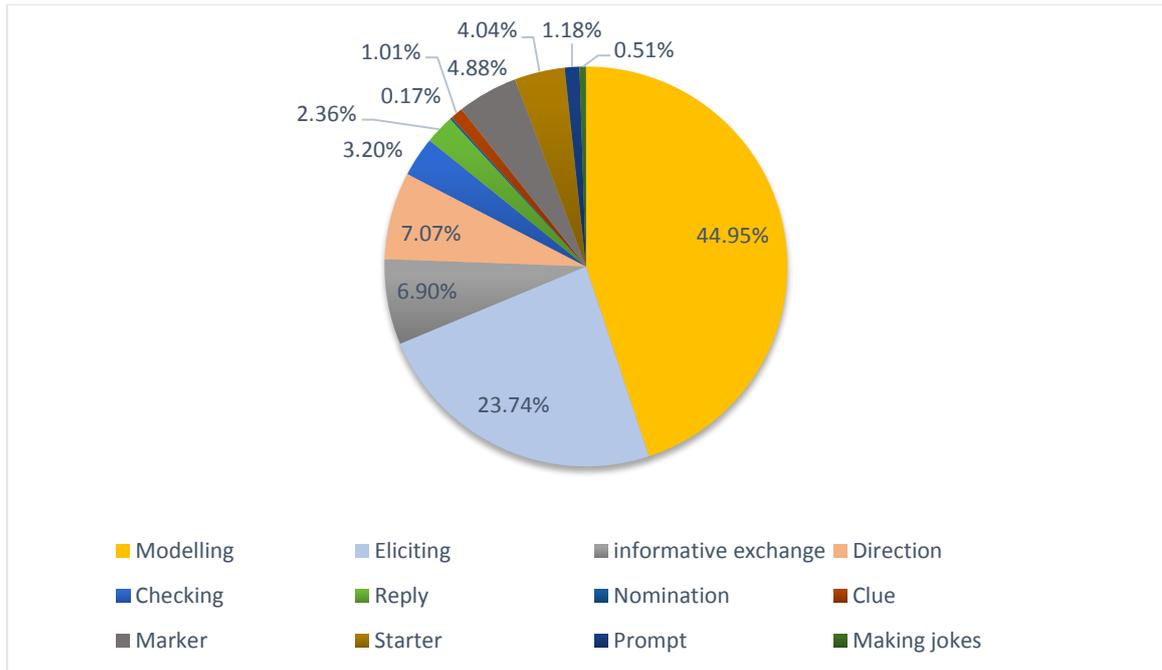
Figure 5: Distribution of teacher's talk in traditional lessons
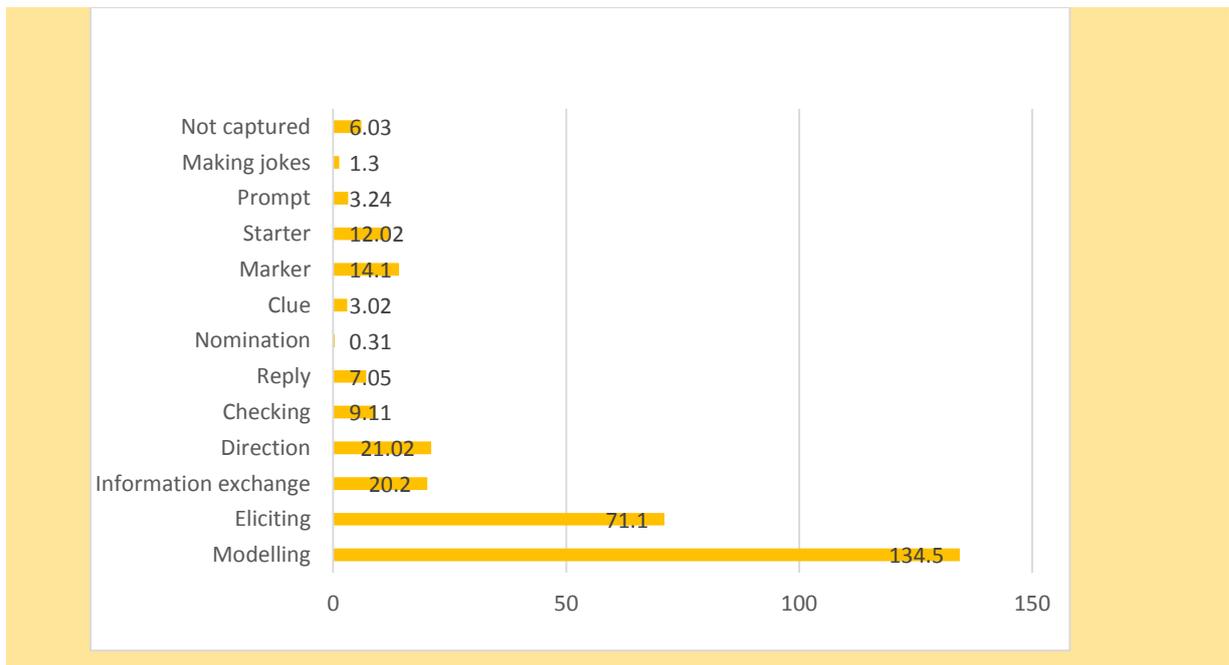

Figure 6: Time spent on teacher's talk in traditional lessons

Observations revealed that the teacher started the traditional sessions by greeting pupils and this was done by asking pupils some referential questions such as "How are you today?" "Did you have a nice weekend"? "What did you do after school yesterday"? As Hardman (2007) reports, referential questions are types of questions

to which the answers are unknown to the teacher. According to the teacher asking referential questions during the greeting time is more appropriate as this is the time when the formal session has not yet started and pupils feel more comfortable to participate and give answers to the teacher's questions. The teacher said: *"I try to ask the referential questions in an informal and friendly way to encourage pupils to participate and also to make them feel comfortable and safe to reply to questions"*. The teacher also added that *"based on my experience even shy pupils are willing to participate in the beginning of the session when it is time for greetings as they are not worried about being judged by the teacher or their peers"*. After greeting the pupils and taking the register, the formal session started. The teacher introduced the new lesson and explained what the lesson was going to be about so that pupils would have an idea of what they were going to learn in that session.

The teacher usually introduced the lesson in the target language (English), and when pupils did not understand the instructions she gave further explanations and brought some examples in the pupils' mother tongue (Farsi) to aid their comprehension. After the teacher introduced the topic of the lesson, she introduced the new language items such as new vocabulary, phrases, or grammar rules. This was done by reading the language items aloud to pupils and then writing them on the board which allowed pupils to hear and read the language items at the same time and become familiar with their spellings. Moreover, it allowed pupils to take notes of the language items and practice the spelling of the words.

I witnessed that the teacher did not ask pupils to open their books until she introduced the new language items. Once pupils became familiar with the language items the teacher directed them to open their books and then she read the language items to pupils and gave their definitions in Farsi. After that the teacher asked pupils to repeat the language items in chorus. In the stimulated recall interview session, when the teacher was asked to explain the advantage of repeating the new language items by pupils in chorus, she replied: "*this allows pupils to practice the pronunciation of the new language items and it also allows the teacher to check the pupils' pronunciation which means that if pupils do not pronounce the words correctly the teacher could recognize and correct it immediately*". Calculation of the data on Figure 5, displays that modelling language items by the teacher was the most dominant communicative act in traditional lessons representing 45% (N=267) of 594 communicative acts.

Also Figure 6 shows that about 134 minutes (T=303) of the total teacher's talk in traditional lessons was devoted to modelling language items. The following extract is an example of how the teacher modelled language items in the classroom.

Extract 1:

1. **Teacher:** ok (.) open your books to page 30
2. who is ↑she grandmother (.) grandmother means [مادر بزرگ] <TRANSLATION>
3. ↑ repeat after me GRANDMOTHER
4. **Pupils:** grandmother
5. **Teacher:** grandma
6. **Pupils:** grandma
7. **Teacher:** grandma is an informal form of grandmother ↑repeat after me
8. GRAND MA
9. **Pupils:** grand ma
10. **Teacher:** grand ma
11. **Pupils:** grand ma
12. **Teacher:** grandfather who is ↑he grandfather means [پدر بزرگ] <TRANSLATION>
13. **Pupils:** grandfather

In line 1 of the above extract it is shown that the teacher directed pupils to open their books which was right after she introduced the new vocabulary for parents and grandparents. Then in line 2, she gave the definition of the words in the pupils' mother tongue so that pupils could comprehend better and then in line 3 asked them to repeat the words in chorus once she modelled the word 'grandmother'. After the teacher checked the pupils' pronunciation, she asked some questions from pupils in the target language to make sure that they had understood the meaning of the new vocabulary. For example, in the video recording I observed that the teacher asked some questions such as "Who has a grandfather in this class"? "Who has a grandmother"? Or "Who has both of them"? This type of questions were coded as "referential questions" in the observation scheme as their answers were unknown to the teacher (Hardman, 2007).

In the interview session when watching the teacher asking some referential questions from pupils in related to the lesson, I asked her to explain the reason for asking such questions. The teacher replied: *"I think this is a good way of checking pupils' comprehension of the lesson, however I do not have to always ask questions to check pupils' comprehension as I can usually tell by their facial expressions if there is need for further explanations".* I witnessed that when pupils did not understand the

teacher's questions or explanations they tended to look at each other and the teacher noticed this; however I noted that the teacher did not always give explanations immediately. According to the teacher, the reason for this hesitation was because she wanted to check whether the rest of the pupils had understood her explanations and/or questions so that they could explain to their peers. This is in line with the scaffolding theory of Vygotsky which says that assistance in classroom does not have to always come from the teacher and less able peers can be helped by the skills and knowledge of the more able peer (Bailey, 2001; Dobinson, 2001; Storch, 2007, Vygotsky, 1978).

In the data of this study, modelling was not only used to check pupils' comprehension of the meaning or pronunciation of the words but it also was used to get pupils to practice the spelling of the words. For example, I observed that sometimes when the teacher introduced a new word and gave its definition to pupils in the native language, she spelled the word and then asked pupils to repeat the spelling chorally. In line 3 of the following example, the teacher introduced the word "kitten" and then gave its meaning in Farsi. After the teacher asked pupils to repeat the word numerous times (line 4), she then provided pupils with the spelling of the word and asked the whole class to spell the word in chorus as indicated in line 10 of the following extract:

Extract 2:

1. **Teacher:** what is the baby of a ↑cat it starts with <spel> k </spel>
2. **Pupils:** …
3. **Teacher:** kitten (.) kitten means
   <TRANSLATION> [بچه گربه]
4. ↑ Repeat after me KITTEN
5. **Pupils:** kitten
6. **Teacher:** kitten
7. **Pupils:** kitten
8. **Teacher:** kitten
9. **Pupils:** kitten
10. **Teacher:** <spel> kitten </spel> (.)↑repeat after me KITTEN
11. **Pupils:** <spel> kitten </spel> kitten
12. **Teacher:** <spel> kitten </spel> kitten
13. **Pupils:** <spel> kitten </spel> kitten

Another common communicative act performed by the teacher in traditional lessons was eliciting linguistic responses from the pupils. Figure 5 shows this accounted for 24% (N= 141) of 594 teacher's communicative acts and Figure 6 shows that about 71

minutes (T=303) of the total time on teacher's talk was devoted to eliciting. As it is shown in the Figure 7, elicitation was found in three different forms of questions known as display questions which is when their answers are known to the teacher; referential questions, which is when their answers are unknown to the teacher, and finally cued questions which are used for pupils to answer through repeating the teacher's explanations (Hardman, 2007). Therefore, elicitation was coded based on whether a question was a display, referential, or cued.
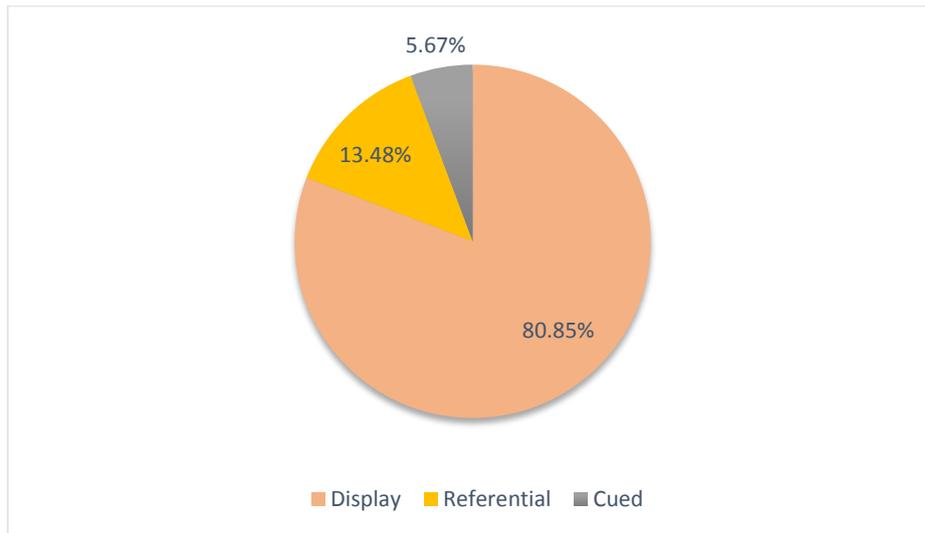

**Figure 7:** Distribution of teacher's questions in traditional lessons
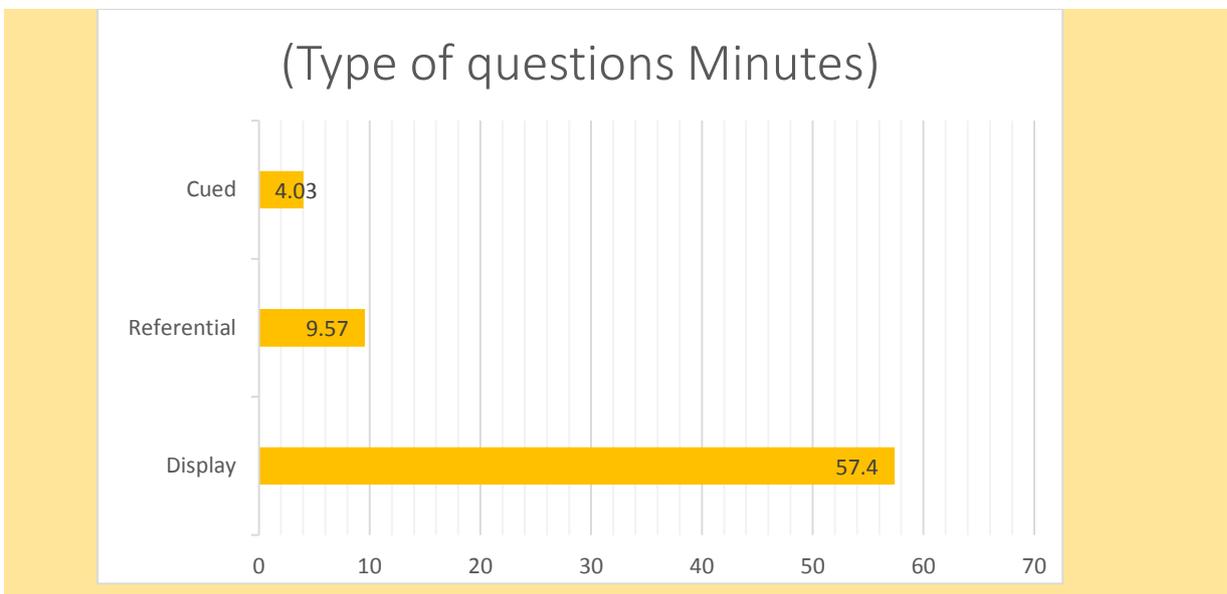
Figure 8: Time devoted to teacher's questions in traditional lessons

As Figure 7 reveals, display questions were the most common type of questions asked by the teacher representing about 81% (N=114) of the total number of 141 questions. Figure 8 shows that about 58 minutes of the total teacher's questioning

87

time (T=71) was devoted to display questions. On the other hand, Figure 7 shows that the use of referential questions was accounted for about 13% (N= 18) of 141 questions which was significantly less frequent than display questions. Also, Figure 8 shows that the amount of time devoted to referential questions was about 10 minutes (T=71) of the total teacher's questioning time. In the interview session, the teacher said "*asking display questions can encourage pupils to participate more in classroom activities as they require short answers such as single words or short phrases and this makes pupils with lower level of English feel safer to reply and participate*". The teacher's response is in line with the statement of Dalton-Puffer (2007: 96), who says that *"answers to display questions contrary to referential questions are seen as notoriously restricted, quite often consisting of one word"*. Therefore she suggests that it seems these kind of questions which require short answers is helpful for beginners who are not competent enough to produce language.

The teacher also added that "*if pupils were supposed to give longer answers they would rather stay silent and not participate*". Moreover, she said that like referential questions, display questions allow the teacher to check pupils' comprehension of the taught language items and correct them when they make mistakes. Therefore, from the teacher's responses, it can be concluded that since display questions required shorter answers, pupils were encouraged to respond more to this type of questions and perhaps that is the reason why the teacher used more of display rather than referential questions. The following extract is an example of some display questions asked by the teacher in traditional lessons.

Extract 3:

1. **Teacher:** what is ↑this ((the teacher holds up a CD))
2. **Pupils:** it is a <spel> CD </spel>
3. **Teacher:** what are ↑these ((The teacher holds up 3 CDs))
4. **Pupils:** they are <spel> CDs </spel>
5. **Teacher:** what is ↑this ((the teacher holds a ruler))
6. **Pupils:** it is a ruler
7. **Teacher:** what are ↑these ((the teacher holds two rulers))
8. **Pupils:** they are rulers
9. **Teacher:** what is this↑ Maryam ((the teacher to a pencil))
10. **Maryam:** It is a pencil
11. **Teacher:** what are ↑these ((the teacher points to two three pencils))
12. **Maryam:** they are pencils
13. **Teacher:** that's correct, thank you

Based on the analysis of the observation sessions, display questions were asked by the teacher to practice the new language items and also to check whether pupils had understood the language items. This is in line with Haneda (2005), who argues that display questions have two important functions: one is to practice the new language items and the second is to check pupils' comprehension of the language items. As shown in extract 3, the teacher asked pupils some display questions to practice some new grammar rules (singular and plurals), and also to check whether they can differentiate them from one another. I observed that the teacher assisted pupils by simplifying the task for them and this was done by pointing to real objects which were available in the classroom (e.g. CD). This kind of assistance is considered scaffolding; as simplifying a task for pupils is one of the characteristics of scaffolding which can develop pupils' language learning (Ohta, 2001; Wood, 1976). However, as I mentioned earlier, using visual aids such as real objects was very uncommon in traditional lessons and there were only few scenes observed when the teacher included real objects (none of which were prepared beforehand). Figure 9 shows that the teacher holds up a CD to help children to comprehend the instruction better.

Figure 9: Teacher using visual aid

Cued question was another type of question asked by the teacher representing 6% (N= 8) of 141 questions (see Figure 7) and as Figure 8 displays about 4 minutes of the total teacher's questioning time (T=71) was devoted to this type of question. I observed that when the teacher introduced a language item such as a word or a

phrase, she omitted parts of the given information and tried to elicit the missing information from pupils. This type of question often functions to reinforce information given by the teacher or elicited by pupils and its aim is to keep the learners' attention rather than requiring an answer to a question (Pontefract & Hardman, 2005). I noticed that when the teacher asked a cued question her intonation changed and she slightly raised her volume. In the stimulated recall interview session the teacher said that by raising her volume she can draw pupils' attention to the lesson and keep them involved in the learning process.

The following extract is an example of some cued questions asked by the teacher in a traditional lesson:

Extract 4:

1. **Teacher:** what is ↑this it is a pencil (.)↑ it is a ^
2. **Pupils:** pencil
3. **Teacher:** what are ↑these they are pencils (.) ↑they are ^
4. **Pupils:** pencils
5. **Teacher:** is changes to are (.) and it changes to they
6.   ↑ is changes to ^
7. **Pupils:** are
8. **Teacher:** ↑ it changes to ^
9. **Pupils:** they
10. **Teacher:** thank you very much

As discussed earlier, the analysis of the observations revealed that majority of the questions asked by the teacher were of the display type which did not provide opportunity for interaction in the classroom. However, there were some referential questions asked by the teacher which were mostly asked in the beginning of the session as the teacher believed that during the greeting time pupils are more relaxed and they are not worried about making mistakes or being judged by the teacher or their peers. The teacher also believed that referential questions require a good level of English and speaking skill and since her pupils were only beginning learners she did not want to make them uncomfortable or embarrassed if they failed to respond. This type of question allows pupils to interact with the teacher in meaningful way and, as Clifton (2006) reports, a lack of referential questions in a classroom prevents pupils from meaningful communication and producing longer utterances.

