

**An Investigation into the Impact of Language Games on Classroom  
Interaction and Pupil Learning in Libyan EFL Primary Classrooms**

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## **Abstract**

The present investigation is guided by the assumption that using a language games-based approach is likely to provide more learning opportunities for pupils through creating an enjoyable learning environment which will enhance pupil-pupil and teacher-pupil interaction. This study involves the use of language games in teaching English to young Libyan learners in two state schools in Libya's capital, Tripoli. One hundred 11 year old pupils and two teachers took part in this study. Pupils were divided into four classes, two traditional classes and two language games classes. Activities based on language games replaced some activities presently in the course book. The main purpose of the study is to explore the nature of classroom interaction in Libyan EFL primary classrooms and how this is affected by the use of language games. The study also aims to discover the teachers' perceptions concerning the use of language games and their impact on pupil learning in action.

The study employed a multi-method research design based on a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods. Data was gathered by means of live classroom observation using computerised observation software as well as video-recording, stimulated recall and semi-structured interviews with teachers, and the analysis of pupil-pupil talk during a spot-the differences game. The coding scheme used as a general framework in this study was adapted from the work of Sinclair and Coulthard (1975). Transcripts of the observations were coded and analysed at the level of acts.

The nature of classroom interaction in the traditional classes and language games-based classes was compared. The overall findings revealed that, although teachers still dominated the talk and controlled classroom discourse, some significant differences were

found in the nature of classroom interaction between traditional and language games-based classes. It also emerged that pupils who used language games were more successful than their counterparts in traditional classes in producing more and longer utterances containing English. It was also found that the teachers participating in this study developed positive perceptions concerning the use of language games.

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## Abbreviations

TC	Traditional Class
GC	Games Class
L1	First Language (Arabic)
L2	Second Language (English)
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
SR	Stimulated Recall

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## **Author's Declaration**

I certify that, to the best of my knowledge, all the material in this thesis represents my own work and that no material is included which has been submitted for any other award or qualification.

Signature: Shaban Aldabbus

Date: 30. 10. 2008\_\_\_\_\_



## **Chapter One: Introduction**

### **1.1. Background to the research problem**

Teaching English as a second or foreign language to young learners has prompted a great deal of academic research and discussion (Scott and Ytreberg 2001; Cameron 2001; Brewster et al 2004), for several reasons. One reason is that English has become accepted as an international language during the last few decades, and therefore its importance has been more widely recognized and increasingly included in primary curricula in many countries. Libya is among the countries where English has been introduced to young learners in basic education. The English programme in Libyan basic education aims to enable pupils to: i) achieve a reasonable proficiency in listening and speaking English at a reasonable speed, reading simple texts with comprehension and writing about a simple subject or incident; ii) develop their interest in learning English so that they can learn effectively by themselves; and iii) improve their knowledge and have access to foreign cultures (The General People's Committee for Education 1996). However, it seems that these aims are not being realised. A survey carried out by The Ministry of Education, (2004) found that pupils' performance in English was disappointing. One reason for this unsatisfactory performance could be that Libyan students who learn the English language are not given opportunities for interaction and participation in the classroom; they do not assume responsibility for their learning; and they lack the chance to work collaboratively (UNESCO 2002). This was confirmed by a recent study conducted by Orafi (2008). He found that EFL classrooms in Libyan intermediate schools were generally teacher-centred where pupils worked individually.

Having trained as a teacher in Libya and having taught there for about twenty years I have found the teaching and learning environment in most Libyan schools almost akin to an

army camp where most teachers are very firm with their pupils. The relations between teachers and pupils tend towards formality, and are teacher-directed. Pupils are expected to keep silent and take no part in any activity unless asked to do so (El-Abbar 2004). They are required to stay in their seats, and must seek the teacher's permission if they want to leave the class for any reason. Learners are required to learn and memorize material, and to complete homework; otherwise they may be punished. The majority of students appear to show no interest in learning the English language, and seem to be reluctant to participate in the classroom (Habeeb 2003).

Given the disappointing performance of English language learning in Libya, together with my experience of Libyan classrooms, I wondered whether the introduction of language games to teach English would encourage a more interesting and enjoyable classroom atmosphere in which opportunities for language development could be created through interaction. Therefore, this study investigates whether using language games changes the nature of interaction in Libyan classrooms and increases the opportunities for language development.

## **1.2. Context of the study**

This section provides an overview of the context in which the study was conducted including definitions of EFL young learners according to the Libyan context, and general background about the education system in Libya.