The following extract is an example of some referential questions asked by the teacher in order to encourage pupils to talk during the greeting time:

Extract 5:

1. **Teacher:** good morning everybody
2. **Pupils:** good morning
3. **Teacher:** how are you ↑today
4. **Pupils:** fine thank you
5. **Teacher:** where did you go after school ↑yesterday
6. **Pupils:** home
7. **Teacher:** what did you do at ↑home
8. **Pupils:** …
9. **Teacher:** Yegane what did you do at ↑home
10. **Pupil:** I did my homework
11. **Teacher:** thank you (.) now let me check the list

Directing pupils to do activities in the classroom represented 7% (N= 42) of 594 communicative acts (Figure 5), which was coded as 'direction' in the observation framework. Also, Figure 6 displays that about 21 minutes (T=303) of the total time spent on teacher's talk was devoted to direction. The activities that the teacher asked pupils to do included tasks from their course book or non-educational tasks such as the teacher's requests for pupils to open their books, or closing and opening the window. The following extract is an example of how the teacher directed pupils to perform an activity.

Extract 6

1. **Teacher:** open your books to page 40 (.) you need to write down the questions
2. for the following answers (.) for example (.) look at number five (.) the books
3. are green (.) what's the ↑question (.) the question is (.) what colour are the
4. ↑books what colour ↑is or are
5. **Pupils:** are
6. **Teacher:** yes (.) are.(.) did you understand how to do the ↑task
7. **Pupils:** …
8. **Teacher:** ok (.) let's do the next one together as well (.)no it isn't (.) it's a globe
9. (.) is it <spel> Wh ,<spel> question or ↑yes no question
10. **Pupils:** yes no question
11. **Teacher:** correct (.) yes no question (.) what's the question
12. **Pupils:** is it a
13. **Teacher:** ↑ is it a chair or ↑map it can be anything except globe (.)
14. ↑understand
15. **Pupils:** yes
16. **Teacher:** great (.) now do the rest of them

As it is shown in line 1 of extract 6, the teacher directed pupils to page 40 of their book to perform an activity. Then in line 2, she gave the instruction of the task in English and provided pupils with an example of an activity to show them how the task should be performed. However, as shown in line 6 when the teacher checked for pupils' understanding they kept silent and their facial expressions showed that they were still confused. Therefore, the teacher provided pupils with another example of activity and this time she tried to engage pupils in the activity and gave further explanations (line 8). After performing the second activity, pupils seemed to be more satisfied with the teacher's explanations and started doing the task individually.

Checking pupils' comprehension of the lesson or teacher's explanations/questions, was another communicative act observed in traditional lessons. This type of communicative act was used by the teacher to find out whether or not pupils had any problems in understanding the teacher's explanations. As it is shown in Figure 5, checking pupils' comprehension represented about 3% (N= 19) of 594 communicative acts and Figure 6 shows that about 9 minutes (T=303) of the total time spent on teacher's talk was devoted to this communicative act. Pupils' comprehension was usually checked by asking questions such as "Do you understand?" or "Is there any problem"? The observations revealed that when pupils did not understand the teacher's explanations they usually asked her to repeat her explanations or give further information. The following extract shows how the teacher checked pupils' comprehension of the given information.

Extract 7:

1. **Teacher:** so (.) the mountain is high (.) Tannaz is tall (.) the ruler is long.
2. ↑do you understand the difference
3. **Pupils:** …
4. **Teacher:** I didn't hear, (.)yes or ↑no
5. **Pupils:** …
6. **Teacher:** mountain is high, Tannaz is tall, and the ruler is long (.) do you
7. understand the ↑difference↑
   [كوه بلند ا ،ست طناز قد بلند است و خط كش دراز است تفاوت اين سه را ز هم فهميديد؟]
   <translation>
8. **Teacher:** ↑did you understand
9. **Pupils:** yes teacher
10. **Teacher:** good

As shown in line 2 of extract 7, the teacher asked pupils in English whether or not they had understood her explanations by asking the question "Do you understand the difference?" The teacher expected to receive an answer from pupils which could be either a yes or no. However, pupils kept silent and did not reply to the teacher's question (line 3). When the teacher did not receive an answer she used Farsi as shown in line 7, and tried to scaffold pupils by repeating the same explanations in the pupils' mother tongue in order to make it easier for pupils to understand her explanations.

The use of L1 in L2 classrooms has been widely debated for the past few decades (Aurbach, 1993; Mukatash, 2003; Schweers, 1999; Tang, 2002). The general assumption is that English has to be taught through English and some researchers such as Bouangeune (2009) and Hawks (2001) believe that the use of L1 in L2 classrooms does not encourage learners to use and practice the L2 and this can be a disadvantage for the learners especially for those who do not have an opportunity to practice the target language outside of the classroom (Nation, 2001). However, in spite of the critical considerations surveys on teacher's opinions from different backgrounds often reach to the conclusion that the use of L1 should be present in the learning of additional languages (e.g. Celaya 2001, Cook 2001, González Davies 2002, Macaro 2005, Prodromou 2001). Furthermore, research on the cognitive model of learning seems to confirm that the use of L1 "can have at least as substantial a facilitating acquisitional role as it can have an inhibitory role" (Macaro 2005: 41).

The use of L1 in second language learning has been also supported by the Vygotskian socio-cultural theory (Lantolf, 2004). This theory suggests that the use of L1 can assist learners in developing their understanding of the meaning of the L2 and can also be used as a means to create an interactive environment where learners can help each other throughout the task (Lantolf, 2004). Classroom observations showed that pupils appreciated the use of L1 by the teacher as it could be noticed that it helped them to comprehend her instructions better.

The following section provides a discussion on pupils' communicative acts which were selected based on the coding of the observation framework. In order to analyse the obtained data, the same process as for the analysis of the teacher's communicative acts was applied.

4.3.2. Pupils' talk

Pupils' talk was coded based on whether pupils asked a question, participated in classroom activities voluntarily, responded or reacted to the questions raised by the teacher or their peers, and repeated language items produced by the teacher or peers. The findings summarised in Figure 10 are based on the total number of 468 communicative acts made by pupils in 6 traditional lessons. Figure 10 reveals that choral repetition was the most dominant communicative act in traditional lessons which accounted for about 57% (N= 269) of 468 communicative acts. Also, Figure 11 on page 95 shows that about 15 minutes (T=26) of the total time spent on pupils' talk was devoted to choral repetition while Figure 27 shows that in game lessons about 2 minutes (T=113) was devoted to choral repetition . According to the data, most of the pupils' talk in traditional lessons was devoted to repeating the language items which was often performed chorally. According to Hardman (2005), choral responses do not provide opportunity for meaningful communication in class and do not allow pupils to get fully engaged in the learning process. However, he argues that choral responses encourage shy pupils who rarely participate in classroom activities become involved in the learning process and practice the target language.
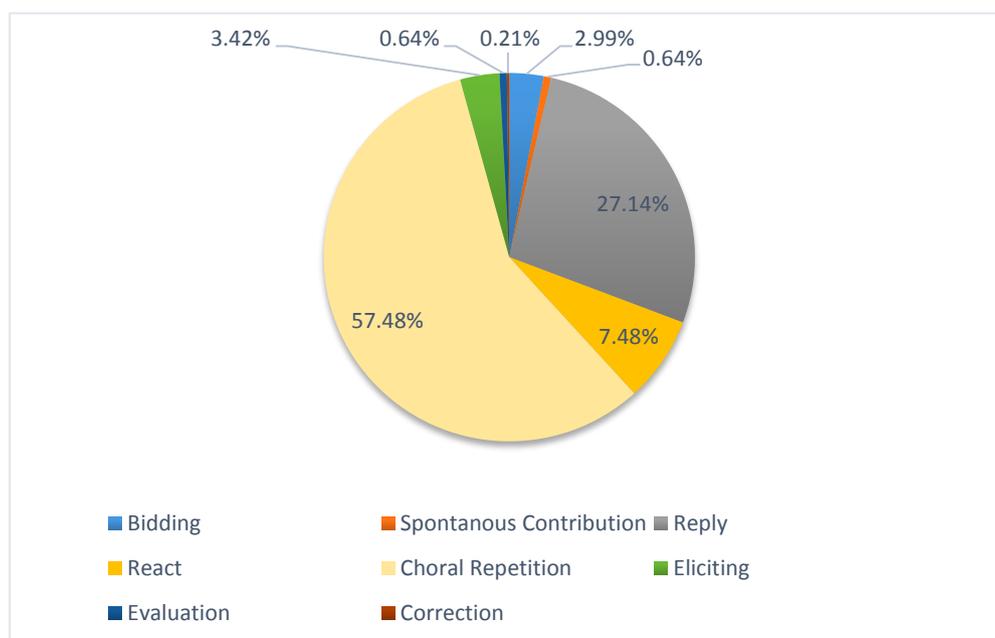
Figure 10: Distribution of pupils' talk in traditional lesson
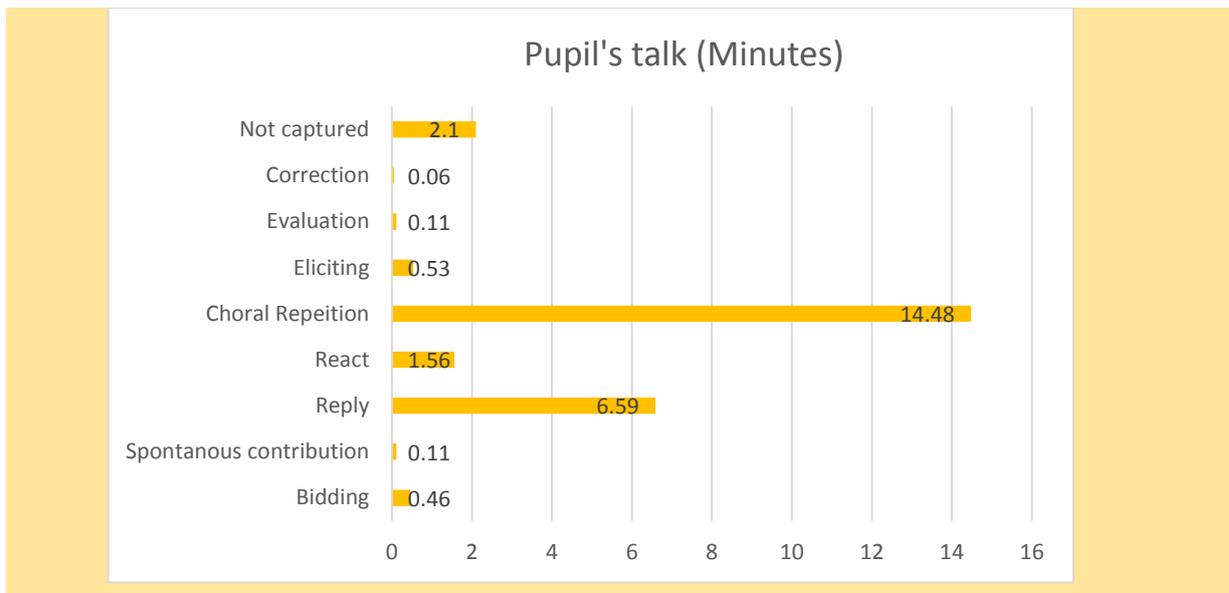
Figure 11: Time devoted to pupils' talk in traditional lesson

I observed that sometimes pupils were nominated to repeat a language item individually. According to the teacher the reason for nominating individuals while pupils were repeating the language items chorally was because sometimes she noticed that individuals were not participating in choral repetition, therefore by nominating the pupils she wanted to warn them that they should pay more attention in class and this way she could get them involved in the learning process. Figure 12 shows pupils repeating the language items in chorus when modelled by the teacher

Figure 12: Pupils repeating language items in chorus

Replying to teacher's questions was another common communicative act performed by pupils. Figure 10 shows this constituted 27% (N= 127) of 468 communicative acts and Figure 11 shows that about 6 minutes of the total time spent on pupils' talk

(T=26) was devoted to this communicative act. Most of the responses to the teacher's questions required short answers which was usually a single word or a phrase. Dalton-Puffer (2007), describes this as a typical effect of classroom questions and states that the majority of student responses are short and consist of one word or one clause element. She states that these short answers not only occur as a reaction to display questions but are also a normal kind of answer to referential questions. This was also the case in the choral repetition when pupils had to imitate the teacher and repeat a single word or a phrase. Therefore, in traditional lessons pupils did not have the opportunity to communicate in the target language or make long utterances. The following extract is an example of how pupils responded to the elicitation questions addressed by the teacher to the whole class in order to check their comprehension.

Extract 8:

1. **Teacher:** what's the opposite of tall
2. **Pupils:** short
3. **Teacher:** short, that's right
4. **Teacher:** can you say your ruler is tall
5. **Pupils:** no
6. **Teacher:** what's the right word then
7. **Pupils:** long
8. **Teacher:** long, that's right

The findings also revealed that there were some spontaneous contributions made by pupils; however, this was not a common communicative act in traditional lessons and represented only 0.64% (N=4) of the 468 pupils' communicative acts (Figure 10). Figure 11 shows that about 0.11 minutes (T=26) of the total time spent on pupils' talk was devoted to spontaneous contribution. Observations revealed that some pupils voluntarily produced language items without the teacher asking them to produce them. These language items were usually a word or a phrase that the teacher very often used in the classroom and pupils were exposed to them almost every session. For example, "be quiet", "open your books", "listen", "don't shout", etc. I also observed that some active pupils reproduced the new language items by whispering them to themselves right after it was produced by the teacher. This is known as inner or private speech and helps learners to clarify thought, retrieve language items, and imitate pronunciation which consequently develops the learning of the L2 (Lantolf, 2004).

One example of private speech observed in traditional lessons is when the teacher was teaching some new vocabulary for food and drinks such as beverages, soft drinks, alcoholic, and non-alcoholic. I observed that some pupils were whispering these words to themselves and they were trying to imitate the pronunciation of the words and sometimes they checked their pronunciations with the teacher. Moreover, I observed that some pupils were practicing the phrases and the words by using them on their peers. For example, when the teacher told the class to be quiet, some pupils were telling their peers who were talking to be quiet. Another example of spontaneous contribution was found when the teacher asked the whole class to open their books and one of the pupils shouted to the class "Open your books". This suggests that some pupils were more eager than others to learn English and they were more confident to reproduce the teacher's utterances or they were possibly more eager to please the teacher.

Asking questions or eliciting any linguistic information by pupils was another communicative act that I observed in traditional lessons. This communicative act was coded as elicitation and as it is shown on Figure 10, it accounted for about 3% (N= 16) of 468 pupils' talk. Also Figure 11 shows that about 0.53 minutes (T=26) of the total time on pupils' talk was devoted to asking questions or eliciting linguistic information. The video recordings revealed that most of the pupils' questions were addressed to the teacher asking for clarification or repetition when they did not understand parts of the instruction or when further explanation was required. Pupils often used their mother tongue to ask for clarification and repetition or just said "What?" "Teacher, can you repeat please?" It was also observed that the teacher usually used pupils' first language for giving further explanations or she tried to clarify the definition by giving some examples. The following extract is an example of how pupils asked the teacher for repetition when they did not understand the teacher's request:

Extract 9:

1. **Teacher:** can you name some parts of your ↑ body
2. **Pupils:** what↑ teacher can you repeat please
3. **Teacher:** can you name some parts of your ↑body (.) For example (.) nose (.)
4. eyes
5. **Pupils:** nose (.) eyes (.) ears (.) hair (.) mouth
6. **Teacher:** thank you

Figure 13: Pupil raising hand to ask a question

Bidding was another pupils' communicative act observed in traditional lessons which Figure 10 shows to represent about 3% (N= 14) of 468 communicative acts. Also Figure 11 displays that 0.46 minutes (T=26) of the total time spent on pupils' talk was devoted to bidding. Bidding often occurred when the teacher asked a question from the whole class and pupils started bidding by raising their hands and saying "Teacher me" or they just said "Teacher" repeatedly until the teacher asked them to give their answers. Figure 14 shows how bidding was taking place in class.

Figure 14: Pupils bidding

However, I witnessed that some of the pupils who bid did not know the answer and kept silent or gave wrong responses when they were asked to give their answers. The following extract shows how the pupils made bids to give an answer to the teacher's question:

Extract 10:

1. **Teacher:** what's the difference between thin and ↑slim
2. **Pupils:** what ↑teacher
3. **Teacher:** what's the difference between thin and ↑ slim
   <translation> [تفاوت این دو کلمه با هم چه   هست؟]
4. **Pupils:** teacher me (.) teacher can I say ((pupils raising their hands))
5. **Pupil:** [یکی یعنی چاق یکی هم لاغر]
   <one means fat and the other not fat>
6. **Teacher:** no (.) that's wrong
7. **Pupil:** [یکی ازلاغر اون یکی هست]
   <one is thinner than the other>
8. **Teacher:** you are getting closer to the answer
9. **Pupil:** [یکی خوش هیکل اونهزتر]
   <one of them is in better shape>
10. **Teacher:** almost right answer
11. **Pupils:** teacher (.) can you repeat ↑please
12. **Teacher:** [اولی سالم به نظر نمیاد اما دومی به معنای این میباشد که اندام متناسبی]
    <thin doesn't look healthy but slim means you are in good shape>

As shown in line 1 of the above extract, the teacher addressed a question to the whole class and in line 4, pupils started bidding to answers her question. In lines 5, 7, and 9, some attempts were made by pupils to answer the teacher's question;

however, none of the answers was correct. After several attempts the teacher provided pupils with the right answer but pupils did not understand the teacher's explanation and asked for repetition (pupil elicitation). The teacher usually used Farsi to clarify and simplify the tasks for pupils which can be considered scaffolding, as Wood (1976) argues that simplifying the tasks is one of the characteristics of the scaffolding.

Video recordings also revealed some non-verbal responses from pupils which were shown by their facial expressions or nodding and these accounted for 7% (N= 35) of 468 pupils' communicative acts (Figure 10). Also Figure 11 shows that about 2 minutes (T=26) of the total time on pupils' talk was devoted to non-verbal responses. Facial expressions were usually observed when the instruction was not clear to pupils or when they were not happy about something. For example, when the teacher ignored their questions or assigned a lot of homework pupils showed with their facial expressions that they were unhappy. Performing the teacher's orders by pupils was another non-verbal communicative act observed in traditional lessons; such as bringing some chalks and markers from the teachers' room or cleaning the whiteboard.

4.3.3. Teacher feedback

Teacher feedback plays an important role in education as it helps learners to learn about their potential at different stages of learning and become familiar with their strengths and weaknesses and improve their performance (Ramsden, 2003). In this study feedback was coded based on whether the teacher praised criticised, accepted, evaluated, or corrected pupils' answers. Figure 15 displays how the teacher's feedback was distributed across these categories in traditional lessons based on the total number of 172 feedback comments provided by the teacher. Also, Figure 16 shows how much time of 31 minutes on teacher's feedback was spent on each category of the communicative acts.
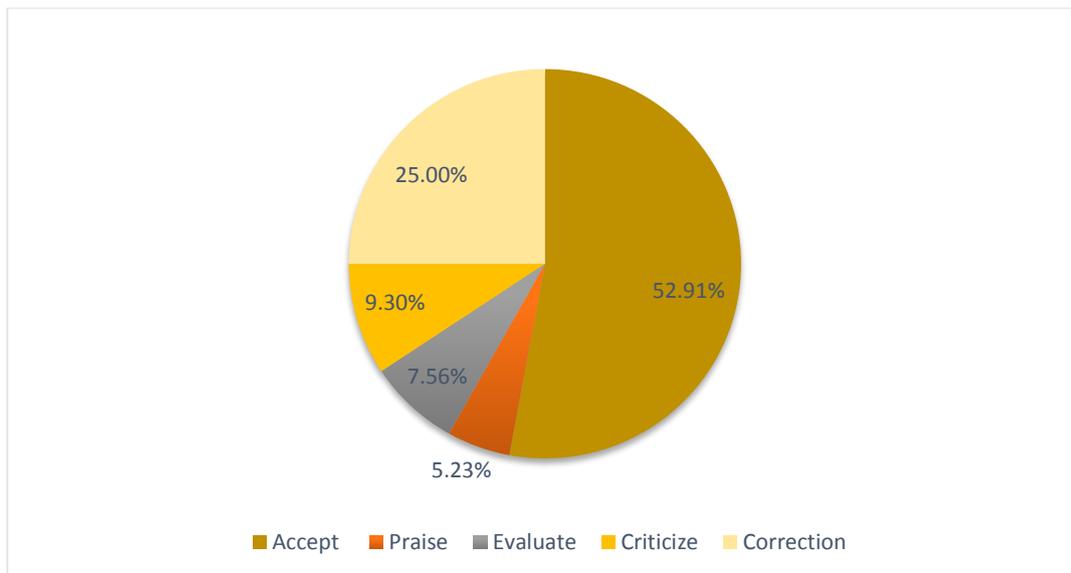
Figure 15: Distribution of the teacher's feedbacks in traditional lessons
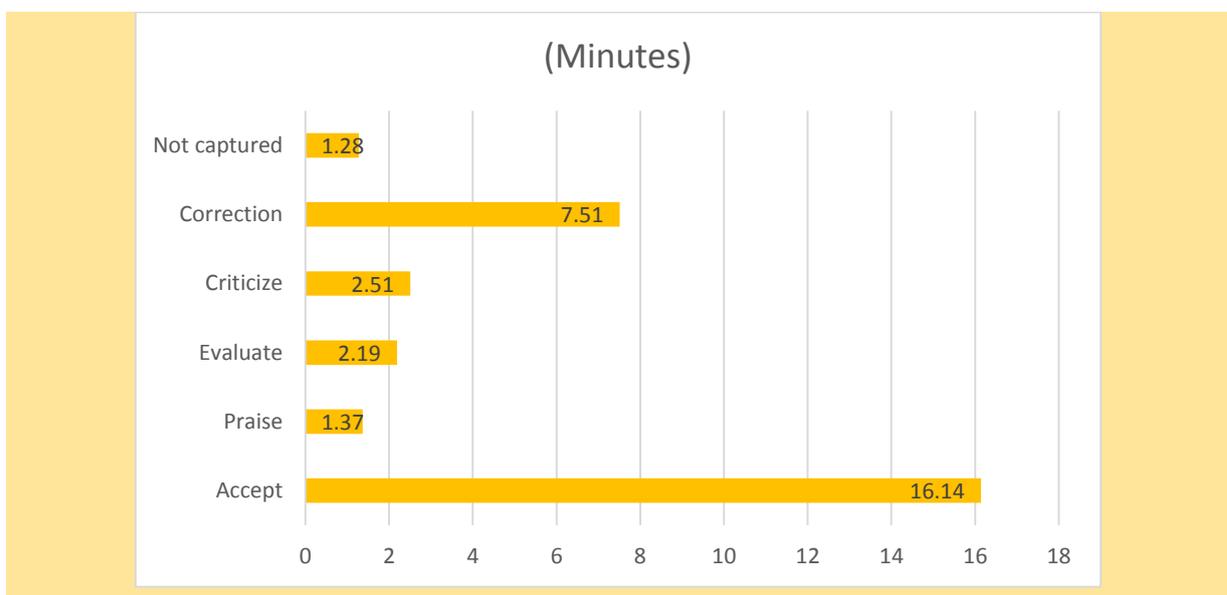
Figure 16: Time devoted to teacher's feedback in traditional lesson

As Figure 15 displays, acceptance was the most common type of feedback in traditional lessons representing about 53% (N= 91) of the total number, whereas praising pupils accounted for about 5% (N= 9) of feedback. Figure 16 shows that about 16 minutes (T=31) of the total time on teacher's feedback was devoted to acceptance and only about 2 minutes (T=31) was devoted to praising pupils. According to the teacher, praising pupils motivates them to participate more in the classroom activities and also has a positive effect on pupils' learning. The teacher's statement can be confirmed by the statement of Smith and Heggins (2006), saying that providing positive feedback and praising pupils for their correct responses can

motivate and encourage learners to participate more in classroom activities. However, the findings showed that the teacher's feedback in traditional lessons was more in the form of accepting rather than praising which could be due to the formal atmosphere of the classroom. Video-recordings revealed that the teacher accepted pupils' responses by saying "Yes", "Thank you", or nodding indicating that their responses were correct which helps pupils to establish the linguistic knowledge they have already acquired (Smith and Heggins, 2006), and praised them with using the words "good", "Very good", "Well done". The following extract is an example of how the teacher praised a pupil for doing her homework.

Extract 11

1. **Teacher:** can I see your home works please (.) you were supposed to write
2. some expressions as idiom
3. **Pupils:** …
4. **Teacher:** who has written the↑ expressions
5. **Pupil:** me teacher
6. **Teacher:** well done (.) she has written some expressions
7. thank you it's very good (.) Negar received one positive

Another type of feedback observed in traditional lessons was correcting pupils' errors which accounted for about 25% (N= 43) of feedback (Figure 15). Figure 16 shows that about 8 minutes (T=31) of the total time on teacher's feedback was devoted to correcting pupils' errors. According to Gass (1997), teachers use this type of feedback to indicate that certain features of the learner's language production are not yet correct and acceptable in the target language. The value of corrective feedback as Lyster (2001) reports is in its informative function which informs learners of their errors and assists them to correct their errors and reach their objective. Observation of traditional lessons revealed that most of the pupils' errors were corrected by the teacher and pupils were rarely given chance to retry and correct their errors. According to the teacher, giving a chance to pupils to correct their mistakes by themselves can be very time consuming, while this wait time can be spent on correcting and explaining their mistakes. The following extract shows how the teacher corrected pupils' errors immediately after the pupil gave an incorrect response to her question:

Extract 12:

1. **Teacher**: what's the meaning of ↑ugly
2. **Pupils**: dirty
3. **Teacher**: no (.) not dirty (.) don't make a mistake (.) ugly and dirty have two
4. different meanings (.)
5. dirty means not clean but ugly means not beautiful (.) someone that you don't
6. want to look at his her face (.) they are very different in meaning.
7. **Pupils**: teacher can you say it in farsi ↑please
8. **Teacher**: [زشت و کثیف دو معنی متفاوت دارند این دو را با هم اشتباه نگیرید]
<ugly and dirty are two different things, don't get confused with these two words>

In line 1 of the above extract, the teacher addressed a question to the whole class to check pupils' comprehension and as shown in line 2, pupils failed to give the right answer. Then in line 3, the teacher answered her own question immediately and did not allow pupils to think of a response. As suggested by Walsh (2006), providing pupils with waiting time helps pupils to think about their ideas and formulate their responses. Moreover, when a teacher provides pupils with waiting time, it gives a clear message to learners that the teacher values their opinion and respects the fact that they are thinking (Fusco, 2012). However, the video recordings revealed that occasionally the teacher used a different approach to correct the pupils' errors and gave them some time to think of an answer and nominated more capable pupils if a pupil failed to give the right answer. This is shown in the following example:

Extract 13:

1. **Teacher**: what's the synonym of ↑thin
2. **Pupils**: …
3. **Teacher**: the synonym of ↑thin (.) tell me another word with the same meaning
4. **Pupils**: fat
5. **Teacher**: ↑synonym I said
6. who knows the answer (.) synonym of thin
7. **Pupils**: fat
8. **Teacher**: ↓synonym not opposite
9. **Pupils**: fat
10. **Pupil**: square
11. **Teacher**: ↑ SQUARE
12. **Pupils**: teacher can you write it on the board ↑please
13. **Teacher**: Thin is synonym of slim ((teacher writes thin and slim on the
14. blackboard))
15. **Teacher**: now (.) what's the synonym of ↑thin
16. **Pupils**: slim
17. **Teacher**: thank you

In line 1 of extract 13, the teacher asked pupils for the synonym of the word "Thin" and pupils did not respond. Then in line 3, the teacher rephrased the question and waited for pupils to give a response; however, in line 4 pupils gave an incorrect answer and said "fat" which is the opposite of the word thin. After pupils gave an incorrect response, I observed that the teacher did not provide the correct answer to pupils but she returned the question back to the whole class by asking the question "Who knows the answer?" (line 6). According to Anton (1999), this is an effective technique that places the responsibility for knowledge on learners and can also be considered as a kind of scaffolding for those pupils who cannot answer the question. In lines 7, and 9, and 10, it is shown that some pupils voluntarily replied to the teacher's question, however they gave incorrect responses. At his point, the wait time took slightly longer than usual, and my interpretation was that the teacher became a bit frustrated when one of the pupils gave an incorrect response to her question for the second time as she slightly raised her volume (line 11). After several attempts one of the pupils sitting at the back of the classroom asked the teacher if she can write the word "synonym" on the board (line 12). After the teacher wrote the word 'synonym' on the blackboard, she gave the correct answer to the class and checked for their comprehension.

Criticising pupils was another type of feedback provided by the teacher which accounted for 9% (N= 16) of feedback (Figure 15). Figure 16 shows that about 3 minutes (T=31) of the total time on teacher's feedback was devoted to criticizing pupils. The video-recordings revealed that most of the criticisms were addressed to individuals mostly because they had forgotten to bring their course book or had not done their homework. I also observed that the teacher caught one of the pupils copying words from her book during a dictation test. The following extract is an example of how the teacher criticised the student for copying off from the course book:

Extract 14:

1. **Teacher:** ↑what are you doing (.) is this a ↑book (.) you are ↑copying
2. ((teacher takes pupil's book and walks towards desk))
3. you are not allowed to write anymore and I will give you a zero on the dictation
4. test
5. **Pupil:** ↑no teacher (.) please

As shown in extract 14, one of the pupils was copying off the words from her book during a dictation test and the teacher punished the student by giving her a 0 mark (The Iranian grading system is from 0-20). In the stimulated recall interview session I asked the teacher what she thinks about punishing students for their wrong doings. The teacher responded that *"it is important to build a good relationship with pupils as it provides a relaxed and conducive learning atmosphere in the classroom, however I believe that if pupils misbehave or do something wrong, it should not be ignored by the teacher".* The teacher believed that if pupils did not respect the rules of the classroom or the school, they should be punished and face the consequences. The teacher added that punishing a student in front of the class for his/her wrong doing can also be a warning to the rest of the students and is a message to them that they should respect the rules of the classroom.

Criticising pupils for misbehaving or making a noise in the classroom was also observed. For example, I observed that some pupils who were sitting at the back of the classroom were making a noise and not paying attention to the teacher's instructions. The video recordings revealed that the teacher was very sensitive about pupils making a noise in the classroom and I witnessed that when pupils shouted or raised their volume the teacher told them off and warned them that if they continue shouting they should bring along their parents. I also noticed that the teacher used pupils' mother tongue when she told them off or criticized them in general and in cases where she used the target language to criticize pupils, she automatically switched to the native language. In regards to using L1 by the teacher to maintain discipline in the classroom, Macaro (1997) reports that using L1 can be more effective than using L2, as it shows pupils that it is a serious warning, rather than practicing imperative and conditional constructions. A similar statement was made by the teacher in the stimulated recall interview session when she was asked why she used the native language to criticise pupils. The teacher replied: *"I have found that pupils pay more attention to my warnings when I use their mother tongue and I have found it more effective".* She also said that she sees herself more in authority and in control of the classroom when using her mother tongue. In regards to her sensitivity about pupils' noise she said *"when pupils start making a noise the teacher must not let it go for long as it will be more of a challenge to stop it later on".*

4.4. Conclusion

The preceding sections were designed to answer the first question of the study which intended to find out how the teacher and pupils interact with each other in an Iranian EFL primary classroom. The results show that in an Iranian EFL classroom most of the talk was by the teacher and pupils had very little chance to talk and participate in classroom activities and hence practice the target language. Classroom observations revealed that when the teacher introduced the new language items she expected pupils to sit in their places and not to talk or ask any questions while she was teaching. It was observed that the teacher did not provide an opportunity for pupils to practice what they were taught through working together in pairs or groups. The only time the teacher expected pupils to talk was when she asked a question from pupils or modelled a language item and pupils had to repeat the language item/s in chorus.

The findings also revealed that in an Iranian EFL primary classroom, the learning environment was very strict and formal and this was due to the fact that the teacher highly controlled the interactions in the classroom and did not provide opportunities for pair or group work, which is an effective way of providing interaction among pupils and can facilitate their learning (Storch, 2007). Observations showed that pupils' talk was limited to giving short answers to the teacher's questions and choral repetition of the language items which was often a word or a phrase. Moreover, it was observed that the teacher mostly relied on the course book to teach the lessons and she did not use any other materials such as pictures, posters or any other fun activities to create a more enjoyable learning environment for the pupils. Lack of interaction between the teachers and pupils and fun activities in the classroom created a very formal relationship between the teacher and pupils and made pupils to become passive receivers of knowledge instead of being actively involved in the learning process.

With regard to the teacher's feedback, the findings revealed that different types of feedback such as acceptance, correction, praise, criticism, and evaluation were used by the teacher and acceptance was found to be the most common feedback provided by the teacher. Correcting pupils' errors was the second common type of feedback and it was observed that the teacher very often corrected the errors by herself and very rarely gave pupils enough time to correct their own errors, however, there were few occasions where the teacher gave pupils the chance to retry and correct their

own mistakes. Praising, criticising, and evaluating pupils' responses were other kinds of feedback provided by the teacher.

The next chapter discusses the nature of classroom interaction in language game-based lessons and describes how the teacher's and pupils' interactions were affected by the introduction of language games.

Chapter Five: Findings and Discussion regarding game-based lessons

5.1. Overview of language game-based lessons

The analysis of observation sessions revealed some differences between the traditional and language game-based lessons. The main difference that I found between the two lessons was the change in the atmosphere of the classroom. Observation of game-based lessons revealed that unlike in traditional lessons (where the classroom atmosphere was formal and dry), in game-based lessons the atmosphere was friendly and motivating. This is also confirmed by Brewster et al (2004), who argues that games can create an enjoyable and motivating learning environment where pupils can have fun and learn at the same time. Moreover in game-based lessons pupils seemed to be more interested to talk and practice the target language in the classroom, as the comparison of the data between the traditional and game lessons showed that in game lessons, pupils made more bids to participate in the classroom activities and they also elicited more information from the teacher and their peers which will be discussed in greater detail below. This active involvement of pupils in game lessons could be due to the use of language games which can lower anxiety in the classroom and thus making pupils motivated to express their opinions and feelings (Hansen, 1994).

Another difference that I found between the traditional and language game-based lessons was the use of pair and group work among pupils. As discussed above, observation of traditional lessons showed that in traditional lessons pupils did not have the chance to talk to each other and practice the target language communicatively. However, observation of game-based lessons revealed that pupils were provided with opportunities to cooperate with each other and use the target language communicatively. This is supported by Betteridge and Buckby (2005) who confirm that games can create an interactive learning environment where learners can work with their peers in pairs and groups and use the target language communicatively.

I also witnessed that due to the use of language games, the pupils' sitting arrangements had changed in game lessons, as the teacher usually divided pupils in pairs or groups of four and then asked them to get out of their seats and stand in front the classroom to play the language games. Moreover, when pupils had to play the language games while sitting in their places, they had to turn around and face

their peers to communicate with them in pairs or groups. This was unlike the traditional lessons where pupils had to strictly sit facing the teacher and the whiteboard and could not leave their seats until the end of the lesson. In other words, pupils seemed to have more freedom in game lessons and they were less controlled by the teacher, which again seemed due to the use of language games which reduces tension in class and makes both the teacher and pupils more relaxed (Philips, 2001).

The fact that pupils had more freedom in the classroom seemed to help in building a closer relationship between the teacher and pupils in game lessons and provided a friendly atmosphere in the classroom. According to Gardner (2010), a friendly teacher-student relationship and a pleasant classroom atmosphere can facilitate pupils' language learning, as learners become motivated to participate more in classroom activities. However, this is something that pupils did not appear to have opportunities for in traditional lessons. Figures 16 and 17 in page 109 compare the classroom settings and the pupils' sitting mode in traditional and language game-based lessons.

Figure 17: Classroom setting in traditional lessons

Figure 18: Classroom setting in game lessons

5.2. Nature of classroom interaction in language game-based lessons

5.2.1. Teacher initiation
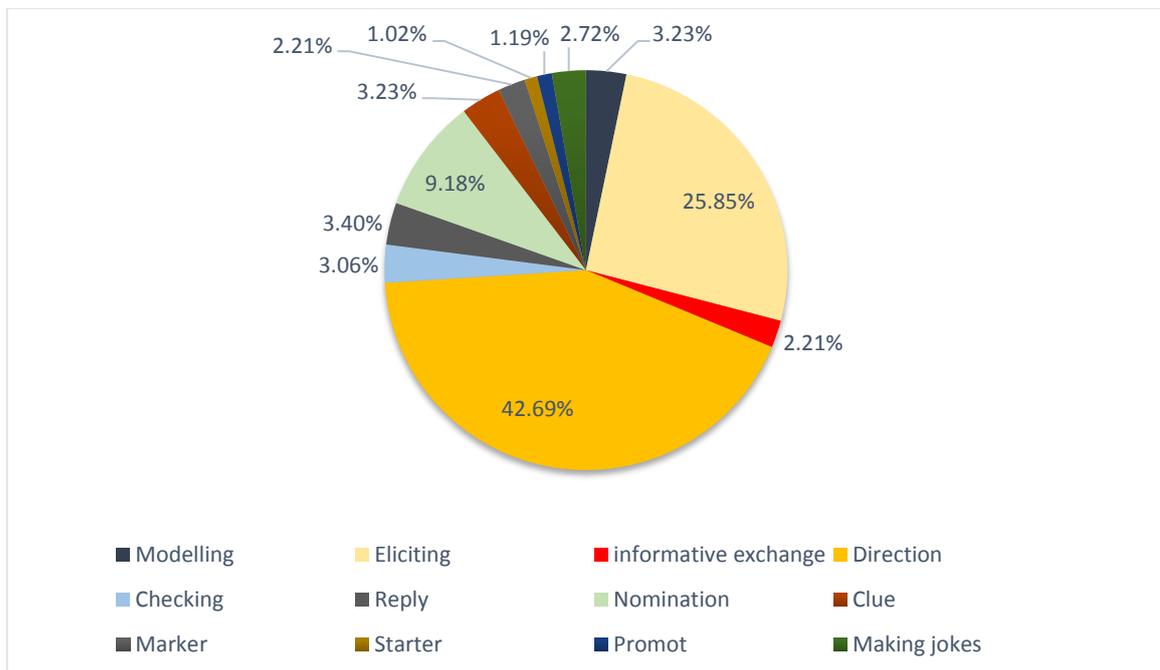
Figure 19: Distribution of teacher's talk in language game-based lessons
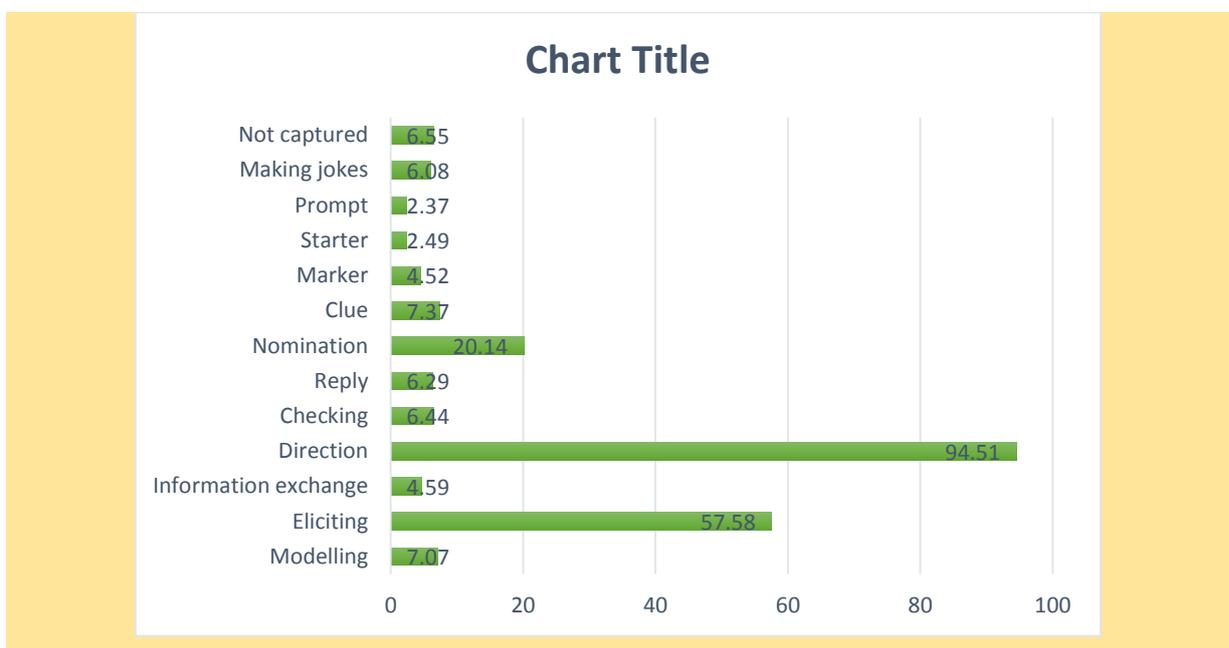

Figure 20: Time devoted to teacher's talk in game lesson

The analysis of observation sessions revealed some substantial differences in teacher's communicative acts between the traditional and language game-based lessons. Figure 19 shows that directing pupils to perform activities in the classroom was the most dominant communicative act performed by the teacher in game-based

lessons. Figure 20 also reveals that directive exchanges in game lessons represented about 43% (N= 251) of 588 teacher's communicative acts while Figure 5 on page 83 shows that directive exchanges accounted for about 7% (N= 42) of 594 communicative acts in traditional lessons. Also, Figure 20 shows that in game lessons about 95 minutes (T=226) of the total time on teacher's talk was devoted to direction while Figure 6 on page 83 shows that in traditional lessons about 21 minutes (T=303) was devoted to direction. The increase in the use of teacher's direction was due to the fact that in game-based lessons the teacher tried to get pupils more involved in the learning process through the use of language games and different types of activities, whereas in traditional lessons pupils were more passive.