### ***1.2.1. Libyan EFL young learners***

There is little consensus in the literature specifying the exact age of a 'young learner'. For example, Phillips (1993) defined young learners as those aged between five and twelve

years old. Scott & Ytreberg (2001) divided young learners into two main groups; five to seven year olds, and eight to ten year olds. They added that each group has its own abilities in doing things and recognizing the world around them. However, specifying the exact age of a young learner also differs from one context to another. Broadly speaking, pupils in basic education stage or (compulsory education) in many parts of the world are considered young learners. The basic education can continue until children are 14 years of age such as in Tunisia and Egypt whereas in the UK primary education continues up to eleven (British Council 1999). In Libya, young learners are viewed as those who are studying in basic education (6 to 15 years old). This stage is divided into two sub-stages, primary stage from 6 to 12 years old and preparatory stage from 13 to 15 years old. From now on, the term 'young learners' in this study refers to pupils in the primary stage aged from 6 to 12. This particular group was chosen because teaching young learners is my area of experience and hence the study supports my personal interest and professional development. It could also be argued that young children have not yet developed social attitudes towards the use of one language as opposed to another, and hence may be more cognitively open to another language (Ellis 1985c).

### ***1.2.2. The Education system in Libya***

The education system in Libya has been reviewed over the last three decades in order to respond to local and international developments. The current education system consists of three main stages: basic, intermediate, and higher education, as will be illustrated shortly. Kindergarten education has not been included in the education ladder. It has been recently established in some main cities as optional and usually accepts a limited number of children at the age of four. Students usually start their education at the age of six, thereafter spending nine years in basic education, three years in intermediate education

and three to five years in higher education. All schools are open five days a week, from Sunday to Thursday. The school day starts at 8.30am and lasts till 13.00pm. Pupils from years one to year six attend six periods of instruction a day, each of 40 minutes, with a 30 minute lunch break at 11.10 am. Pupils from years seven to nine attend seven periods of instruction daily.

#### **1.2.2.1. Basic education**

Basic education is considered the foundation for the education of all children between the ages of six and fifteen. According to education policy in Libya, all Libyan children, males and females, aged between six and fifteen are required to enrol in basic education and are not allowed to be involved in any kind of employment before the age of fifteen. Basic education aims to provide the minimum range of knowledge and concepts, and to create a suitable setting for children to acquire the skills and ideas that will help them take responsibility for themselves when they grow up. It is divided into two stages: the primary and preparatory stages. The primary stage is the first in the basic education system; it is a six year course, followed by a three- year preparatory course. The preparatory course is the second stage of basic education, which culminates in a general examination administrated by the zonal education office. This leads to the general basic education certificate (Ministry of Education 2004).

#### **1.2.2.2. Intermediate education**

The intermediate educational programme includes two main paths: specialized intermediate education, such as in biology, the social sciences, engineering, languages; and vocational intermediate education such as in industrial, mechanical and electrical vocations. Students at specialised secondary schools study for three years, during which in the first year they study general subjects and after this foundation year specialize for

the second and third years; the certificate awarded is the intermediate education certificate. The aim is to vary the types of education at the intermediate educational level, and to meet the learners' needs and interests. On the other hand, the vocational intermediate education programme lasts for three to four years. The aim is to prepare school leavers to benefit from new scientific and technological developments, and to enable them to practise the jobs that best suit their areas of specialist interest. The certificate awarded is the intermediate training diploma.

#### **1.2.2.3. Higher education**

Higher education refers to the university level, higher institutes and higher technical and vocational centres. The study period varies from three years for some higher technical institutes to five years for some university faculties. Certificates awarded are higher technician diplomas or bachelor's degrees.

Although improving the educational system is a priority for the education authorities in Libya, the educational programmes still suffer from shortages in facilities such as computers, laboratories, and information networks, a lack of qualified teachers, and the use of traditional methods of teaching (Khalifa 2002). This could be due to the fact that the central focus is on increasing the quantity of schools and institutes rather than improving the quality of teaching and learning outcomes.

#### ***1.2.3. Teaching English in Libya***

Teaching English in Libya has gone through various stages of popularity in the 1980s, mainly due to political reasons. In the mid 1990s, the policy of the Ministry of Education towards teaching and learning English changed radically and it was given much greater

emphasis. The idea of teaching and learning English has grown significantly since then. One of the primary reasons for this growing concern is the recognition of the importance of the English language in academic contexts. In addition, the dramatic increase in the number of students studying at university level has been a contributing factor to the increased interest in learning English. This factor is coupled with the use of English as a tool in teaching engineering, medicine and other disciplines.

English is currently taught as a compulsory subject and as a foreign language. This starts in the fifth grade of the primary stage at the age of eleven, while in private schools pupils start learning English at the age of six. At university level students study English either for general or academic purposes. It is also used as a medium of teaching in certain departments, such as medicine, engineering, and English teaching. In the process of learning English, students usually depend on the teacher and on the input provided in the classroom, because English is not used outside the class. The general aim of the teaching of English is to develop the learners' language proficiency in the four language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing.