This communicative act required physical responses by pupils to carry out the teacher's commands. For example, pupils were asked to stand in front of the classroom to perform a language game, or they were instructed to work in pairs or groups which sometimes required them moving around in the classroom and changing their seats. Moreover, the teacher played some movement and role play games with pupils in which she instructed pupils to perform activities and again pupils had to give physical responses to the commands. This teaching method which was originally developed by James Asher (a professor of Psychology) at the University of San Jose in the late 1960's, is known as Total Physical Response (TPR) and is based on the coordination of language and physical movement. The main advantage of this method is that it involves processes that resemble natural language acquisition by developing comprehension and involving action responses, and it reduces the level of anxiety in the new language situation (Pinter, 2006). Moreover, the TPR method has the advantage of pairing mental processing with action which leads to greater retention (Freeman, 2000). As a result of the increase in directive exchanges in game lessons, physical responses by pupils also increased in game lessons. As the comparison of data on Figures 26 in section 5.2.2 and Figure on page 94 shows, physical responses by pupils increased from about 7% (N= 35) of 468 pupils' talk in traditional lessons to 31% (N= 269) of 869 pupils' talk in game lessons which will be further discussed in detail in section 5.2.2.

The following extract is an example of how the teacher directed pupils to play a language game to practice the new words for some action verbs.

Extract 15:

1. **Teacher:** now close your books we want to play a game (.) Sara, Maryam,
2. and Negin (.) come to the blackboard (.) I say an action verb and you should
3. perform it.
4. **Pupils:** what ↑teacher (.) can you repeat ↑please
5. **Teacher:**   [من یک فعلی را نام می برم و شما باید ان را انجام دهید]
   <I say an action verb and you should perform it>
6. for example (.) I say sit down (.) you should sit down or I say walk (.) you
7. should walk
8. ↑Understand
9. **Pupils:** yes
10. **Teacher:** okay (.) now Sara (.) Maryam (.) and Negin (.) clap your hands
11. ((Pupils Clapp their hands))
12. **Teacher:** Dance
13. ((Pupils dance))
14. **Teacher:** turn around and make a circle
15. **Pupils:** ((pupils turn around and make a circle))
16. **Teacher:** very good (.) thank you (.) go back to your seats please

In line 1 of extract 15, the teacher asked pupils to close their books as she wanted them to play a language game. Then, in line 2, the teacher gave the instruction of the language game in English, however, pupils did not understand the instruction and they asked for repetition (line 4). In line 5, the teacher repeated the instruction in Farsi and in order to make the instruction clearer she gave some examples (line 6), and then checked for the pupils' comprehension (line 8). After pupils confirmed that they understood the instruction of the game, the teacher nominated three pupils who seemed to be eager to participate and according to the teacher they were competent pupils who had always showed interest in participating in classroom activities. According to the teacher *"the main reason for nominating competent and active pupils first is to provide an opportunity for the weaker pupils to watch and learn from more capable pupils and become more confident in their performances"*. This is known as peer scaffolding which emphasizes on collaborative assistance among peers, as it is believed that it can create opportunities for L2 learning (Apple and Lantolf, 1994; Mitchell and Myles, 2004). Once the nominated pupils performed the teacher's commands, the teacher praised them and asked them to get back to their seats (line 16). Figure 20 below was taken while pupils were responding to the teacher's commands during a movement game.

Figure 21: Pupils performing action verbs

Eliciting language items was found to be another common communicative act in game lessons representing about 26% (N= 152) of 588 teacher's communicative acts compared to 24% (N= 141) of 594 communicative acts in traditional lessons (See Figures 19 and Figure 5 on page 83). Also, the comparison of the data on Figure 20 and Figure 6 on page 83, shows that in game lessons about 58 minutes (T=226) of the total time on teacher's talk was devoted to eliciting compared to 71 minutes (T=303) in traditional lessons.

Even though there was no substantial difference in the total amount of eliciting between the two types of lessons, there was a difference in the type of questions asked by the teacher. For example, Figure 21 shows that in game lessons display questions accounted for about 10% (N= 15) of 152 questions, while Figure 5 on page 83 shows that display questions accounted for about 81% (N=114) of 141 questions in traditional lessons, being the most common type of questions asked by the teacher. Also, Figure 23 shows that in game lessons about 6 minutes (T=58) of the total time on teacher's questioning was devoted to display questions while Figure 8 on page 87 shows that in traditional lessons about 58 minutes (T=71) of the total time on teacher's questioning was spent on display questions.

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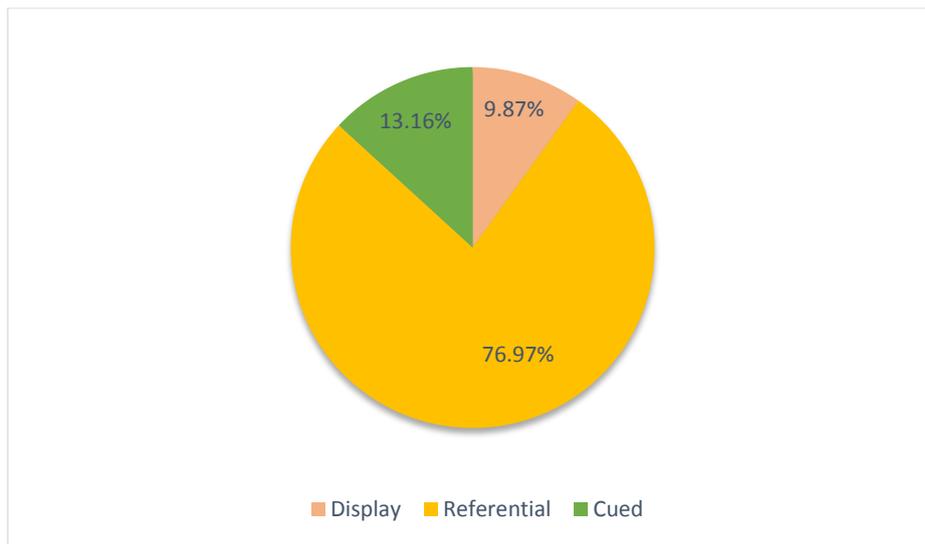
Figure 22: Question types and percentages in game lessons
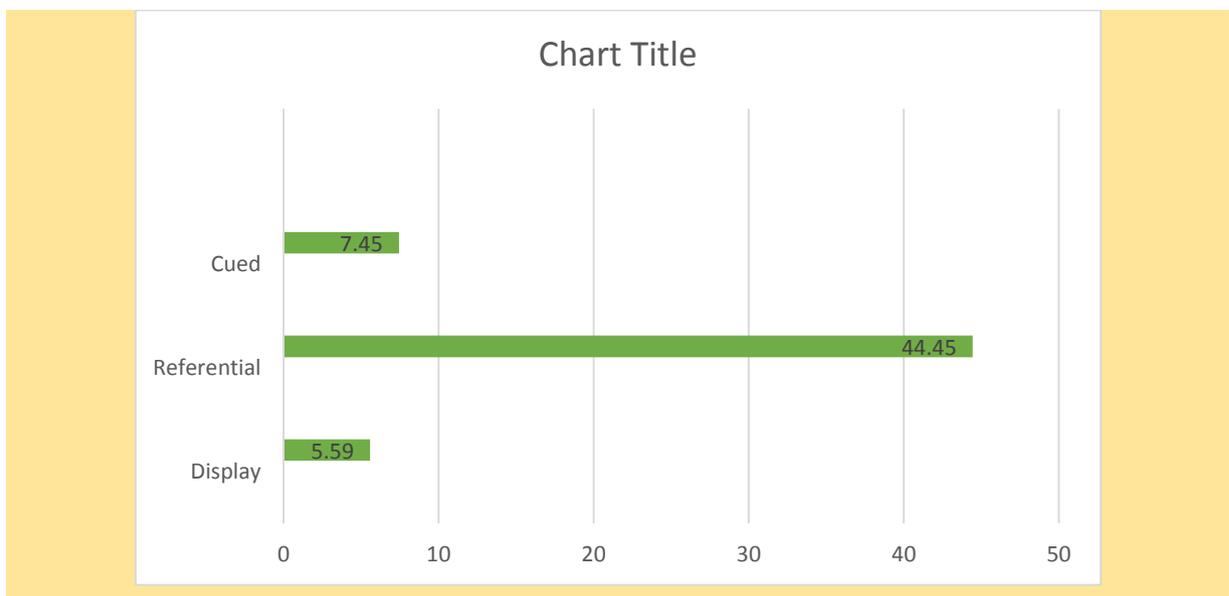
Figure 23: Time devoted to teacher's questions in game lesson

The analysis of the data showed that as in traditional lessons, display questions were asked by the teacher to elicit and practice the new language items. The following extract is an example of how display questions were used as an eliciting technique in game lessons to practice the new language items:

Extract 16:

1. **Teacher:** how is the weather ((teacher holds an umbrella))
2. **Pupils:** it's rainy
3. **Teacher:** the weather is ^
4. **Pupils:** rainy
5. **Teacher:** how is the weather ↑Negar

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6. **Negar:** it's rainy
7. **Teacher:** yes (.) that's right (.) it's rainy

As shown in line 1 of extract 16, the teacher used a display question to practice the word "rainy" which she had taught earlier and by asking a display question she wanted to get pupils to practice the word. Although in line 2 pupils replied to the teacher's question with a correct answer, in line 3 the teacher asked a cued question to get pupils repeat their response to enhance the input. This is also supported by Pontefract and Hardman (2005), who say that cued questions often function to reinforce the information given by the teacher or elicited from the pupils, and to keep the learner's attention rather than requiring an answer to a question. Once pupils repeated their response for the second time, the teacher nominated one of the pupils who was not paying attention to the lesson to answer the same question. According to the teacher nominating pupils when they are not paying attention to the lesson is a good way to regain their attention and it is also a message to other students to pay attention to the teacher's instruction. After the pupil replied to the teacher's question in line 6, the teacher evaluated and accepted her response by repeating it (line 7).

In order to create an interaction opportunity for pupils in a fun and enjoyable way, the teacher asked each pupil in turn to stand in front of the classroom and play a pantomime. She explained to pupils that their performance should represent a word for the weather so that other pupils can guess the weather and produce the right word. Figure 24 was taken when one of the pupils was playing pantomime to represent the cold weather. The pupil started the game by asking her peers the question: *"How is the weather"?* She pretended that she was shivering and the rest of the pupils immediately said *"it's snowy".* In my opinion this was a great way to practice the new vocabulary for the weather as pupils were exposed to the same language structure and same words numerous times and they did not become bored or lose their interest.

Figure 24: Pupil playing pantomime to represent vocabulary for the weather

As in traditional lessons, display questions were also used for teaching the new language items and checking pupils' comprehension. For example, I observed that the teacher introduced some new vocabulary for the body parts by pointing out to different parts of her body and asked some display questions to check whether pupils understood the meaning of the words. I also witnessed that, unlike in traditional lessons where the teacher did not prepare any type of visual aids beforehand and solely relied on the real objects available to her in the classroom, in game lessons she provided pupils with some pictures and cards to play with during the language games. There were also occasions that the teacher used real objects or directed pupils to look at the pictures in their course book when asking display questions to teach the new language items. This kind of assistance is considered scaffolding as simplifying a task for the pupils is one of the characteristics of scaffolding which can develop pupils' language learning (Wood, 1976).

The following extract shows how the teacher used some display questions to introduce the new vocabulary to pupils:

Extract 17:

1. **Teacher:** What's the meaning of ↑body ((Teacher points to her body))
2. **Pupils:** (بدن) <body> body
3. **Teacher:** can you name some parts of your ↑body
4. **Pupils:** ↑What
5. **Teacher**: we are going to learn the name of some parts of our body (.)

6. for example (.) nose (.) Ears (.) mouth ((teacher points to her body parts as
7. she introduces the words))
8. now (.) I point to my body parts and we say their names together (.) what's the
9. meaning of ↑this ((The teacher points to her stomach))
     حالا میخواهیم اسم اعضاء بدنمون را یاد بگیریم. من به اعضاء بدنم اشاره میکنم و شما باید اسمش را نام]
     ببری[<translation>
10. **Pupils:** …
11. **Teacher:** it's called stomach
12. **Pupils:** stomach
13. **Teacher:** Yes (.) That's right (.) very good

As shown in line 1 of extract 17, the teacher taught the new words for the body parts through pointing to different parts of her body so that pupils can comprehend the meaning of the words better. This is supported by Ohta (2001), who states that using visual aids can reinforce pupils' learning as it allows them to absorb the information through an additional sensory perception. A further support of this was by the teacher who said that visual aids help pupils to understand and remember the meaning of the words better. She said that *"based on my experience I have found that pupils can understand and remember the meaning of the words better when they are taught through visual aids"*. Figure 25 was taken while the teacher was introducing the new words by pointing to her body parts.

Figure 25: Teacher pointing to her eyes to introduce the word

After the teacher introduced the new words for the body parts, she divided pupils into pairs to play a language game and practice the new language items. As shown in line

8 and 9, the instruction of the game was given in English and Farsi so that pupils could better comprehend the instruction. The teacher explained to pupils that each pupil in turn should call out a body part and say for example: "touch your eyes" or "touch your nose" and the other pupil must follow the command. The pupil who fails or hesitates to follow the command is eliminated and the other pupil wins the game. This game was inspired by the so-called language game "Simon says" in which one pupil plays the role of Simon who issues instructions to other pupils (usually a physical action such as "jump in the air", "make a circle", or "touch your nose") and the other follows the command. The following extract is an example of how two of the pupils were playing the language game to practice the vocabulary for body parts:

Extract 18:

1. **Teacher:** Negar and Aida (.) stand in front of the classroom and play the
2. game
3. **Pupil1:** touch your nose
4. **Pupil2:** ((She touches her nose))
5. **Pupil2:** teacher like this
6. **Teacher:** Yes
7. **Pupil2:** touch your hair
8. **Pupil 1**: ((She touches her hair))
9. **Pupil1**: touch your mouth
10. **Pupil2**: ((she touches her teeth))
11. **Pupil1**: No (.) touch your mouth
12. **Teacher**: Your MOUTH not teeth
13. **Teacher**: Negar is the winner (.) excellent Negar

In line 1 of extract 18, the teacher asked two of the pupils to stand in front of the classroom to play the language game as she wanted to provide an opportunity for the weaker pupils to watch their peers and learn how the game is played. This can be considered as peer scaffolding which focuses on assistance that pupils receive from their peers to enhance their learning (Gibbons, 2002; McDonough, 2004; Storch, 2007). In line 3, the game started by one of the pupils calling out a body part which required the second pupil to follow the command and touch the right part of her body called out by her peer. In line 5, the pupil was seeking for the teacher's approval when performing the command as she wanted to make sure that her performance was right. After she gained the teacher's approval she carried on with the game with more confidence and called out a body part (line 7). The game went on until in line

10, one of the pupils failed to perform the command and was eliminated from the game. What was interesting is that one of the pupils was trying to assist her peer when she failed to perform the command and was trying to tell her that her performance was wrong (line 11) and again, this is in line with what was discussed earlier in the literature review chapter that scaffolding does not have to always come from the teacher and it is possible that peers assist each other during a task which can help them to develop their language learning (Bailey, 2001; Dobinson, 2001; Donato, 2000; Lantolf, 2000). Figure 26 was taken while pupils were playing the game in pairs in front of the classroom:

Figure 26: Pupils practicing the vocabulary for body parts

The use of referential questions on the other hand increased in game-based lessons. As the comparison of the data reveals (Figures 22 and Figure 7 on page 87), referential questions accounted for about 77% (N= 117) of 152 questions compared to 13% (N= 18) of 141 in traditional lessons. Also, comparison of the data on Figure 23 and Figure 8 on page 87 shows that in game lessons about 45 minutes (T=58) of the total time on teacher's questioning was devoted to referential questions while in traditional lessons 10 minutes (T=71) was devoted to teacher's questioning. This could be due to the motivating and enjoyable atmosphere of the classroom which was created by the use of language games and made pupils more eager to reply to referential questions and therefore the teacher could ask more of this type of questions. According to Cullen (1998), referential questions can create more

interaction opportunities than display questions as they allow learners to produce lengthier utterances and use the target language communicatively in meaningful way which can enhance pupils' language learning. Similarly Dalton-Puffer (2007:96), argues that "referential questions are frequently seen as more natural and are expected to generate student answers that are somehow qualitatively better, more authentic, more involved, longer, and more complex than answers".

From observations, I found that unlike in traditional lessons where the use of referential questions was restricted to greeting times, in game lessons the teacher asked referential questions during the lesson and while playing language games with pupils as well as the greeting time. Observation of game lessons showed that pupils were more eager to reply to the referential questions than they were in traditional lessons and this could be due to the enjoyable atmosphere of the classroom created by the use of language games which had motivated pupils to reply to this type of questions, and since pupils were more eager to reply to these questions, the teacher asked more referential questions in game lessons.

The following extract shows how the teacher asked a referential question from pupils while playing the role of a mother and daughter in a role play game:

Extract 19:

1. **Teacher**: what do you say to your mom when you get back home from ↑school
2. **Pupils:** ↑What teacher (.) repeat please
3. **Teacher**: when you go home after school (.) what do you say to your ↑mom
4. **Pupils**: …
5. **Teacher**: for example (.) you get back home from school (.) knock on the door
6. (.) and ↑say
7. **Pupils:** …
8. **Teacher:** What do you tell your mom when you get ↑home
   <translation> [وقتی از مدرسه به خانه بر میگردید به مادرتان چه میگویی]
9. **Pupils:** …
10. **Teacher:** for example (.) when I get home I say hi mom (.) I'm home.
11. **Teacher:** ↑Do you understand
12. **Pupils:** Yes teacher
13. **Pupil:** teacher I say (.) hi mom I'm home
14. **Teacher:** very good

In line 1 of extract 19, the teacher asked a referential question from pupils in English but pupils did not understand the question and asked the teacher for repetition

(line2). Then I observed that the teacher rephrased the question and asked it again (line 3), but pupils did not understand the question and kept silent. In line 5, the teacher assisted pupils and provided them with an example to help with their comprehension. After providing an example, one of the pupils voluntarily replied to the referential question and the teacher praised the pupil for her attempt (line 14).

Based on the observation sessions, referential questions created an opportunity for pupils to interact with each other and although the interaction was still controlled by the teacher, it allowed pupils to have meaningful conversation in the classroom. This confirms the argument made by Dalton-Puffer (2007) saying that referential questions can create opportunity for meaningful interaction and use of language communicatively.

Modelling a language item such as a word or a phrase was also observed in game lessons. However, as the comparison of the data reveals in Figures 18 and Figure 5 on page 83, modelling language items by the teacher was significantly reduced in game lessons and accounted for only about 3% (N= 19) of 588 compared to 45% (N= 267) of 594 in traditional lessons. Also, Figure 20 shows that about 7 minutes (T=226) of the total time on teacher's talk was devoted to modelling language items while Figure 6 on page 83 shows that about 135 minutes (T=303) of the total teacher's talk was devoted to modelling language items. According to Seibold (2004), teachers model language items to expose learners to the correct form of pronunciation of the words. A similar claim was made by the teacher in the interview session that she models language items to show pupils how to pronounce the words correctly.

The reason for the decrease in the use of modelling language items by the teacher in game-based lessons is due to the fact that the teacher did not solely rely on the choral repetition to elicit and practice the language items. In game-based lessons the teacher reduced the amount of modelling and instead focused on a different strategy which was encouraging pupils to interact with each other and reproduce the language input. However, where the teacher employed a modelling strategy it was in the same way as in traditional lessons (i.e. language items were produced by the teacher and pupils repeated in chorus afterwards). In the stimulated recall session when the teacher watched some video-recorded extracts from the traditional and game-based lessons she said that *"I can see that my pupils are more eager to*

practice the English language through language games than when they are asked to produce the language items repeatedly". She also noticed that there were times that she asked pupils to repeat a word or a phrase for more than 6-7 times and she said that she did not realize that this could be discouraging for pupils. Therefore, in game-based lessons she tried to reduce the amount of modelling, even though she still believed that reasonable amount of modelling is essential for improving pupils' pronunciation.

5.2.2. Pupils' Talk
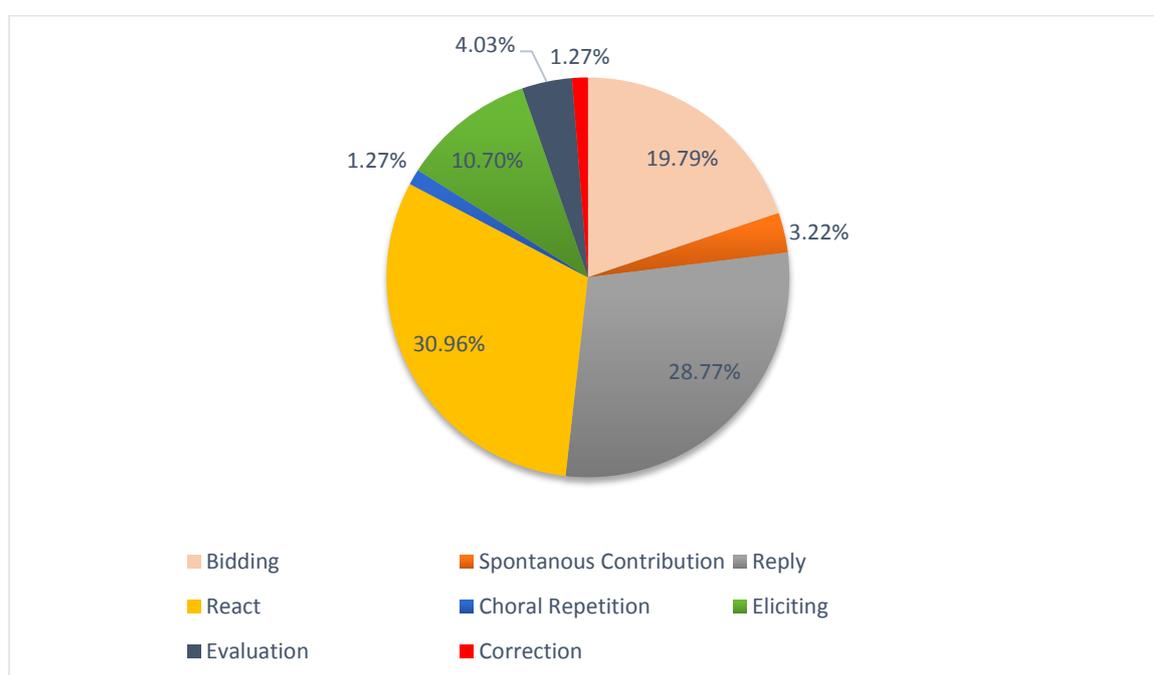
Figure 27: Distribution of pupils' responses in game lessons
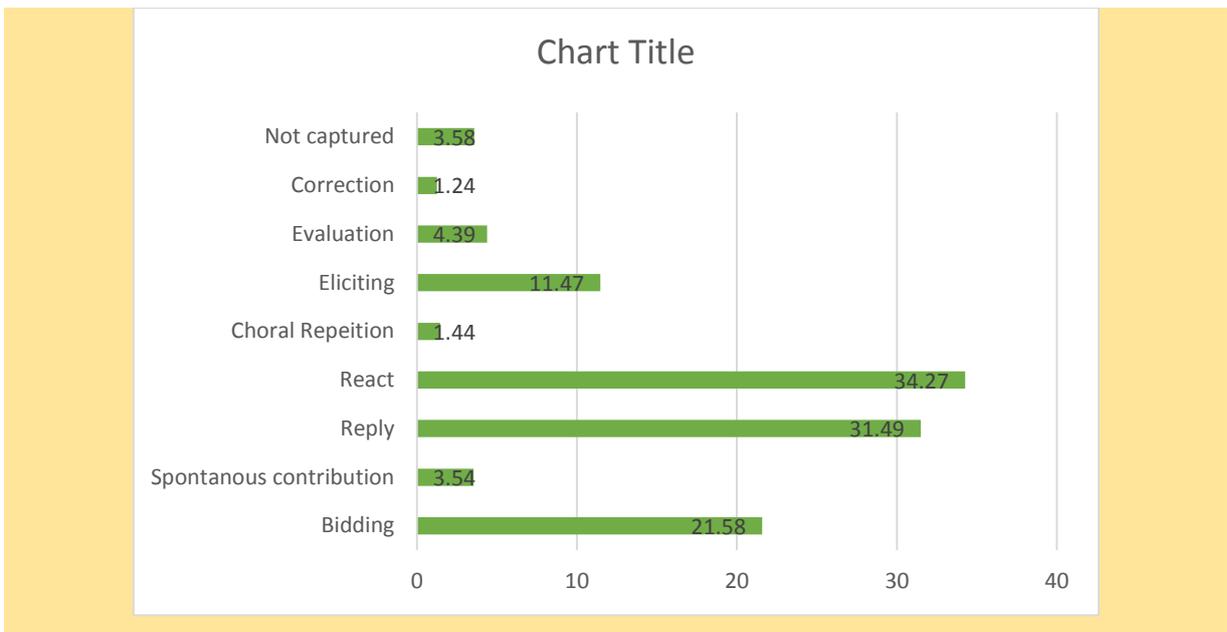
Figure 28: Time devoted to pupils' talk in game lesson

The findings from the analysis of the data in game lessons revealed that choral repetition of the language items by pupils was substantially reduced as a result of the introduction of language games (See Figure 27). As shown in Figure 10 in page 94, choral repetition of the language items in traditional lessons represented about 57% (N=269) of 468 pupils' communicative acts, while Figure 27 shows that this communicative act was much reduced in game lessons and accounted for about 2% (N= 11) of 869 communicative acts. Also, Figure 11 on page 94 shows that in traditional lessons about 15 minutes (T=26) of the total pupils' talk was devoted to choral repetition while Figure 28 shows that in game lessons about 2 minutes (T=113) of the total time on pupils' talk was devoted to choral repetition. The noticeable reduction in the use of choral repetition of the language items by pupils was due to the significant reduction in the teacher-led repetition or modelling of language items in game-based lessons and that is because the teacher did not solely rely on modelling the language items to elicit them from pupils. The teacher used some language games in the classroom and by including the new words, phrases, and grammar rules in the games created an opportunity for pupils to produce and practice the language items. The use of language items by pupils through language games created an opportunity for meaningful communication, whereas with choral repetition pupils could only practice the pronunciation of the words but they were not able to use them communicatively (Hardman, 2005).

As argued by Hohls (2007), it is important that teachers use all possible opportunities for meaningful communication and provide language learners with opportunities to produce the target language in a natural occurring way by establishing natural communication situations such as chatting to pupils about personal and general topics, storytelling, singing songs and chants, and playing games. In game-based lessons the teacher provided meaningful communication through creating opportunities for the pupils to interact with each other in pairs and groups and use the English language in a communicative way. For example, when the teacher taught the language items for the body parts, she first introduced the words in English and then used the words in meaningful sentences as shown in the following extract.

Extract 20:

1. **Teacher:** look at me (.) eyes (.) nose (.) teeth
2. **Teacher:** how many ↑eyes do you have
3. **Pupils:** I have two ↑eyes
4. **Teacher:** how many ↑nose do you have
5. **Pupils:** I have one ↑nose
6. **Teacher:** how many ↑teeth do you have
7. **Pupils:** I have twenty eight ↑teeth
8. **Teacher:** very good

In line 1 of the above extract it is shown that the teacher introduced the words eyes, nose, teeth, and then in line 2 she asked pupils how many eyes, teeth, and nose they have. As it is shown in line 2, the teacher used the new language item 'eyes' in a meaningful sentence by asking a meaningful question from pupils rather than drilling the word and asking pupils to produce it repeatedly (as she did in traditional lessons). Moreover, in line 3 it is shown that pupils also used the new language item 'eyes' in a meaningful sentence to answer the teacher's question. Similarly in line 4 and 6 the teacher used the new language items 'nose' and 'teeth' in meaningful sentences which again required pupils to use the words meaningfully in sentences to reply to the teacher's questions (line 5 and 7).

However the use of language games did not only provide opportunity for meaningful interaction between the teacher and pupils, but also among pupils themselves. Observations showed that in game lessons pupils were asked to work together in pairs and/or groups to play the language games and therefore to have meaningful communication with each other. For example, as shown in extract 18, when pupils were playing the 'Simon says' game, the nature of the game required pupils to use

the language items that they had learned in meaningful sentences rather than repeating them in an isolated form. This was also the case in other types of language games in which pupils were required to use the language items in meaningful sentences. Also, in the language games where there was discrete language items involved (i.e. spelling games), pupils still had to have meaningful communication with each other as they had to seek to understand how to play the game before, during, and after the game (Betteridge & Buckby, 2005). One example of pupils having meaningful communication with each other to learn how to play a language game can be seen in the following extract when pupils were having a conversation about how to take turns in the 'Simon says' game.

Extract 21:

1. **Pupil1**: It's my turn (.) you said touch your nose (.)
2. **Pupil2:** ok (.) you say
3. **Pupil1:** only one time you say

As shown in line 1 of the above extract, pupils were having a conversation about turn taking in the 'Simon says' game. Although in this conversation the taught language items were not used by pupils, the use of language games and the pair and group work between pupils provided opportunity for the learners to interact with each other.

However, observations showed that in traditional lessons pupils were not able to have meaningful communication with each other and that was because of the nature of the activities in traditional lessons which did not require pupils to interact with each other. Observations showed that in traditional lessons the teacher also did not ask pupils to work together in pairs or groups but they were asked to do the activities individually. Moreover, in traditional lessons pupils did have meaningful interaction with the teacher and their language production was restricted to isolated words rather than using the words in meaningful sentences. For example, as it is shown in extract 1, the teacher produces some new words for family members and then asks pupils to repeat them chorally rather than using the words in meaningful sentences. This is while extract 23 shows that in game lessons the teacher asks pupils to use the same language items in a communicative and meaningful way through playing role play games.

Another pupils' communicative act which was affected by the use of language games was pupils' reactions or non-verbal responses to the teacher's instructions. As

discussed earlier, directing pupils to perform activities was one of the teacher's communicative acts observed in both types of lessons. Figures 19 and Figure 5 in page 83 revealed that directing pupils to perform activities by the teacher represented about 7% (N=42) of communicative acts in traditional lessons compared to 43% (N= 251) in game lessons. This increase had a direct influence on the amount of pupils' non-verbal responses in game lessons as the teacher's instructions required non-verbal responses from pupils. As Figures 27 and Figure 10 in page 94 show, pupils' non-verbal responses to the teacher's instructions represented 7% (N= 35) of 468 pupils' communicative acts in traditional lessons compared to 31% (N= 269) of 869 pupils' communicative acts in game lessons. Also, Figure 28 shows that about 34 (T=113) of the total pupils' talk was devoted to reacting to the teacher's instructions while Figure 11 on page 94 shows that 2 minutes (T=26) of the total pupils' talk was devoted to non-verbal responses.

As discussed earlier, total physical responses (TPR) is a language teaching strategy through which the teacher introduces new language items through a series of commands and students are supposed to respond to the commands with action (Freeman, 2000). According to Freeman (2000), the TPR teaching method is particularly beneficial for beginner language learners as they are not required to give oral responses until they have achieved and demonstrated full comprehension through physical actions. Moreover, he argues that the use of TPR method leads to rapid understanding of the target language, long term retention of the language items, and stress free activity for both pupils and the teacher.

Pupils' elicitation which included any type of questions asked by pupils for gaining information, was another communicative act influenced by the introduction of language games. Figures 27 and Figure 10 in page 94 reveal that the amount of questions asked by pupils increased from 3% (N= 16) of 468 communicative acts in traditional lessons to 11% (N= 95) of 869 communicative acts in game lessons. Also, Figure 28 shows that in game lessons about 12 minutes (T=113) of the total pupils' talk was devoted to eliciting information, while Figure 11 on page 95 shows that about 1 minute (T=26) of the total pupils' talk was devoted to eliciting information.

From what I observed in game lessons, the majority of the questions that pupils asked from the teacher were when part of the instruction was not clear to them and they wanted the teacher to repeat her explanations or to give further explanations

and examples in Farsi. I observed that the use of L1 by the teacher and pupils when something was unclear to pupils was common in game-based lessons just as it was in traditional lessons. This could be due to the pupils' low English level preventing them from understanding some of the advanced words or expressing themselves in English. According to Moon (2000), the use of L1 when pupils do not have enough knowledge of English is helpful as it allows them to continue their communication with the teacher or their peers. Similarly, Macaro (2005) argues that the use of L1 should be present in L2 classrooms as it can facilitate L2 learning. He states that the avoidance of L1 results in increased usage of input modification (e.g. repetition, speaking more slowly, and substituting basic words for more complex ones), which might have a negative effect on any interaction and make the discourse less realistic. However, Cook (2001) argues that the teacher should control the amount of L1 in second language classroom otherwise pupils will rely on the L1 rather than focusing on the target language. He also states that the use of L1 by the teacher should also be controlled as pupils will rely on the teacher's translation and do not focus on the second language.

Observations revealed that pupil-pupil questioning was also common in language game-based lessons especially when they were working in pairs or groups to perform an activity or play a language game. For example, I observed that during a matching game, some questions were exchanged between pupils and the following example shows how this occurred:

Extract 22:

1. **Pupil 1:** how many cards you ↑have
2. **Pupil2:** I have two (.) you should take two cards
3. **Pupil1:** teacher only two ↑cards
4. **Teacher:** yes (.) only two cards at a time

The above extract is an example of pupil-pupil questioning while pupils were playing a 'Pelmanism' game (See appendix 8 for the full description of the game). Line 1 of extract 22 shows that one of the pupils seemed to be confused about the rules of the game because she was unsure how many cards she was allowed to turn over at a time. Although the instructions of the games were usually given in both languages of English and Farsi, I sometimes observed that pupils did not fully understand the

instruction of the games as the games were new to them and they had to ask their teacher for repetition. However, I observed that sometimes pupils checked with their peers first to see if they could reply to their question(s) before they asked the teacher for repetition (line 1 and 2). In line 3, it is shown that although pupil 1 received an answer from her peer, she was still seeking for the teacher's approval. Once the pupil obtained the teacher's approval she carried on with the game with more confidence.

Further analysis of the data revealed that pupils' bidding to participate in classroom activities was more common in game lessons. Figures 27 and Figure 10 in page 94 show that this communicative act represented 3% (N= 14) of 468 pupils' communicative acts in traditional lessons and 20% (N= 173) of 869 pupils' communicative acts in game lessons. Also, comparison of data on Figure 28 and Figure 11 on page 95 shows that about 22 minutes (T=113) of the total time on pupils' talk was devoted to bidding compared to 0.46 (T=26) in traditional lessons. The increase in the bidding act in language game-based lessons was due to the use of language games which had created a motivating learning environment and encouraged pupils to voluntarily participate in the classroom activities. Moon (2000) argues that the fun element of language games keeps pupils motivated and interested in what they are learning which makes them want to become engaged in the activities and continue what they are doing. As in traditional lessons, pupils started bidding by raising their hands and saying "Teacher me" or just by saying "Teacher" repeatedly until the teacher asked them to give their answers. Another reason that bidding was more common in game lessons could be due to the fact that language games can reduce anxiety in class (Philips, 2001), and therefore pupils had become more relaxed and less concerned about making mistakes and being judged by their teacher or their peers.

Spontaneous contribution was another communicative act that I observed in game lessons. Even though this was not a very common communicative act, its use was more frequent in game-based lessons representing 0.64% (N= 4) of 468 compared to 3.22% (N= 28) of 869 communicative acts (Figures 27 and Figure 10 on page 94). Also Figure 28 shows that about 4 minutes (T=113) of the total time on pupils' talk was devoted to spontaneous contribution, while Figure 11 on page 95 shows that in traditional lessons only 0.11 minutes (T=26) was devoted to this communicative act. This communicative act included pupils' contributions in providing information or producing language items such as a word, phrase, or a sentence which was not

elicited by the teacher. For example, I witnessed that the teacher introduced some language items or produced a sentence and pupils reproduced them without the teacher asking them to do so. The following extract shows how pupils contributed spontaneously while playing a language game.

Extract 23:

1. **Teacher:** you should introduce your grandmother and mommy to the class (.)
2. for example (.) this is my grandmother and this is my mother (.) to the students
3. please (.)
4. Make yourself look like a grandmother (.) wear your glasses and talk like an
5. old lady
6. **Pupils:** {LG}
7. **Pupil1:** Yas (.) you look like a grandmother {LG}
8. **Pupil2:** wear your glasses
9. **Pupil 3:** she is my grandmother and she is my mother
10. **Teacher:** very good (.) thank you very much

Line 1 of extract 23 shows that the teacher invited pupils to play a role play game. The teacher started the game by explaining the game to pupils and providing an example of how they should introduce their mother and grandmother to their peers. Then (line 4), she told one of the pupils to wear her glasses and try to talk like an old lady. In line 7, it is shown that one of the pupils produced a language structure that was not elicited by the teacher but produced by the teacher earlier when explaining the instruction of the game. Similarly in line 8, another pupil suddenly said "wear your glasses" which was again a language structure produced by the teacher earlier when she was giving the instructions of the game. These examples show how the context of play provided an opportunity for pupils to reproduce the language items that they are exposed to and contribute spontaneously.

According to the teacher using role play games with learners in class is a great way to get pupils practicing the language items in a meaningful way and enhancing their communications kills in the target language. She said *"when pupils play roles in the classroom they are actually learning how to use the target language communicatively in real life situations outside of the classroom"*. This is also confirmed by Brewster et al (2004), who argues that dialogues and role plays are a useful way of practicing

meaningful communication with primary school pupils. He reports that dialogues and role plays provide fluency practice and are a means of extending language use and develop pupils' social skills of interaction.

Figure 29 was taken from a role play game while one of the pupils was wearing her glasses and acting like a grandmother.