#### ***1.2.4. The curriculum***

The basic education curriculum has witnessed many changes and developments during the last decade. The most major change is the introduction of the subject of the English language to the curriculum in the first stage of basic education. A new course book was designed by a group of Libyan educationalists under the supervision of the National Centre for Educational Research. The main goal of the English language programme at this stage is to introduce pupils to simple and basic language as a first step to gaining familiarity with and becoming interested in English. The material comprises a course

book, a workbook, and a class audio-cassette. However innovation in curricular matters is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. Teachers and learners in Libya do not usually influence curriculum change. Although “learners learn best when they are involved in developing their learning objectives” Nunan, (1988, p.22), their needs and interests are rarely investigated in Libya. Parents are also unable to directly influence what is going in school, especially when it involves an academic matter such as curriculum change (Khalifa 2002).

#### ***1.2.5. Methods of teaching***

As with other subjects in Libya, English is taught with the sole aim of passing exams and moving to the next stage. According to my experience as a teacher of young learners in Libya, the learning process is largely viewed as mechanical habit formation. That is, the teaching process is dominated by teacher questions, the selection of pupils to respond, and the demonstration of examples on the board for students to imitate and repeat chorally. Some Libyan teachers still doubt the value of communicative activities because they believe that vocabulary and grammar rules must be the starting point in learning any foreign language, unlike when acquiring a first language. They think that pupils should be provided with large amounts of vocabulary and grammar rules to be memorized, and then they can start thinking of introducing various activities to practice the language (Al-Buseifi 2003). These beliefs reflect their practise in class, where traditional methods of teaching such as the grammar translation method and the audio-lingual method are dominant (Orafi 2008).

### ***1.2.6. Teachers' background***

Teachers at the basic education stage are usually trained at teacher training institutes. These institutes recruit students from among those who have completed their basic education. The period of training is five years and the certificate obtained is a diploma in teaching English, whereas secondary stage teachers are graduates from the faculties of education and arts in the universities. The admission requirement for these faculties is the secondary school certificate, and the course lasts for four years. However, the objectives of the teacher training institutions have recently been reviewed and reformed in the light of new educational objectives and the changes which have been introduced in the curricula at the basic education stage (Al-Gadhi 2005). Although a great number of English language teachers in Libya have graduated from higher institutes and universities, their background in teaching methodology is limited. One reason for this may be because they have not been exposed to recent approaches to teaching EFL (Orafi 2008).

### ***1.2.7. Assessment***

The memorisation of meaning and the spelling of words are common methods of evaluation in English tests in the basic education stage in Libya, which include no oral tests. It might be argued that the fact that English tests do not normally include an oral component might have led to the neglect of oral skills (Al-Buseifi 2003). The majority of the questions in any English language test are usually of the multiple choice type, matching words with pictures, putting scrambled words in order, and writing missing letters in words. This makes it easier for learners to cheat or pass tests with very little effort, and may mean that learners pay very little attention to working hard. Therefore, learners become 'exam-conscious', interested only in results and passing tests without paying attention to the subject itself. Monthly written tests by which pupils are evaluated



are very common in Libyan schools. The main purpose of conducting such tests is to help teachers track the progress of their students. Scores obtained are kept in the pupils' records and sent to parents. At the end of the academic year pupils have a written examination in order to pass the subject. If a student fails to achieve the required score, another opportunity is provided. In cases where a pupil fails a second time, he/she cannot be transferred to the next level (Nasef 2004).

### **1.3. Significance and originality of the study**

Different aspects of teaching and learning English in Libya have been studied by many researchers (such as, Al-Moghani 2003; El-Mojahed 2007; Innajih 2007; Orafi 2008). Most of these have concentrated on intermediate and university level students, and none have investigated the impact of language games on classroom interaction and learning the English language in Libyan primary schools. However, although teaching English through language games has been investigated in the ESL setting (for example, by Cekaite and Aronsson 2005; Thomas et al. 2006; Smith 2006), relatively few studies have investigated foreign language teaching and the use of language games (for example, Uberman 1998; Yip & Kwan 2006). The originality of this study derives from the fact that it would seem to be the first attempt to deal with this particular topic in the Libyan context.

Furthermore, even though this topic has been investigated in other contexts, the present study has adopted a more sophisticated methodology using diverse methods. Instead of relying on video-recordings only, as many other researchers have done (for example, Smith 2006; Abd-Kadir and Hardman 2007), five instruments were employed to collect data in this study. Three of these were used to explore the nature of the interaction in

classroom (live observation using the observer software, video-recorded observation and stimulated recall interviews). The other two dealt with pupils' language use during a spot-the-differences game and teachers' perceptions about the use of language games (see 3.2.).

#### **1.4. Research questions**

This study's main aim is to investigate the impact of language games on classroom interaction in Libyan EFL classrooms, learning opportunities and teachers' perceptions about the use of language games in class. This can be broken down into several key questions which are developed in light of the present author's experience as a teacher of young learners in Libya and a report prepared by UNESCO about education in Libya (UNESCO 2002). The research questions for this study are as follows:

1. What is the nature of classroom interaction in the Libyan EFL primary classrooms, and how is it affected by the introduction of language games in the classroom?
2. What learning opportunities does the language games-based approach provide for pupils in Libyan EFL primary classrooms?
3. What are the teachers' perceptions about the use of language games in teaching the English language to Libyan young learners?