Figure 29: Pupils playing a role play game

5.2.3. Teacher's feedback
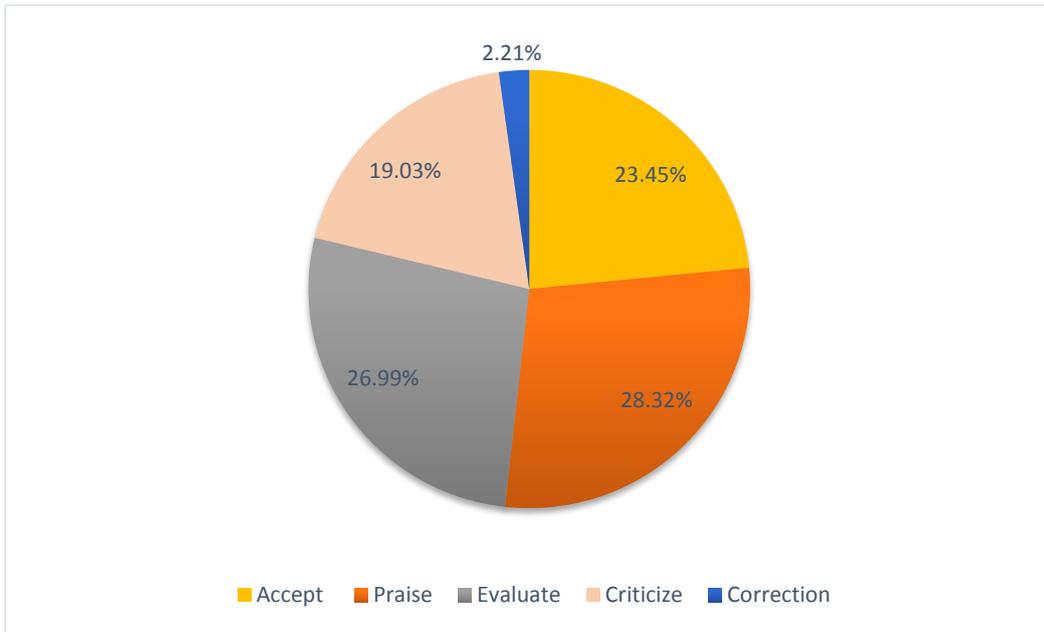
Figure 30: Distribution of Teacher's feedback in game lessons
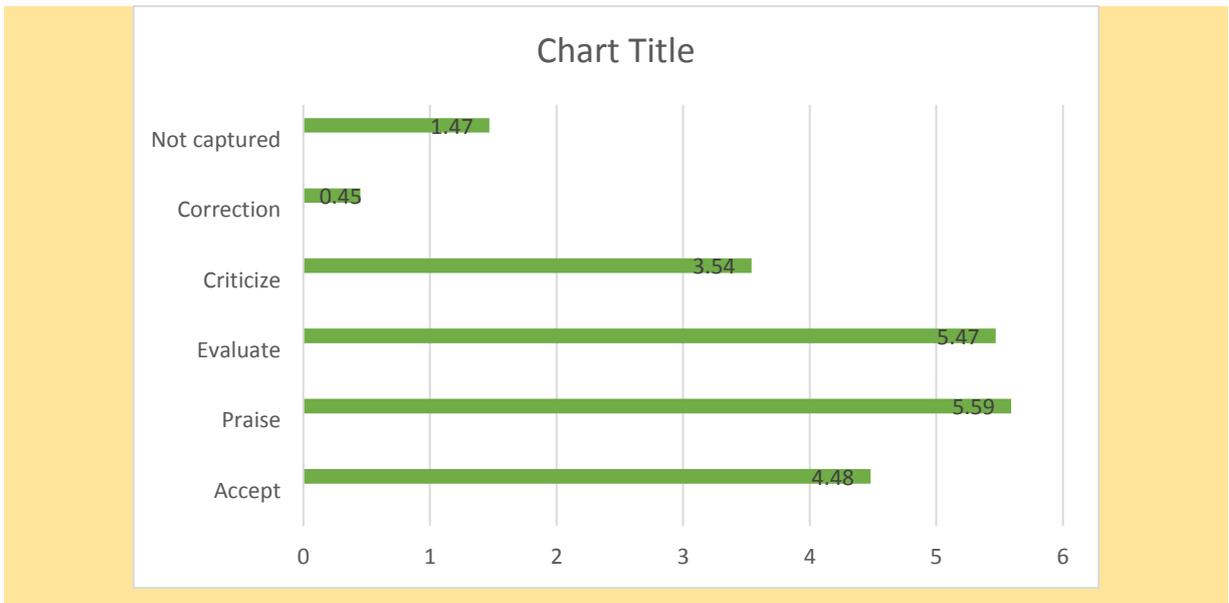
Figure 31: Time devoted to teacher's feedback in game lesson

Another important aspect of teacher's talk investigated in game-based lessons was teacher's feedback. Observations showed that the teacher's feedback was provided in different forms of accepting pupils' responses/performances, evaluating their responses/performances, praising and criticizing pupils. As displayed in Figure 30, praising pupils was the most common type of feedback in language game-based lessons. The comparison of data shows (Figures 30 and Figure 15 on page 101),

shows that praising pupils in game lessons accounted for 28% (N= 64) of 226 feedback comments compared to 5% (N= 9) of 172 feedback comments in traditional lessons which shows that the use of rewarding words by the teacher was more frequent in game-based lessons compared to traditional lessons. Also, Figure 31 shows that about 6 minutes (T=21) of the total time on teacher's feedback was devoted to praising pupils while Figure 16 shows that about 1 minute (T=31) was devoted to praising pupils. According to Smith and Heggins (2006), providing positive feedback on learner's performance can motivate and encourage students to participate more in classroom activities and this was evident from the increase in pupils' bidding in game lessons showing that they were more eager to participate in classroom activities (See Figure 27 and Figure 10 on page 94 for the comparison). Moreover, Brophy (1981) reports that providing positive feedback by the teacher can increase students' self-esteem and build a closer relationship between the teacher and pupils. Again the fact that pupils showed more interest to bid and participate in classroom activities could be due to the use of positive feedback which had increased their self-esteem as Brophy (1981) reports.

According to the teacher the reason why she provided pupils with positive feedback in game lessons was because she wanted to motivate her pupils to participate more in the activities. She said that:

> "I could see that some of my pupils who rarely participate in classroom activities were eager to participate in language games, therefore by praising them and using rewarding words I wanted to encourage them and appreciate their participation".

The following extract is an example of how the teacher praised pupils with rewarding words after playing a guessing game:

Extract 24:

1. **Teacher**: now we want to play a guessing game (.)↑ ready
2. **Pupils:** yes
3. **Teacher:** okay (.) I draw a picture and you should guess the word for the
4. picture (.) the person who says the word first is the winner.
   <translation> [من یک نقاشی میکشم هر کس که اول حدس بزند که چی است برنده اس]
5. **Teacher:** okay (.) now guess what this picture is
6. **Pupil1:** triangle
7. **Teacher:** well done Samira (.) excellent (.) Samira is our first winner

Line 1 of extract 24 shows the teacher invited pupils to play a guessing game. Then in line 3 and 4, the teacher gave the instruction of the language game in English and Farsi so that pupils can fully comprehend the teacher's explanations. The teacher explained to pupils that she was going to draw a picture on the blackboard and pupils had to guess what the picture was. After the teacher gave the instruction of the game, she asked pupils if they could guess the word for the picture she was drawing. I observed that one of the pupils sitting at the back of the classroom shouted out the word "Triangle" and the teacher praised the pupil for her correct response with some rewarding words (line 7). The purpose of this language game was to revise the vocabulary that the teacher had taught earlier and by playing this game she wanted to check pupils' understanding of the meaning of the words.

Correcting pupils' errors was another type of feedback used by the teacher in language game-based lessons. As discussed in Chapter 2, corrective feedback is a kind of feedback that teachers use to inform learners of their mistakes and by pointing out their mistakes learners will be informed of what was wrong in their language production and how it should be corrected (Gass, 1997). Figures 28 and Figure 14 on page 101 show that this type of feedback represented about 2% (N= 5) of 226 feedback in game lessons compared to 25% (N= 43) of 172 feedback in traditional lessons. Also, comparison of data on Figure 31 and Figure 16 on page 101 shows that in game lessons only 0.45 minutes (T=21) of the total time on teacher's feedback was devoted to correction, while in traditional lessons 8 minutes (T=31) was devoted to correcting pupils errors.

The reason why this type of feedback was less frequent in game lessons could be due to the fact that in game lessons pupils had more chance to interact with each other and therefore practice the target language communicatively which could have helped with pupils' language development (Ellis, 1999). Based on Long's (1983) interaction hypothesis theory, the interactional collaboration among peers can lead to second language development. Moreover, second language learners are more likely to achieve better levels of comprehension of the new input in their effort to communicate through interaction (Ellis, 1999; Long 2006). Furthermore, the teacher believed the fact that pupils voluntarily contributed and produced the language items could have helped them make fewer errors. As discussed in section 4.3.2, spontaneous contribution was one of the pupils' communicative acts observed in the Iranian EFL classroom and although this communicative act was not very common in

either of lessons, its rate in game lessons was higher compared to traditional lessons (see Figures 27 and Figure 10 on page 94). This could be due to the fun and enjoyable atmosphere of the classroom created by the use of language games that motivated pupils participate more in classroom activities (Philips, 2001).

Another possible reason for corrective feedback being less frequent in game lessons could be due to the fact that since in game lessons pupils were working in pairs and groups and the teacher was not involved in their communication, it is possible that the teacher did not recognise all of the pupils' errors to correct them. Also, it could be that the teacher recognised pupils' errors but she ignored them to prevent interrupting their conversation. As discussed in Chapter 2, incorrectness is one of the disadvantages of using pair and group work in classroom (Harmer, 2001), as the teacher might not be able to identify all of the pupils' errors or if she identifies them she might not want to interrupt them and let them speak freely (Midgley et al, 2000).

Observations showed that in game-based lessons the teacher dealt differently with pupils' errors. I witnessed that when pupils made errors during the games, the teacher did not interrupt them to correct their errors and let them continue the game. According to the teacher, she did not correct pupils' errors during the games as she did not want to demotivate or discourage them by interrupting them and pointing out their errors; however she said that she did not ignore their errors and corrected them when the game was finished. The teacher's statement corresponds largely with suggestions from CLT practice that teachers should not interrupt students to correct their errors when they are in the middle of communication with their peers or the teacher (unless the error leads to a breakdown in communication), as too much error correction may easily discourage and thereby demotivate the student (Whong, 2011).

According to Cashin (1979), providing negative feedback in the classroom can create a tense and stressful atmosphere and therefore he suggests that when teachers provide negative feedback they should make it clear that the comment relates to a particular task or performance and not on the student as person. Moreover, he argues that negative comments should be protected with a compliment about aspects of the task in which student succeeded. The following extract is an example of how the teacher patiently corrected pupils' errors while protecting the negative comment with a compliment about the good use of vocabulary.

Extract 25:

1. **Teacher:** okay (.) now I am going to divide you into groups of four (.) I want
2. each of you to play the role of a family member for example (.) father (.)
3. mother (.) brother and sister (.) the rest of the class should guess from your
4. role play whether you are a father (.) mother (.)
5. brother or a sister

> حالا شما را به گروه های چهار نفره تقسیم میکنم.ازای هر گروه باید یک نقشی را اجرا کنند و بقیه از] روی اجرایشان حدسبزنن که آن شخص چه نقشی را اجرا میکند. نقش ها باید نقشه پدر، مادر، مادربزرگ، خواهر و بردار یک خانواده باشد. [<translation>

6. **Teacher:** okay (.) the play starts (.) stand right in front of the classroom face to
7. your classmates
8. **Pupil1 (Maryam):** okay Faeze (.) I cook for lunch and you go to school
9. **Pupil2 (Faeze):** ((pretends to be crying)) no (.) I don't want to go to school
10. **Pupil3 (Setareh):** no Faeze go to school (.) I know you are shying
11. **Pupil4 (Sarah):** I go to play football
12. **Teacher:** okay (.) who is the mother of the ↑family
13. **Pupils:** Maryam is the mother of the family
14. **Teacher:** who is the sister of the ↑family
15. **Pupil:** Faeze is the sister of the family
16. **Teacher:** who is the father of the ↑ family
17. **Pupils:** Setareh is the father of the family
18. **Teacher:** and who is the brother of the ↑ family
19. **Pupil:** Sarah is the brother of the family
20. **Teacher:** okay Setareh (.) you said she is shying (.) well done for using this
21. word but you should have said you are shy not you are shying
22. **Teacher:** thank you very much (.)that was a great performance (.) you can
23. now go back to your seats

In line 1 of extract 25, the teacher divided pupils into groups of four and asked them to play a role play game. She asked each member of the group to perform the role of a family member and the rest of the pupils had to guess the role of each player. In line 8, one of the pupils used the word "cook" to give hints to pupils that she was playing the role of a mother who was cooking for her family. Similarly, another pupil used the word "football" as a clue to tell pupils that she was playing the role of the brother of a family. In line 10, it is shown that one of the pupils who was playing the role of the father made a grammatical error during her role play, however the teacher did not interrupt her and let her continue talking. Once all participants played their roles, I observed that the teacher corrected the pupil's error and also praised her for her choice of word. This was unlike in traditional lessons where the teacher corrected pupils' errors immediately right after it occurred (see extract 12 in page 103). Finally,

the teacher praised all the participants for their participation and asked them to get back to their seats.

Criticizing pupils was another type of feedback provided by the teacher in game lessons. I witnessed that as in traditional lessons, the teacher criticised pupils when they misbehaved or made a noise in the classroom. Although literature on language games stresses that language games reduces tension in class and provide a relaxing atmosphere in the classroom (Philips, 2001), calculations of the data shown in Figure 28, reveals that the use of language games did not reduce the amount of teacher's criticisms in game lessons. In fact the comparison of data in Figures 28 and Figure 15 on page 101 shows that the teacher's criticisms increased from 9% (N= 16) of 179 feedback in traditional lessons to 19% (N = 43) of 226 feedback in game lessons. also comparison of data on Figure 31 and Figure 16 on page 101 shows that in game lessons about 3.54 minutes (T=21) of the total time devoted to teacher feedback was devoted to criticizing while in traditional lessons 2.51 minutes (T=31) was devoted to criticizing pupils. This could be due to the fact that the teacher was very concerned about pupils' making a noise in the classroom and since in game lessons pupils had become excited about the use of language games, they created more noise and thereby they were more criticised by the teacher. I witnessed that when the teacher criticised pupils she warned them that if they shout or misbehave they will be excluded from the game. In my opinion this was an effective approach to use with pupils as they were so eager to participate in the games that did not want to be excluded, therefore they were trying to play quietly.

According to the teacher, pupils' noise during the games can be disturbing for other classrooms, therefore she suggested that pupils should play type of games that do not create a lot of noise in the class. She said that *"My main concern is that when pupils make a noise it will disturb other teachers and pupils in the next door classrooms and I feel I have to constantly control their volume".* She believed that teachers should not let the noise go for long as it will be more of a challenge to stop it later.

However, I observed that as in traditional lessons the teacher criticised pupils in Farsi, as she believed that it is more effective and makes her feel to have more control over the classroom. The following extract shows how the teacher criticized a pupil when she was making a noise during a language game.

Extract 26:

1. **Teacher:** ↑ Setare don't shout
2. **Teacher:** if you don't listen to what I say you cannot play the game
    <translation> [نگین الان میخواهیم بازی کنیم اگر به توضیحات من گوش نکنی نمیتونی بازی کنی]
3. **Pupil:** ↑no teacher please (.) I stay quiet

In the above extract, it is shown that one of the pupils was creating a lot of noise in the classroom while playing a language games and in line 2, the teacher warned her that if she does not play the game quietly, she will not be able to continue to play the game. However, since the pupil did not want to be excluded from the game, she told the teacher that she will stay quiet (line3). This seemed to be an effective approach to discipline pupils in game-based lessons as I witnessed that every time the teacher used this strategy with pupils they immediately calmed down and told the teacher that they will play quietly.

5.3. Conclusions regarding teachers' and pupils' talk in traditional and games-based lessons

Based on the findings of the study, I found that there were noticeable differences between traditional and language game-based lessons in most of the elements investigated. The findings of the game-based lessons revealed that the main difference between the game-based and traditional language lessons was that in game-based lessons pupils were able to interact with each other through pair and group work and they were also able to scaffold each other where required. By contrast, in traditional lessons pupils did not have chance to interact with each other and they were more dependent on the teacher when they needed to be assisted in a task. It was also found that due to the fun, exciting, and relaxing learning environment created by the use of language games, the teacher praised pupils more than she did in traditional lessons.

The video recordings revealed that the structure of the game-based lessons was very similar to the traditional lessons in that the teacher started the sessions by checking pupils' homework, reviewing the previously taught language items, and introducing the new language item. However, the main difference between the game-based and traditional lessons was that in game-based lessons the teacher usually asked pupils to work in pairs or groups when doing activities in the classroom, whilst in traditional

lessons there was no pair or group work involved. Moreover, in game lessons it was observed that the type of activities that the teacher used with pupils provided an opportunity for them to interact with each other in a meaningful way but in traditional lessons pupils were deprived of this interactive learning environment where they could practice the target language meaningfully and the only way they could practice the language items was through choral repetition.

Another distinctive feature of game-based lessons was the use of visual aids such as pictures and cards for introducing new language items. For example, it was observed that in game lessons the teacher introduced some new vocabulary for the weather such as windy, sunny, rainy, and foggy by showing some pictures. Then she gave out some pictures and a series of vocabulary for the weather which were prepared beforehand and asked pupils to work in groups of four in order and match the words with the right pictures. Similar tasks with the use of pictures were used in game-based lessons which provided an opportunity for the pupil to interact with each other and discuss the meaning of the new vocabulary. This is unlike the traditional lessons in which choral repetition was the only way for pupils to practice the new language items.

5.4. Semi-structured interviews with the teacher

5.4.1. Interview with the teacher before using language games

The interview started by asking the teacher about her preferred teaching method with pupils in her classroom. She replied that:

> *"Personally I am not used to applying Communicative Language Teaching method in my classroom as this is not how I was taught English by my teachers. I have used Grammar Translation Method for many years now and I have found it an effective approach to use with beginner language learners who do not have enough knowledge of English to express themselves properly or fully understand teacher's explanations in English".*

Based on the teacher's response it is understood that the teacher preferred the Grammar Translation Method as she believed that this method is suitable for beginner learners with low English level.

The teacher was also asked whether she had ever used language games in her classroom and her opinion about using language games with young learners. The teacher said that:

> *"I have used language games in my classroom a few times and that was at the end of the session when we had extra time and pupils enjoyed it a lot. However, sometimes pupils became too excited and made a lot of noise which was disturbing for other classrooms".*

The teacher also added that:

> *"I stopped using language games when I received complaints from few of the pupils' parents who believed that games should be played outside of the classroom in pupils' free time and not during the lesson in the classroom."*

The teacher said that pupils' parents were thinking that she was wasting time in the classroom and not taking the lessons serious, therefore, she stopped playing games to satisfy the parents as she did not want to receive any more complaints. From the teacher's responses it could be said that the pedagogical value of the language games is not recognised by the teacher and she merely used language games for fun and not for developing pupils' language learning. Based on the teacher's response as well as my own experience as a teacher of young language learners in Iran I would say that most of the pupils' parents do not value language games and if a teacher plays language games in class pupils' parents will consider it as a waste of time or they might think that the teacher is not doing enough of work in the classroom, so I realize why the teacher stopped using language games in her classroom.

The teacher was also asked whether she had any experience of training sessions for using language games with pupils in her classrooms. She replied that she never had any training sessions other than reviewing handbooks including some language games. Based on the teacher's response as well as my personal experiences in Iran as a trainee, I could say that teacher training centres in Iran such as colleges, Universities, and teacher training schools do not value the use of language games in language classrooms and that is the reason why these centres do not provide their trainees with appropriate techniques for using language games. The teachers also

said that their teachers never used language games with them so this could mean that their teachers also had not been trained to use language games in their classes.

5.4.2. Interview with the teacher after using language games

After the use of language games, the teacher was invited again for another interview session to ask her opinion about including language games in their lessons. The teacher was asked to explain what she thought about using language game for teaching a lesson. She said that:

> *"this was the first time for me to teach a lesson through language games. I always looked at language games as fun activities which can be used to fill in the extra time at the end of the session and never used them as a teaching device but now I have realized that they can be more than just fun activities".*

This suggests that the teacher had developed a positive perception towards language games as she had come to the realization that language games have some pedagogical values and they are not merely designed for having fun. The teacher said that she thinks using language games is a great way to revise and reinforce the taught language items and is also a great way to introduce the new language items in a more fun and enjoyable way.