Whilst it is acknowledged that the introduction of language games will create more opportunities for pupil-pupil interaction than is typical in Libyan classrooms, the question remains as to whether their introduction will impact on teacher-pupil interaction, and whether any changes in the interactive environment (teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil) support more opportunities for language learning. This thesis therefore compares the

opportunities for EFL learning afforded in classroom interaction in a traditionally taught class, with those in a class where language games are introduced. In so doing the thesis also explores what this learning through interaction looks like, i.e. the process of EFL learning in action, whilst some measure of the product of pupils' learning is also considered. The thesis also considers the reasons why and how such changes take place, particularly in relation to the teachers' perceptions of language games.

### **1.5. Methodology**

The study is based on a multi-strategy research design, in which data is gathered according to a triangulation approach which consists of four different methods of data collection: i) classroom observation; ii) stimulated recall interviews; iii) semi structured interviews, and iv) the analysis of pupil-pupil talk. Classroom observation was employed to explore the nature of interaction in the classroom and how it is affected by the implementation of language games. The stimulated recall interviews were used to supplement data gathered by classroom observation and to give further interpretation of certain behaviours taking place in the classroom. The analysis of pupil-pupil talk, on the other hand, aimed to evaluate the amount and type of language produced by pupils in traditional classes compared to their counterparts in games classes. The final instrument employed in this study involved semi-structured interviews with teachers to discover their perceptions about the use of language games in the classroom.

The rationale behind using the triangulation approach is that it offers the use of different research methods which give many advantages. It leads to greater validity and reliability than a single methodological approach (Bryman 2004). It can also provide more detailed

data about the phenomena under investigation (Yin 2002) (see section 3.2 for more details on the methods adopted)

### **1.6. Expected outcomes and contributions to the field**

It is hoped that the findings of this study will contribute to the research literature and to teachers' pedagogical practise in a number of ways:

1. It will address the current gap in the literature regarding the teaching of English for young learners in Libya;
2. It will ascertain the extent to which the use of language games has a beneficial impact upon classroom interaction and the opportunities for language development.
3. It is hoped that the use of such games in the classroom will lead to a significant shift from a teacher-centred approach to a learner-centred approach, with a concomitant improvement in pupils' learning of English;
4. It will provide new knowledge that will pave the way for the development of more effective course material and teaching methods in Libyan classrooms;
5. It is hoped that the teachers involved in this study will formulate new beliefs and perceptions towards teaching the English language; and that these will translate into improved pedagogical practise.

## **1.7. Organization of the study**

This thesis contains six chapters described as follows: chapter one presents a brief background to the research problem, and the significance and originality of the study. It also describes the context of the study and introduces the research questions and the expected outcomes. Chapter two provides an overview of the relevant literature and theories of teaching young learners. This chapter also considers the different factors affecting classroom interaction as well as its impact on the opportunities for language development. Then, an overview of the impact of language games on classroom interaction is given.

Chapter three explores the methodology of the study. In this chapter the research design and a rationale for this design is introduced. Then the sources of data collection (classroom observation, stimulated recall interviews, semi-structured interviews with teachers, and the analysis of pupil-pupil talk) are described. The procedures used for employing each instrument, pilot studies, and the validity and reliability of the methods are discussed. This chapter also deals with the ethical issues of the research and describes its participants and the study's settings. Chapter four is devoted to data analysis and discussion. Chapter five proceeds to answer the research questions posed by the study and discusses the main findings. Chapter six presents the main conclusions and contribution and pedagogical implications of the research. Additionally, the limitations of the study and suggestions for further research are considered.

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

This chapter presents an overview of the relevant literature to provide a theoretical rationale for the use of language games. It is divided into three sections. Section one provides a review of learning theories that offer insights into how young children learn languages. Section two is devoted to a review of previous research on classroom interaction, and section three outlines the importance of language games as a significant variable in enhancing classroom interaction.

### **2.1. Theories relevant to children's language learning**

How young learners can learn a second or foreign language seems to be a complex and controversial topic. It has been investigated and discussed by many researchers and theorists. For example, Skinner (1957) and Lado (1964) believe that first (L1) and second language (L2) acquisition follow similar patterns, since practice and imitation are common to both whereas, others (e.g., McLaughlin 1984; House 1997; Cameron 2001), argue that second or foreign language acquisition will never exactly duplicate first language acquisition because of the influence of the first language on second or foreign language learning. The process of learning a second or foreign language is different from first language acquisition because children already have the experience of acquiring their first language and are more cognitively mature (Bates et al 1984). However, in order to develop an awareness of how children learn languages and to explore the theoretical foundations of this study, it is essential to be equipped with sufficient background knowledge about the process of language learning, as this helps to shed light on the way children think, learn, and then interact in their second/foreign language classes.

There are several general philosophical approaches that try to explain the process of language learning. Each approach has a particular philosophical basis and focuses on a particular determining factor. One of the most influential approaches to language learning in recent years is socio-cultural approach in which social interaction and talk play a key role. The socio-cultural approach to learning differs from other cognitive approaches in that “it does not accept that knowledge originates and develops exclusively inside the individual mind by means of biological mechanisms and internal process” (Gutierrez 2006, p.232). The fundamental proposition here is that social and linguistic influences may have priority over individual cognition, and that the former may influence or determine the latter (Vygotsky 1978). Such a socio-cultural theory was originally developed by Vygotsky (1896-1934), a psychologist whose ideas have contributed to current understanding of classroom interaction. It was defined by Wertsch (1990, p.112) as “an approach that focuses on the institutional, cultural, and historical specificity of mental functioning rather than on universals”. The central issue for this school of thought is to recognize the interdependence of the individual and society, as each creates and is created by the other (Wells and Chang-Wells 1992).

In his socio-cultural theory, Vygotsky (1978) gave much greater priority to social interaction, emphasising the role of language, communication and instruction in the development of knowledge and understanding. He considered talk as the central and primary medium of the process of learning because it helps the learner to make explicit to himself and to others what he knows, understands and can do. In 1970, Britton reported that talk is seen as a major instrument of learning in infancy: that an infant learns by talking and that he learns to talk by talking. Olyer (1996) argued that providing students with opportunities to talk is essential, and therefore children should be encouraged to

become producers and not just consumers of knowledge. Vygotsky stressed the significance of talk in children's cognitive development. Just as work-tools are "a means of labour of mastering nature", Vygotsky sees language as a symbolic cultural tool (Vygotsky 1978, p.53). The importance of language in children's mental development lies in the fact that language is not only shaped by the mind but also shapes the mind:

*"Initially speech follows action, is provoked by and dominated by activity. At a later stage, however, when speech is moved to the starting point of an activity, a new relation between word and action emerges. Now speech guides, determiners, and dominates the course of action; the planning function of speech comes into being in addition to the already existing function of language to reflect the external world"* (Vygotsky, 1978, p.28).

Vygotsky (1986, pp.24-27) argues that significant intellectual development occurs when speech and practical activity converge. He suggests that, since the relationship between speech and action is the very essence of practical and abstract intelligence, research that seeks to investigate processes of cognitive development should look at goal-directed verbal interaction between people (Vygotsky 1986). The importance of talk in the classroom has also been emphasised by recent researchers, such as Corden (2000) in his book 'Literacy and Learning Through Talk'; and very recently by Storch (2007), who investigated the merits of pair work in ESL classes in Australia and found that the talk generated by learners during pair work was facilitative of language learning.

Vygotsky also emphasized the role of children's interactions with the people around them, such as parents and peers or teachers in the classroom, and therefore he stated that with the help of more knowledgeable people children can do and understand much more than they can on their own (Vygotsky 1978). However, the usual thinking is that the



child's level of cognitive development is restricted only to the level where the child is able to solve the problem independently and without assistance. On the other hand, what was not recognised was the level of the development of the child's capability if the problem is solved with the assistance of more knowledgeable people. Assisting a child in carrying out a task has been labelled 'scaffolding' (Bruner 1983), in which the teacher's role is to push the learner one step at a time beyond where he is now; that is, to provide children with the necessary support until they can manage to conduct the task on their own. "Once a task has been mastered, scaffolds are removed and the learner is left to reflect and comment on the task" (Walsh 2006, p.35).

### **2.1.1. Scaffolding and the Zone of Proximal Development**

The metaphor of scaffolding has been adopted by educators both in L1 and L2 to describe the nature of this assisted performance, which involves not only helping 'to do', but, moreover, helping to know and learn 'how to do'. It represents the idea that teachers serve to provide a bridge between the learners' existing knowledge and skills and the demands of a new task which beginning learners might not be able to handle. According to Larsen-Freeman (1997), teaching is not transmission but rather scaffolding. It is widely acknowledged that language learning is not the transmission of knowledge from a more capable learner to a less able one, but rather the interaction and/or participation of language learners with help and support from more able ones to enhance their mastery of the target language. For example, when we help children to solve a problem or conduct a task, we are providing conditions and instructions by which they can accomplish the task. When we point things out to the child, we help to highlight what he should attend to. By reminding children of what to do, we are helping them to retrieve and exploit their

previous experience (Wood 1998). Wood et al (1976, p.98) describe six functions of the teacher in scaffolding a child's performance:

1. Recruiting the child's interest in the task as it is defined by the tutor;
2. Reducing the number of steps required to solve a problem by simplifying the task, so that the learner can manage components of the process and recognize when a fit between task requirements and the child is achieved;
3. Maintaining the pursuit of the goal, through motivation of the child and direction of the activity;
4. Marking critical features of discrepancies between what the child has produced and the ideal solution;
5. Controlling frustration and risk in problem solving;
6. Demonstrating an idealised version of the act to be performed.