The teacher was also asked to explain what differences she found between traditional and language game-based lessons. The teacher said that she thinks in language game-based lessons most pupils were interested to participate in classroom activities while in traditional lessons only some pupils participated in the activities. She said that:

> *"In traditional lessons I usually have to nominate pupils to respond to my questions but I was surprised to see that those pupils who I usually nominate to respond to my questions voluntarily replied to my questions".*

The evidence for the teacher's response can be found in Figures 20 and Figure 7 in page 79 showing that pupils' bidding was much more common in game lessons compared to traditional lessons. She also added that in language game-based lessons pupils had more chance to talk in English because of the use of language games but in traditional lessons they had less chance to use the target language communicatively.

The next question was asked from the teacher to find out whether her behaviour was different with pupils in game-based lessons compared to traditional lessons. The teacher said that she was more flexible with pupils and less strict in the classroom as pupils were so excited about using language games and the teacher wanted to keep the excitement in the classroom. She said that:

"I think I was less strict with pupils and gave more freedom to them in the classroom. In game-based lessons I did not feel that I had to control pupils as much as I did in traditional lessons and I think that was because of the friendly atmosphere of the classroom".

The final question asked the teacher whether she found any difficulties with using language games in her classroom. The teacher replied that when pupils were working in pairs or groups she had less control over their language production and if they made any errors she was not able to correct them. The teacher said that *"if pupils make errors during pair or group work I will not know and will not be able to correct their errors".* This attitude of the teacher that pupils' errors should be corrected immediately was observed in the teacher's practice in traditional lessons showing that the teacher strongly believes that pupils' errors should not be neglected. The teacher also said that pupils made a lot of noise during the games and that can be disturbing for other classrooms so it is important to play the language games that do not create a lot of noise in the classroom.

My impression from the discussions I had with the teacher about the use of language games was that after using the games, the teacher developed a positive perception about language games and she recognised the pedagogical value of the games. However, the negative attitudes of the parents towards the use of language games in the classroom and the noise created by pupils while playing the language games were two important issues raised by the teacher. Therefore, it can be concluded that in order for the Iranian EFL teachers to be able to continue to use the games with more confidence, they need to look for ways to convey the importance of language games to parents. Also in regards to pupils' noise teachers should find out how with proper classroom management they can deal with the pupils' noise with more confidence.

5.5. Conclusions from the teacher interviews

The findings of the semi-structured interviews revealed that before using language games, the teacher preferred to use the grammar translation method with pupils in her classroom. The teacher believed that this is an appropriate method for beginner learners who do not have enough knowledge of English for communication and it is also an easy method to apply as it does not need any preparation. In the interview session, the teacher said that she had used language games before, but she only used them as fun activities and not as a teaching device. She also believed that language games had created a fun and exciting atmosphere in the classroom which had made pupils more willing to participate in the classroom activities and be able to practice the English language more than they did in traditional lessons. Moreover, the teacher found that due to the use of language games she was more patient with pupils and provided pupils with more positive feedback than they did in traditional lessons. Although the teachers found some difficulties with using language games in her classroom, the interview results shows that the teacher developed a positive perception about language games and found them as an effective approach for teaching English to young language learners.

Chapter Six: Conclusions

6.1. Study achievements and its contribution to theory

As indicated in chapter 1, there was a general criticism of language teaching in Iran that language learners are deprived of opportunities to talk and interact with each other in the target language and the socio-cultural aspect of the English language is neglected by the teachers in Iranian EFL classrooms (Kariminia & Salehi, 2007). It was also discussed that the classroom talk is dominated by the teacher and there is little or no chance for pupils to communicate with each other in the target language in a meaningful way (Kiany & Shayestefar, 2010). On the other hand, in the literature review chapter the importance of classroom talk, social interaction and communication based on the socio-cultural theory of Vygotsky (1978) was greatly emphasized, as it is believed that talk and interaction in classroom can provide an opportunity for the learners to practice the target language and therefore it can facilitate their language development (Corden, 2000). In addition, the good quality of talk based on the interaction hypothesis theory of Long (1983), which referred to meaningful interaction and communication among interlocutors, was greatly emphasized as it is argued that it can facilitate the language learning process (Ellis, 1999; Gass, 1997; Long, 2006). Therefore, the study aimed to discover whether the principles of the teaching and learning based on the socio-cultural theory which considers the contributions made by society to help with individual development through interaction or mediation (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006), is useful and applicable in the Iranian context.

Looking at the findings of the study from a theoretical perspective, it could be said that the findings of the study illustrate in practice the value of Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory (1978), as the use of language games provided an opportunity for the pupils to work together collaboratively in pairs and/or groups and they were able to talk and interact with each other as well as their teacher in the classroom. For example, in game lessons pupils initiated more questions and elicited more information from the teacher and/or their peers. Moreover, in game lessons pupils reacted more to the teacher's instructions and they also made more bids to participate in classroom activities, which shows that the use of language games changed the nature of interactions towards being more pupil-centred and hence contributed to the social part of the Vygotsky's (1978) socio-cultural theory.

Furthermore, the fact that the teacher and pupils responded positively to language games was a contribution to the cultural aspect of the socio-cultural theory, as it showed that language games are culturally accepted in the Iranian context. Based on the socio-cultural theory of Vygotsky the way children learn to process, interpret, and encode their world depends on the cultural context in which they have grown and developed (Vygotsky 1978). Similarly Ferdman (1991) argues that there is a relationship between literacy and culture. He believes that each of us maintain an image of the behaviours, beliefs, values, and norms, which is appropriate to members of the ethnic group/s we belong and he refers to it as *Cultural identity* (Ferdman: 348). Therefore, there was a possibility that the idea of using language games that are practiced by people with beliefs, norms, and values that were developed within western society might not work in a Middle Eastern country. For example, as it was discussed in the literature review chapter, Iranian EFL teachers believe in traditional teaching methods (Kariminia & Salehi, 2007), which can be due their cultural beliefs that make them believe learning environments should be solemn and formal (Sorayaei, 2012). Therefore it was possible that the Iranian teacher would not respond positively to language games. Also, it was possible that pupils were influenced by the cultural beliefs in Iran and they were used to their formal lessons, and hence might not respond positively to language games.

However, the findings of the study showed that this was not the case in the Iranian EFL classroom and both the teacher and pupils responded positively to the language games. The findings of the study showed that in game lessons pupils had become more motivated to participate in classroom activities as they made more bids compared to traditional lessons. This is in line with the statement by Uberman (1988), who argues that the use of language games can create a relaxing atmosphere in classrooms which can motivate pupils to participate more in classroom activities (Moon, 2000). Moreover, the findings showed that the teacher praised pupils more in game lessons and used more of rewarding words. This can be again due to the fact that the use of language games had reduced the tension and created a relaxing atmosphere in the classroom (Schultz & Fisher, 1988).

In addition, the findings of the study support Long's (1983) interaction hypothesis theory which emphasises on the quality of talk through meaningful interaction among interlocutors (Ellis, 1999). The quality of talk in the Iranian EFL classroom was enhanced through the use of language games which created meaningful interaction

between the teacher and pupils and among pupils where they could negotiate the meaning of the language items. For example, when the teacher taught the new vocabulary for the family members or the weather, she did not merely ask pupils to imitate the words to practice their pronunciation (as she did in traditional lessons), but she invited pupils to use the words meaningfully in sentences through playing language games (i.e. Pantomime and role play), which could be considered as illustrative of Long's (1983) hypothesis theory.

The findings of the study also showed that the use of language games provided scaffolding opportunity for pupils through interacting with their peers and their teacher. According to Vygotsky (1978), when children interact with people around them, whether they are more knowledgeable and capable such as their teachers and parents, or they are less capable ones such as their peers, they can understand and do things much better than on their own (Lantolf, 2004). The findings of the study showed that due to the use of language games which had created opportunity for the pupils to work together in pairs and/or groups, they were able to assist each other during the activities, which illustrates scaffolding in practice. Additionally, the use of TPR activities in this study can be considered as continuous application of scaffolding strategy (Vygotsky, 1986), and that is because the person who provides the commands has to provide comprehensible input so that receivers of knowledge are able to comprehend the information and respond to the commands (Cantoni, 1996). For instance, when pupils were playing a pantomime to practice the vocabulary for the weather or family members, one pupil had to assist the other to guess the right word through her play and the pupil had to guess and produce the word and, based on the definition of scaffolding by Vygotsky (1986), this can be considered as peer scaffolding.

However, the use of peer scaffolding did not only occur during the TPR activities, but it also happened when pupils had difficulty performing a task during pair or group work or when they gave incorrect responses while doing a task. In other words, the fact that in game lessons pupils had opportunity to interact and communicate with each other, not only allowed them to have a meaningful communication with each other, but it also provided opportunity for the pupils to support and assist each other as required. Therefore, it can be concluded that the introduction of language games in the Iranian EFL classroom demonstrate the relevance of Vygotsky's (1978) socio-cultural theory in this context, as well as the concept of scaffolding, and Long's

(1983) interaction hypothesis theory; all of which contribute to the cognitive development of language learners.

6.2 Contributions and pedagogical implications of the study

This study presents evidence that teachers and pupils responded positively to the opportunities provided for them through language games which means that the outcome of the study can be used for the improvement of English language teaching methods in Iran. For example, as both teachers mentioned in the interview sessions, Iranian EFL teachers have not been trained to use language games in their classrooms and they are not aware of the pedagogical values of the language games. Therefore, the outcomes of the study can be used for training Iranian EFL teachers to increase their awareness of the pedagogical values of using language games in teaching the English language. Teacher education and training plays an important role in developing school curriculum and students' learning outcomes (OECD, 2012), as teachers are the main actors in classroom and have the potential to promote the learning process engaged in and also transform students' outcomes (OECD, 2012). Therefore, the improvement in teacher's performance will lead to improvement in the quality of education (Siddiqui, 2008).

Although Iranian EFL teachers may have been trained at Universities, Colleges, or teacher training institutes to be able to practice as a teacher, and possess professional knowledge when they start their teaching profession (Arasteh, 1962), it does not mean that there will be no need for them to have any further training or education for their professional development. As it is reported by Siddiqui (2008), pre-service training is not enough of itself for the development of teacher's profession and that is because of the rapid change of social, economic, and educational environment. Moreover, he states that the knowledge that teachers obtain by pre-service training should be kept alive and their technical skills need to be improved. Therefore, Siddiqui (2008) suggests that pre-service training should be supplemented by ongoing in-service training and professional development. The in-service teacher training can be provided for the Iranian teachers through teacher training schools or centres which coordinates professional development in different ways; for example providing up-grading courses, seminars on curriculum changes, new teaching approaches, and new teaching materials (OECD, 1998).

Based on the findings of this study, teacher trainers can educate the Iranian teachers about the benefits of the language games and their impact on pupils' language development. They can also inform the Iranian EFL teachers of the influence of their behaviour on the level of interaction in the classroom and how the use of interactive methods can change the nature of interactions from a teacher dominant to an interactive classroom. In addition, the findings of the study can help with developing English teaching materials in Iran. As mentioned in the above paragraph, new teaching approaches and new teaching materials is one of the ways of professional development activities (OECD, 1998). Therefore, the findings of the study could be the starting point to inform the curriculum planners and text book designers of the importance of the language games and how their use in the Iranian EFL classrooms can be beneficial in terms of providing an interactive learning environment. This can be done by attending conferences and giving presentations demonstrating the importance of language games (OECD, 1998).

6.3 Limitations of the study

As noted, the findings of the study can make great contributions in developing English teaching methods in Iran, however, I should mention that like most studies, this study is not definitive but is based on a sample of learners learning a specific language in a particular context. Therefore, the main limitation of the study is that the obtained results cannot be generalized to other contexts or other populations. For example, although in this research two EFL teachers were involved, both traditional and game lessons were taught by one teacher. Therefore, I am curious to know whether similar results would have been obtained if the lessons were taught by a different teacher in a different classroom or even a different setting with different groups of pupils.

In other words, if two or even more classrooms from a different setting were involved in this study, the findings could have been compared with each other to see whether similar results would have been obtained. However, this was not feasible for me to do in this research for two reasons; first, because of the relatively small-scale nature of this research which limited me in terms of the size of my sample group and context, and the second reason was due to lack of having personal connections in other

Iranian schools. As discussed earlier, gaining access to Iranian schools is extremely difficult if one does not have connections in the schools and it is almost impossible for a stranger to get into the school and observe the classrooms and /or interview with teachers.

Moreover, since this study is a relatively small-scale piece of research and could only investigate limited aspects of classroom interaction and language learning, further research is required to explore the factors affecting the use of language games and thereby the nature of interactions between the teacher and pupils in the Iranian context or other contexts. In the following section I am making some suggestions for other researchers who are interested in this particular area of research to investigate the following factors that I found to be important for further exploration.

6.4. Suggestions for further research

My first suggestion for further research is to investigate the impact of language games on the nature of interactions in male-gender classrooms in the Iranian context. As mentioned earlier, single gender education is the practice of the Ministry of Education in Iran (Keddie, 2006), and since this study was conducted in a female gender classroom, it will be helpful to investigate whether or not the use of language games in male-gender classrooms would have the same impact on the nature of interactions in the Iranian EFL classrooms. Therefore, research on how boys react to language games and whether or not the use of language games in male-gender classrooms can change the nature of teacher's and pupils' interaction towards a more pupil- centred classroom would be helpful. The reason why I found this important is because boys behave in different ways to girls and are interested in different things (Francis, 2000), therefore it will be interesting to find out how they will react to language games and how the nature of interactions between the teacher and pupils and among pupils will be influenced by the introduction of language games. Moreover, it is possible that the teachers' perceptions towards the use of language game would be different in male-gender classrooms. For example, Francis (2000) reports that boys can be noisier compared to girls in classroom, therefore teachers may have to consider numerous factors before applying language games with boys. For instance, they may have to be selective of the type of language games or they

may be even reluctant to use language games with male students. On the other hand, Francis (2000) argues that boys are often allowed more competitive games in male-gender societies, so they might react positively to language games.

Another suggestion is for the researchers to investigate parents' perceptions towards the use of language games in the Iranian EFL classrooms. As the interview results revealed, one of the teachers was concerned about using language games with learners in the classroom and said that she had received complaints from the pupils' parents numerous times when she used language games in her classroom. The teacher said that parents believe that games are meant to be played outside of the classroom and not during the lesson and if a teacher plays language games in the classroom, parents will think that the teacher play games to fill in the time as they do not realize that games are not only for fun but they also have pedagogical values. Therefore, I suggest that investigating parents' perceptions about using language games in the Iranian EFL classrooms will be helpful because if we find that their perceptions towards language games are negative, then we can suggest ways to educate parents and inform them of the benefit of the language games. Also, once parents learn about the advantages of language games, they can use them with their children at home. The involvement of parents and other family members in the education of their children has been recognised for over forty years (DES, 1967), and has a significant role in improving academic achievements and social outcomes for children of all ages (Epstein, 2001; Jeynes, 2007; Hornby, 2011). Therefore, involving pupils' parents will not only increase the parents' awareness of the pedagogical values of the language games, but will also improve the pupils' educational outcomes.

Investigating the nature of classroom interaction between the teacher and pupils and among pupils in the EFL classrooms of the Iranian private language schools is my next suggestion. As indicated in Chapter 1, there is a difference between the state and private schools in Iran in terms of the teaching methods and the use of teaching materials such as text books (Borjian, 2013). Also as discussed in section 1.2, EFL teachers in the Iranian private language schools have tried to adapt their teaching methods with western countries and have imported the communicative language teaching through the text books that are imported from abroad. Therefore, by conducting research to investigate the nature of classroom interaction in the

Iranian EFL classroom of private language schools, we can find out to what extent the teachers and the schools have been successful in changing the nature of interactions in the classroom towards being more pupil-centred.

Another suggestion is to investigate how the confidence of Iranian EFL teachers to use language games in the classroom might be improved. As the findings of the study revealed, criticising pupils by teachers increased in game lessons and as teachers said in the interview sessions, they were concerned about the noise that pupils made during the language games and they felt that they had to constantly control the pupils' volume to prevent disturbing other classrooms. In my opinion, this should not prevent teachers from using language games and as Rixon (1988) argues, if pupils get excited about the language games teachers should take it as a complement. However, teachers can control the level of the noise by proper management (Doff, 1998). Therefore, a study can be conducted to investigate how teachers can control the level of the noise by a proper management and what strategies can be used for the teachers to improve their confidence in regards to the use of language games.

Finally as suggested by Orafi (2008), it would be beneficial to investigate the impact of language games on classroom interaction and language learning in an adult EFL setting. This is particularly beneficial for investigation in the Iranian context as based on my teaching experience in Iran, there is a common perception that games are only designed for children and young learners, so I think it is important to investigate what adult EFL learners think about the use of language games in their classrooms and how they react to the use of language games. Moreover, teachers' perceptions or even the students' perceptions about the use of language games in the Iranian adult EFL classrooms are also important to be considered for investigation. In addition, further research would need to demonstrate, in an Iranian context, a direct link between change in teacher's and pupils' talk (as demonstrated here) and improvement in learning that can be sustained over time.

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Appendix 1

Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) Coding scheme (Modified by the author)

Number	Label	Definition and Function
1	Marker	Realized by a closed class of items- 'well' , 'OK' ,'good' , 'right' , 'alright'. When a marker is acting as the head of a framing move, it has a falling intonation, as well as a silent stress. Its function is to mark boundaries in the discourse.
2	Starter	Realized by a statement, question or command. Its function is to provide information about or direct attention to or thought towards an area in order to make a correct response to the initiation more likely.
3	Elicitation	Realized by a question or a command. Its function is to request a linguistic response.
4	Checking	Realized by a closed class of polar questions concerned with being 'finished' or 'ready' having 'problems' or 'difficulties', being able to 'see' or to hear. They are 'real' questions, in that for once the teacher does not know the answer. If he does know the answer to, for example, 'have you finished', it is a directive, not a check. The function of checks is to enable the teacher to ascertain whether there are any problems preventing the successful progress of the lesson.
5	Direction	Realized by a command. Its function is to request a non-linguistic response.
6	Informative exchange	Realized by a statement. It differs from other uses of statement In that its sole function is to provide information. The only response is an acknowledgement of attention and understanding.
7	Teacher reply	Teacher answers questions asked by pupils.
8	Prompt	Realized by a closed class of items - 'go on', 'hurry up', 'quickly', 'have a guess'. Its function is to reinforce a directive or elicitation by

		suggesting that the teacher is no longer requesting a response but expecting or even demanding one
9	Modelling	"It is a type of prompt by a speaker (usually a teacher) intended to elicit an exact imitation" (Chaudron, 1988:45). It is realized by a language sample provided by the teacher as a model to be imitated by the learner.
10	Clue	Realized by a statement, question, command, or mood less item. It subordinate to the head of the initiation and functions by providing additional information which helps the pupil to answer the elicitation or comply with the directive.
11	Bidding	Realized by a closed class of verbal and non-verbal items- 'Sir', 'Miss', teacher's name, raised hand, heavy breathing, and finger clicking. Its function is to signal a desire to contribute to the discourse.
12	Spontaneous Contribution	Unelected (uninvited) contributions or challenge from pupil. Not a question (Smith, 2004).
13	Nomination	Realized by a closed class consisting of the names of all the pupils, 'you' with contrastive stress. 'Anybody", 'yes', and one or two idiosyncratic items such as 'who has not said anything yet'. The function of nomination is to call on or give permission to a pupil to contribute to the discourse.
14	Reply	Realized by statement, question or moodless item and non-verbal surrogate such as nods. Its function is to provide a linguistic response which is appropriate to the elicitation.
15	React	Realized by a non-linguistic action. Its function is to provide the appropriate non-linguistic response defined by the preceding directive.
16	Choral Repetition	Repetition: echo imitation of a word modelled by another person (usually a teacher) in the

		case of language learning (Allwright & Bailey 1991: 142).
17	Pupils Eliciting	Pupil asks for clarification, repetition or permission to do something
18	Praise	Realised by providing positive feedback using words like very good, excellent, thank you by the teacher for correct answers or good attempts (Flander, 1971).
19	Accept	Realized by a closed class of items- 'yes', 'no', 'fine', and repetition of pupils' reply, all with neutral low fall intonation. Its function is to indicate that the teacher has heard or seen and that the informative, reply or react was appropriate.
20	Evaluate	Realized by statements and tag questions, including words and phrases such as 'good', 'interesting' , 'team point', commenting on the quality of the reply, react or initiation, also by 'yes', 'no', 'good', 'fine', with a high-fall intonation, and repetition of the pupil's reply with either high-fall (positive), or a rise of any kind of negative evaluation).
21	Criticise	Criticise rejecting the behaviour of students, telling the student his response is not correct or acceptable and communicating by words or intonation criticism, displeasure, annoyance, rejection (Chaudron, 1988).
22	Correct	Realized by correcting the pupils' wrong answer using different corrective techniques. For example, teacher asks pupil to try again, teacher herself corrects the errors, teacher transfers the question to another pupil or to the whole class, and teacher ignores the error.
23	Pupils correcting	Realized by statements that pupils used on their peers to correct their wrong answer/s. For example, a pupil gave an incorrect response and her peer corrected the error and gave the right answer.