Hammond and Gibbons (2001) report that the concept of scaffolding is used to argue that, in the same way that the scaffold provides necessary but temporary support to builders, teachers need to provide temporary supporting structures that will assist learners to develop new understanding, new concepts, and new abilities. Hammond and Gibbons further elaborate that, as the learner develops control of these, teachers need to withdraw that support, only to provide further support for extended or new tasks, understanding and concepts. Similarly, Bruner (1983) characterised scaffolding in language development as the adult acting on the motto "where before there was a spectator, let there now be a participant" (p.60). This means that responsibility is handed over to the child and that the child can solve the problem on his own after he has been given enough assistance.

However, for scaffolding to be successful teachers should help learners develop strategies they can apply to different problems they will encounter in the future, not just answer specific questions or solve the specific problem at hand (Bodrova and Leong 1998). Maybin et al (1992) suggest that there are two criteria for determining if a particular example of help can be considered as scaffolding. There must be evidence, firstly, of a learner successfully completing the task with the teacher's help; and, secondly, of the learner having achieved a greater level of independent competence as a result of the experience.

In this context, it seems beneficial to briefly discuss the idea of metacognition as a strong indication of a pupil's learning (Thiede et al 2003; Veenmen et al 2006). The concept of metacognition was initially introduced by Flavell (1976), and it refers to both the knowledge about one's thinking processes (i.e., metacognitive knowledge) and the regulation of these processes (i.e., metacognitive skills). The former refers to a person's declarative knowledge such as facts and rules, whereas the latter refers to a person's procedural knowledge which involves the learner's awareness of how to implement strategies (Veenmen et al 2006). Knowledge and application are also emphasised by Benjamin Bloom as two important stages of his six levels taxonomy of learning. He considered knowledge as a basis for higher level of thinking, whereas application is the use of learnt material in new situations (Forehand 2005). The literature reviewed provides evidence that the development of metacognitive knowledge and skills starts quite early in children's thinking and may have reached a relatively high level by school age if the environment is encouraging (Perry et al 2002). There is also evidence that metacognitive knowledge and skills can be learnt by intentional instruction and, whenever improvement is found in them, improvement is also found in achievement (e.g., Case et al 1992;

Gaskins 1996 cited in Annevirta et al 2007). Such findings have shown the importance of metacognition in learning. Among the aims of this study is to help young learners in Libya to assume responsibility for their learning and gradually become independent in working together and to develop their knowledge and ability to learn. By using language games in the classroom, pupils can work in pairs and groups, discuss things together, scaffold one another, play the same game several times in different ways, consider and evaluate alternative strategies (Wood, 1998), and invent new ways which could be more elegant than those suggested by the teacher. Thus it could be argued that creating a playful context may increase the opportunities for language use and help pupils to develop their metacognitive knowledge and skills which serve their learning goals.

The idea of providing appropriate assistance and withdraw it once the learner shows signs of being able to carry on with the task independently is linked to Vygotsky's concept of the 'Zone of Proximal Development' (ZPD), which he defined (1978, p.86) as:

*“the distance between the actual development level 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”.*

According to Vygotsky's definition of the ZPD, when guidance or instruction is given to the children and they are assisted to reach beyond their actual level of functioning, their mental development level can be expanded. By emphasising the importance of society (e.g. adults, teachers) on the child's mental processes, Vygotsky recognises the fundamental interaction between socio-cultural and cognitive factors. According to Maybin (2003), for educationalists, Vygotsky's argument that cognitive development takes place first at the social level, through interaction and discourse with others, before

being internalised to feed into individual development has shifted the focus to the explicit guiding role of the teacher through talk.

According to Vygotsky, working within the ZPD is a useful starting point for learning because it considers what the child already knows and carefully builds on it according to the child's immediate needs in going forward (Pinter 2006). Nevertheless, Van Lier (1996) claimed that supporting learners with help and guidance while performing an action or solving a problem under teacher assistance does not necessarily mean that one is working in the ZPD, and it is no guarantee that any language development will be achieved. He argued that support does not always need to or most profitably come from the teacher, since learners can use other alternatives to achieve learning goals, such as: i) "assistance from more capable peers or adults; ii) interaction with equal peers; iii) interaction with less capable peers; and inner resources (their knowledge or expertise)" (Van Lier 1996, p.193).

Ohta (2001) also argued that the ZPD is considered as an interactional space between the child's actual ability to do something alone and the ability to do the same thing with the help of adults or more skilful peers. Effective learning also occurs in peer learning settings where there is no unequivocal expert. This is due to the fact that each learner is unique and, therefore, learners can share their weaknesses and strengths with each other in producing higher levels of performance than that of any individual involved. This finding is contrary to Vygotsky's (1978) "formulation of the ZPD, which specified that assistance comes from one who is more capable" (Ohta 2001, p.76). However, assistance in the ZPD functions most effectively when it is tailored to the learner; and is adapted and eventually withdrawn in response to learner development (Lantolf and Aljaafreh 1996).

According to Ohta (2001), the construct of the ZPD shows that language development may not take place if too much assistance is provided during the task or if the task is too easy and not challenging. An “appropriate challenge is necessary to stimulate development in the ZPD” (Ohta 2001, p.11). Likewise, Cameron (2001) agreed that achieving learning goals requires a balance between demands and support. That is, if the task is too demanding, learners will find it difficult to cope, which may lead to frustration; on the other hand if too much support is provided then learners will not be stretched.

In the Libyan context, it could be argued that the concept of scaffolding is routinely used wrongly. According to the present author’s experience, since classroom discourse in Libya is dominated by a teacher-centred using traditional methods (e.g. the Grammar Translation Method and Audio-lingual Method) and the emphasis is on accuracy (Orafi 2008), it has been observed that some Libyan teachers provide more scaffolding than is required, and learners are treated as dependent learners who need to be spoon-fed. As a result, teachers fail to push the children to greater independence and collaborative work (UNESCO 2002). In order to gain the best benefit from scaffolding, teachers should give up some of their control and allow learners to use the target language even if they make errors. This may be difficult for teachers to do, particularly those who exert the most control over activities throughout the lesson.

However, the concepts of scaffolding and ZPD originally referred to contexts of individual teaching. Therefore, applying these concepts to the classroom context is problematic, because schoolteachers and their pupils operate in more complex circumstances. In the classroom, teachers have to engage groups of learners who have multiple zones of proximal developments (Mercer 1995; Webster et al 1996). Thus

teachers need to carefully regulate their help and guidance to suit each individual's ZPD to ensure that the level of support matches the learner's ZPD and then progress can be achieved (Van Lier 1996). They also need to be aware that "a new task with a different teacher may generate quite different 'zones' for the same group of children" (Mercer & Fisher 1992, p.342). However, with a large number of children in a class, as in Libyan schools, responding to so many different ZPDs is challenging and extremely time-consuming. In this case, a possible solution is to have learners help each other, as mentioned by many researchers (e.g. Van Lier 1996; Ohta 2001). The teacher, thus, has to encourage the learners who have already mastered a skill to help their less able peers and should try not to go too fast or too far for learners who are less competent (Kitcha 2004).

From this review of the socio-cultural approach, it could be deduced that, for learning to be effective, pupils should be provided with opportunities to interact with each other in the classroom and be provided with appropriate scaffolding at the right time. This can be done through creating opportunities for talking and interaction between the teacher and pupils and among pupils in the classroom in order for them to assume greater control over their learning by initiating ideas and responses which consequently promote classroom interaction and language learning (Smith 2005), as will be seen in 2.2.5. The problem addressed in the present study is that Libyan learners are deprived of opportunities for collaborative work and interacting together in the target language to attempt meaningful communication in the classroom (UNESCO 2002; Orafi 2008). According to the present author's experience as a teacher of young learners in Libya, it could be argued that most teachers in Libya are guided by second language approaches where they rely on individualistic conceptions of learning while the relationship with the social context is neglected. Thus, I believe that Libyan young learners need an appropriate environment

where they can work collaboratively, socialize with each other and support each other in a stress-free environment using the target language as a meditation tool when involved, for example, in game play. Therefore, socio-cultural theory, which is based on the premise that knowledge is constructed through interaction between children and people around them, could be an appropriate theoretical framework for this study. However, in contexts where English is taught as a foreign language (such as in Libya), the classroom is the only learning-teaching environment where learners can interact in English with people around them and learn together. Consequently, understanding the opportunities for learning through interaction in classrooms is critical in the Libyan context. The power of classroom interaction in promoting and enhancing pupils learning has been recognized by many researchers (e.g. Swain et al. 2002; Alexander 2003). Thus, interaction in the classroom and its impact on language learning will be discussed in the subsequent section.

## **2.2. Classroom interaction**

At the beginning of this section it is important to mention that, in spite of the fact that many studies have investigated classroom interaction in different countries, little or no research in Libya has tackled this subject. An extensive literature search using educational, linguistic and psychological databases did not find any published research regarding classroom interaction among Libyan young learners. Similar research into conference papers also revealed nothing. One of the few documented references to this issue is a UNESCO (2002) report which reveals that Libyan students who learn the English language are not given opportunities for interaction in the classroom. They do not assume responsibility for their learning, and they lack the chance to work collaboratively. Very recently, Orafi (2008) reported similar results when he described briefly what was



happening in Libyan EFL secondary classrooms during his investigation of teachers' practices and beliefs in relation to curriculum innovations in English language teaching in Libya. Therefore, the researcher resorted to his own experience as a teacher in Libya and that of his colleagues, to find out more about the Libyan context. This section, however, begins by defining the term 'classroom interaction'. Patterns of classroom interaction as well as the major factors affecting the nature of classroom interaction are then described, and finally the impact of classroom interaction on language learning is highlighted.