24	Pupils Evaluating	Realized by statements including phrases or statements that pupils use on their peers to evaluate their responses. For example, a pupil makes an error and their peers say that her answer is wrong by saying "No that's wrong", but they do not give the correct answer.
25	Jokes	Realized by statements or phrases which makes pupils laugh and releases tension in class (Allwright, 1980)

Modifications to Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) observation framework

Acts added to list of categories	Acts withdrawn from the list of categories
Teacher Reply (Aldabbus, 2008)	Cue
Model (Chaudron, 1988:45)	Acknowledge
Spontaneous contribution (Smith, 2004)	Comment
Choral repetition (Allwright & Bailey 1991: 142; Flander, 1971)	Silent stress
Pupils elicit	Metastatement
Praise (Flander, 1971; Nunan, 1989)	Conclusion
Criticize (Chaudron, 1988; Nunan, 1989)	Loop
Correct (Lyster & Ranta, 1997)	Aside
Jokes (Flander, 1971)	
Pupils evaluate	
Pupils correct	

Appendix 2

Examples of interview questions for clarifying the teacher's practice

Number	Extract	Observer	Teacher
1	**Teacher:** Ok, How are you today? **Pupils:** I'm fine thanks you and you? **Teacher:** I'm fine thanks. **Teacher:** Where did you go yesterday after school? **Pupils:** I went home **Teacher:** What did you do at home? **Pupils:** I did my homework	Why do you usually start the session by asking referential questions?	*Based on my experience even shy pupils are willing to participate in the beginning of the session when it is time for greetings as they are not worried about being judged by the teacher or their peers.*
2	**Teacher:** Ok…open your books to page 30… Who is she? Grandmother (.) Grandmother means (بزرگ مادر)…repeat after me Grandmother **Pupils:** Grandmother **Teacher:** Grand ma **Pupils:** Grand ma **Teacher:** Grand ma is an informal form of grandmother. ↑ repeat after me grand ma **Pupils:** Grand ma **Teacher:** Grand ma **Pupils:** Grand ma **Teacher:** Grandfather. Who is he? Grandfather means (پدر بزرگ)	I noticed that you asked pupils to repeat the new language games for several times. What was the purpose of this?	*This allows pupils to practice the pronunciation of the new language items and it also allows the teacher to check the pupils' pronunciation which means that if pupils do not pronounce the words correctly the teacher could recognize and correct it immediately.*

3	**Teacher:** Ok, now who has a grandmother in this class? **Pupils:** Me teacher **Teacher:** Good, who has a grandfather? **Pupils:** Teacher I have a grandfather **Teacher:** Good, now who has both of them? **Pupils:** Me	I noticed that after teaching the new words and modelling the language items, you asked pupils some referential question and included the new words in the questions, could you explain why?	*"I think this is a good way of checking pupils' comprehension of the lesson, however I do not have to always ask questions to check pupils' comprehension as I can usually tell by their facial expressions when there is need for further explanations".*
4	**Teacher:** What is this? ((The teacher holds up a CD)) **Pupils:** It is a CD **Teacher:** What are these? ((The teacher holds up 3 CDs)) **Pupils:** They are CDs **Teacher:** What is this? ((She holds a ruler)) **Pupils:** It is a ruler **Teacher:** What are these? ((She holds two rulers)) **Pupils:** They are rulers	Why do you use Display questions more often than display questions?	*Asking display questions can encourage pupils to participate more in classroom activities as they require short answers such as single words or short phrases and this makes pupils with lower level of English feel safer to reply and participate.*
5	**Teacher:** Now close your books we want to play a game. Sara, Maryam, and Negin (.)come to the blackboard… I say an action verb and you should perform it. **Pupils:** What teacher? Can you repeat please? **Teacher:** من یک فعلی را نام می برم و شما باید ان را انجام دهید (ا say an action verb and you should perform it	Why did you usually nominate some of the pupils to perform the game?	*The main reason for nominating competent and active pupils first is to provide an opportunity for the weaker pupils to watch and learn from more capable pupils and become more confident in their performances.*

Appendix 3:

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Questions asked before using language games:

1. What is your preferred method to use with your pupils in the classroom? Why?
2. Have you ever used language games with your learners in the classroom?
3. What do you think about using language games with language learners?
4. Have you had any training experience of language games?

Questions asked after using language games:

1. What did you think about using language games for teaching the English language?
2. What differences did you find between traditional and language game-based lessons?
3. Do you think your behaviour was different with pupils in language game-based lessons compared to traditional lessons?
4. Did you find any difficulties with using language games in your classroom?

Appendix 4

UNIVERSITY OF
Southampton
School of Education

From: ERGO [mailto:ergo@soton.ac.uk]
Sent: 03 November 2012 16:16
To: Parsons S.J
Subject: Ethics ID: 3898 has been reviewed and approved

Submission Number: 3898
Submission Name: Impact of language games on classroom interaction.
This email is to let you know one of your student submissions has been reviewed and approved by the ethics committee.

ERGO: Ethics and Research Governance Online
http://www.ergo.soton.ac.uk

Appendix 5

UNIVERSITY OF
Southampton
School of Education

Teacher research participation consent form

Title of project: The impact of language games on classroom interaction in Iranian Primary English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom

Researcher: Mona Mohabbatsafa

Ethics Number: RGO 3898

Purpose of the research:

The purpose of this research is to investigate the nature of classroom interaction in Iranian Primary EFL classrooms and also find out how language games will have an impact on classroom interaction

Procedures to be followed:

Classroom observation through video recording will be conducted to explore what is happening in the classroom during traditional language teaching and during the introduction of language games. I am interested in the interactions between teachers and pupils as well as between pupils. Additionally the teachers involved in the study will be asked to take part in two stimulated recall interviews to discuss the interactions that were observed. This will involve watching some of the video-recordings from the classroom and discussing these with the researcher. Teachers will also be asked for their views on language- games before and after the study in an interview that will take approximately 30 minutes and be conducted in the teacher's native language.

Risks: The risks in this study are minimal. (i.e. no greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life). All recording will be unobtrusive and will not be shown to anyone else outside of this study.

Confidentiality:

The information gathered from this study will be kept confidential. Your real name or any personal information will not be used in the report and all files, transcripts, and data will be stored in a safe place that no one except the researcher will have access to. However, your images from the video-recordings will be used in the thesis for demonstrating the data.

Benefits for participation: It is likely that the findings of this study will add to the teacher's knowledge about teaching methods to young language learners and also gives some awareness of possible advantages and disadvantages of using language games in Iranian Primary EFL classrooms.

Voluntary participation:

Your participation is voluntary. If you believe you have been in any way coerced into participation, please inform the researcher. Also, you may choose not to answer any question(s) that makes you uncomfortable.

Termination of participation:

You may choose to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Questions regarding the research:

Any questions or concerns regarding the research should be directed to my supervisors Dr Sarah Parsons or Dr Julia Huettner at University of Southampton. You can send an email to:

S.J.Parsons@soton.ac.uk (Dr Sarah Parsons)

j.huettner@soton.ac.uk (Dr Julia Huettner)

If you are happy to take part in this research please initial the following boxes to indicate that you agree

I have read and understood the information sheet and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

☐

I agree to take part in this research project

☐

I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time without my legal rights being affected

☐

I understand that the teacher's and pupils' images will be used in the thesis for demonstrating the data

☐

Data protection

I understand that information collected about me during my participation in this study will be stored on a password protected computer and that this information will only be used for the purpose of this study. All files containing any personal data will be made anonymous.

Name of participant……………………………

Signature of participant……………………..

Date ………………………………..

Signature of researcher:

Date:

Southampton UNIVERSITY OF

School of Education

Parental consent form

Title of the research: "Using language game to help children learn English"

Researcher: Mona Mohabbatsafa

Ethics Number: RGO 3898

Purpose and background:

Under the supervision of Dr Sarah Parsons and Dr Julia Huettner at the University of Southampton, as a post graduate research student in Education, I (Mona Mohabbatsafa), will be conducting a research on classroom interaction at Golha primary school. The purpose of this research is to investigate the nature of classroom interaction when children are learning English and to find out how language games will have an impact on classroom interaction.

For this purpose, your child will be observed by me and the interactions in the classroom will be video-recorded and then reviewed by the researcher for the analysis of the gathered data. However, this information will be kept confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this research. There will be no consequences if your child chooses to not participate.

Risks

The risks in this study are minimal. Children will be in their usual class teachers and observations will take place as part of the normal school day.

Confidentiality:

The information gathered from this study will be kept confidential. Your child's real name or any personal information will not be used in the report and all files, transcripts, and data will be stored in a safe place that no one except the researcher will have access to. However, participants' images will be used in the thesis for demonstrating the data.

Direct benefit:

Research suggests that using language- games in classroom can help children to learn; at the very least the games will be enjoyable as well as helpful to learning. The findings of the research may help to improve the teaching methods to your child at school.

Termination

Your child is free to choose not to participate in this research study and parents may wish to withdraw their children from the program at any time without any penalty. However, if parents withdraw permission the video observation up until that point will still be included, but not thereafter.

Costs

There will no costs to your child or you as a result of your child taking part in this research study.

*please note, the school has already given its approval to this research, and this is all that is legally required, but your additional consent is requested as matter of courtesy and respect.

If you are happy to take part in this research please initial the following boxes to indicate that you agree

I have read and understood the information sheet and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

☐

I agree to take part in this research project

☐

I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time without my legal rights being affected

☐

I understand that my child's image will be used in the thesis for demonstrating the data

☐

Data protection

I understand that information collected about me during my participation in this study will be stored on a password protected computer and that this information will only be used for the purpose of this study. All files containing any personal data will be made anonymous.

Name of participant………………………….

Signature of participant……………………..

Date ………………………………..

Signature of researcher:

Date:

Parental consent for video-recording

I have read and understood the information provided regarding the observation in my child's classroom at Golha Primary school and agree to the following:

I do give permission for my child to appear on a video recording and I understand my child's name will not appear in any material written accompanying the recording and videos will not be shown to anyone outside the research.

Name of parent or Guardian……………………………

Signature of parent or Guardian……………………….

Date …………………………..

Appendix 7

Permission letter for gaining access to the school

To whom it may concern به :

از : دبستان دخترانه غیردولتی گلها

It is my understanding that MS Mona Mohhabbatsafa will be conducting a research study at Golgha Primary school to investigate the nature of classroom interaction and the impact of language games on this interaction in our Primary EFL classrooms.MS Mohabbatsafa has informed me of the design of the study as well as targeted population.

I confirm that as a school principal I am in charge of our pupils and deal with such issues; however we will inform the pupil's parents of this research in one of our monthly parental meetings. We can also provide an opportunity for MS Mohabbatsafa to meet with the parents in one of our monthly meetings to discuss the detail of her study.

We (school principal, school administrator and the teachers) will all support this effort and provide any assistance necessary for the successful implementation of this study. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me. I can be reached at: ۰۰۹۸۲۶۳۲۵۱۷۴۳۷.

Best Regards,
School principal (Zahra Moghimi)

۴۵ متری کاج نیک نژاد جنوبی پاسداران غربی   ۲۵۰۹۳۲۶

Appendix 8:

List of language games used in this study

Game One:

Game type:

Pantomime/ Guessing games

Aim:

Learning and revising vocabulary for weather/ practicing speaking skills

Procedures:

Pupils in turn stand in front of the classroom and play a pantomime. Their play should represent a word for the weather and pupils who watch the pantomime have to guess and produce the right word for the weather. For example, the pupil playing the pantomime asks "How is the weather?" and pupils have to guess the weather and reply by saying "It's sunny" or "It's rainy".

Game Two:

Game type:

Movement game

Aim:

Learning and revising action verbs/ practicing listening skills

Procedures:

The teacher divides pupils in groups of four and asks each group of pupils in turn to stand in front of the classroom and respond to the teacher's commands. For example, the teacher asks pupils to dance, make a circle, jump in the air, turn around, clap their hands, etc. If a pupil does not respond to any of the teacher's commands correctly, she will be eliminated from the game and should leave the group. The game continues until each group has a winner.

Game Three:

Game type:

Role play game

Aim:

Practicing speaking skills /Learning and practicing vocabulary for family members (i.e. grandfather, grandmother, daughter, etc) pupils learn how to introduce their family members to each other by using "to be" verbs.

Procedures:

Pupils are divided into groups of four and they are given different roles of a family member (grandfather, grandmother, son, daughter, etc). Then the teacher asks each group to stand in front of the classroom and introduce their family members to the class.

Game Four:

Game type:

Guessing game

Aim:

Learning and practicing vocabulary for family members and use of some new verbs and adjectives such as Cooking, playing, crying, shy, and "to be" verbs (am, is, are). Practicing speaking skills was the main purpose of the game.

Procedures:

Pupils are divided into groups of four. Then each member of the group should select to play the role of a father, mother, sister, or brother. The teacher asks each group to stand in front of the classroom and play their roles. Pupils are given a list of vocabulary (i.e. shy, cook, cry) to use in their sentences when playing their roles. The class should guess their roles from their plays. The pupil who can guess their roles first is the winner.

Game Five:

Game type:

Alphabet Play (elimination involved)

Aim:

Revising vocabulary and different verbs/practicing listening skills and pronunciation

Procedures:

The teacher asks all pupils to sit in one side of the classroom in rows and leave the other side of the classroom empty. Then the teacher gives a word and from the last letter of her word pupils should make a word. If a pupil hesitates to give a word, gives an incorrect word, or does not pronounce it correctly she will be eliminated from the game and should sit on the other side of the classroom. The game will continue until a pupil wins the game.

Game Six:

Game type:

Movement Game

Aim:

Practicing Listening skills, action verbs, and vocabulary for body parts

Procedures:

The teacher stands in front of the classroom so that all pupils can see her. Then she points to different parts of her body and pupils should call out the body part that the teacher is pointing to (i.e. nose, hands, arms, legs, mouth, lips, etc). After pupils practice the game with the teacher, the teacher divides pupils in pairs and asks each pair in turn to stand in front of the classroom. One pupil should call out a command and say for example "touch your nose" or "touch your mouth" and the other pupil should follow the command accordingly. The pupil who does not respond to command correctly will be eliminated from the game.

Game Seven:

Game type:

Dictation Game

Aim:

Practicing spelling and listening skills. The game also allowed pupils to make some sentences for example "Does it have a K letter"?

Procedures:

The teacher has a word in mind and writes some of its letters on the black board. She misses out some of the letters and pupils should guess what letters of the word are missed out. For example they should ask the teacher does the word have "K" letter, or does it have "C"? The pupil who guesses the word first is the winner.

Game eight

Game type:

Role play game

Aim:

Practicing and learning "WH" questions, greetings, and new vocabulary. The aim of this game is to provide an opportunity for the learners to bring what they have learned into sentences and make longer utterances (practicing speaking skills).

Procedures:

The teacher divides pupils in groups of three and asks each group to stand in front of the classroom. Then the teacher asks pupils to play the role of a mother, a daughter and a friend of the daughter. The daughter and the friend come home from school and the daughter should tell her mom that she is home with her friend and introduce her friend to her mother. The daughter introduces her friend to her mother. The mother and the friend shake hands and say "Nice to meet you".

Game Nine

Game type:

Stand up sit down

Aim:

Practicing spelling

Procedures:

All children stand up in their places and the teacher holds up a card with a word written on it. If the spelling of the word is incorrect pupils should quickly sit down in their places. If the spelling of a word is correct and pupils sit down by mistake they will be eliminated from the game. As the teacher shows the card, she repeatedly says sit down stand up, and within this short time pupil have to decide whether they should stand up or sit down.

Appendix 9

TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

The transcriptions of my data utilise the following conventions:

Signal	Definition
:	Speaker identity/turn start (Du Bois, 1991)
^	Cued question (Pontefract & Hardman, 2005)
…	Long pause (untimed) (Du Bois, 1991)
(.)	A pause less than two-tenth of a second (Seedhouse, 2004)
↑↓	Rising or falling intonational shift (Jefferson, 2004)
(( ))	Non-verbal activity (Jefferson, 2004)
CAPITALS	A section of speech louder than that surrounding it (Jefferson, 2004)
<TRANSLATION>	Utterances translated from Farsi into English (Tannen, 1984)
{LG}	Laughter (Du Bois, 1991)
[ ]	Utterances in Farsi (Van Dijk, 1997)
<spel> </spel>	Mark words or abbreviations which are spelled out by the speaker, i.e. words whose constituents are pronounced as individual letters (Voice, 2007)

Appendix 10:

Example of data analysis

Extract 1:

1. **Teacher:** Ok (.) Open your books to page 30 (Ok=Marker, Open your books=direction as it requires non-verbal response) (pupils opening their books=react)
2. **Teacher:** Who is she? (Teacher eliciting by asking a display question)
3. **Pupils:** Grandmother (pupils reply)
4. **Teacher:** Grandmother means مادر بزرگ (Informative exchange)
5. **Teacher:** repeat after me (.) grandmother (Modelling a language item by the teacher)
6. **Pupils:** Grandmother (Choral repetition of the language item by pupils)
7. **Teacher:** Grand ma (Modelling)
8. **Pupils:** Grand ma (Choral repetition)
9. **Teacher:** Grand ma is an informal form of grandmother (Informative exchange)
10. **Teacher:** repeat after me (.) grand ma (Modelling)
11. **Pupils:** Grand ma (Choral repetition)
12. **Teacher:** Grand ma (Modelling)
13. **Pupils:** Grand ma (Choral repetition)
14. **Teacher:** Grandfather (Modelling)
15. **Teacher:** Who is he? (Teacher eliciting by asking a display question) Your father's or mother's father (Clue)
16. **Pupils:** Grandfather (Pupils reply to the teacher's question)
17. **Teacher:** Grandfather, that's right (.) excellent (Grandfather=accepting, that's right=evaluate, excellent=praise)
18. **Teacher:** grandfather means (پدربزرگ) (Informative exchange)
19. **Teacher:** Do you understand? (Checking pupils' comprehension)
20. **Pupils:** Yes teacher (Pupils reply)

Extract 2: (Game-based lessons)

1. **Teacher:** Right (.) close your books we want to play a game (.) hurry up (Right=Marker, close your book=direction, hurry up=prompt). Negin stop talking its play time (Criticize)
2. **Pupils:** Teacher me first (Bidding)
3. **Teacher:** Negin, Faeze, and Miryam come to the blackboard (Direction) (.)Wear your glasses and play the role of an old lady (Direction)
4. **Pupil:** Wear your glass (Spontaneous contribution)
5. **Teacher:** No (.) glass is wrong (.)glasses (No glass is wrong=Evaluation/glasses= correction)
6. **Pupil:** Teacher (.) what is my role? (Pupil elicit)
7. **Teacher:** You should play the role of a grandma (Teacher reply)

Teacher's Talk

Modelling	Eliciting	Informative exchanges	Direction	Checking moves	Replying to pupil's question	Nomination	Clue	Marker
Repeat after me…Grandmother Grandfather, grandma	Who is she?	Grandma means… Grandma is an informal form of grandmother	Open your book Come to the board Wear your glasses	Do you understand?	You should play the role of a grandma	Negin, Faeze, Miryam.	Your mother's or father's father	Ok

Pupils' Talk

Bidding	Spontaneous contribution	Reply	React	Choral repetition	Pupil elicit
Teacher me first	Wear your glasses You look like a grandmother	Grandfather Yes teacher Grandmother	Closing books Going to the blackboard Wearing glasses Pupils opening their books	Grandmother, Grandma x3	What is my role?

Teacher's Feedback

Praise	Accept	Evaluate	Criticize	Correct
Excellent	Grandfather, thank you	That's right No, glass is wrong	Stop talking	Glasses