### ***2.2.1. Definition of classroom interaction***

It is difficult to define what classroom interaction is, because it might come in various forms. Choral repetition, eliciting, responding to questions and acting out a dialogue are all examples of interaction, but how each type of interaction affects language learning needs further research. However, a review of the literature reveals different definitions, such as the one provided by Johnson (1995) who considered classroom interaction as explicit behaviour and language learning in the classroom, determining to a certain extent the students' learning opportunities and use of the target language. An interaction can also be defined as "an exchange containing either a complete initiation-response-feedback/follow-up (IRF) sequence as described by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) or a partial, initiation-response (IR) one" (Alexander 2000, P.397). Ellis (1990) described the term interaction in the context of second language learning as the process through which learners are exposed to the target language and therefore how different language samples become available for learners to use in the classroom in an interactive way. As can be seen from these definitions, classroom interaction refers to any interaction which takes place between the teacher and learners and amongst learners themselves. According to the

UNESCO report (2002), most Libyan classroom interaction is restricted to teacher-pupil interaction, and given my experience of teaching in Libya, this teacher-pupil interaction is itself restricted to particular patterns (see section 1.1). This study aims to investigate classroom interaction that takes place between teachers and learners and amongst learners which aims to facilitate language learning opportunities. That is the teacher facilitates the process of learning by providing pupils with an appropriate scaffold taking into account pupils' zone of proximal development. This scaffold may be provided by other pupils as they work collaboratively, assisting each other towards a purposeful goal during pair and group work.

### ***2.2.2. Classroom interaction patterns***

Van Lier (1988) claimed that classroom interaction does not consist of random acts but has its own patterns. Some of the most significant findings concerning classroom interaction patterns were revealed originally by Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) study based on classroom data from traditional school classrooms in the UK. It was found that, when talking, teachers and learners usually follow three steps in sequence: initiation, response and feedback (IRF). In this cycle, the teacher initiates a question, one of the students answers, the teacher gives feedback (assessment, correction, comment), then initiates the next question and so on (Ur 1996). Students are expected to provide a brief answer to the question, which is then evaluated by the teacher with such phrases as "Good", "That's right", or "No, that's not right" (Hall and Walsh 2002). This interaction pattern is given a high priority in traditional patterns of classroom interaction (Nunan 1987), which is characterized by fixed patterns such as asking questions, instructing, correcting students' mistakes and the teacher's control over the topic and the pupils' contributions (Ruby 2008). One merit of the IRF pattern is that it can be used by the

teacher to check students' comprehension and students can receive immediate feedback (Candlin & Mercer 2001). According to the author's experience, in Libyan EFL primary classrooms this pattern is mainly used to check pupils' comprehension and to push them to practise the target language through the teacher's use of display questions.

The I-R-F pattern, however, was criticized by Markee (2000, P.71), who claimed that this "speech exchange is characterized by unequal power relationships". Unlike everyday conversation, it is the teacher who decides who will participate, when students can take turns, how much they can contribute, and whether or not their contributions are worthy and appropriate (Hall and Walsh 2002). Similarly, Mercer (1998) argued that classroom discourse based on IRF enables the teacher to control the talk and the turns taken in the classroom, which again restricts students in contributing spontaneously and to answer in any way they like. The IRF sequence is seen by Van Lier (1996) as one way, predetermined by the teacher according to a pre-planned lesson structure through which the teacher controls the classroom interaction leaving no room for learners to present their ideas and thoughts. Van Lier (1996) further questioned the value of IRF sequences in language teaching. These patterns often used to maintain order, encourage pupils to follow stereotypical routines which may hinder the development of their conversational skills. The prominence of IRF should therefore be reevaluated along with the whole ethos of teacher-controlled class. "The teacher does all the initiating and closing and students' work is done exclusively in the response slot. The IRF format therefore discourages students initiation and student repair work" (Candlin & Mercer 2001, P.95).

### ***2.2.3. Factors affecting classroom interaction***

It can be understood from the above introduction that the utterances of teachers and pupils are the most significant factors that greatly influence and shape the nature of interaction in the classroom (in addition to other factors which will be discussed shortly). As stated in chapter one, the main focus of this study is on exploring the general features of interaction in the Libyan EFL primary classroom, based on Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) framework which focuses on specific aspects of interaction and mainly teacher initiation, pupil response and teacher feedback. Therefore, it is important to discuss in some detail the potential effects of each part of Sinclair and Coulthard's model on classroom interaction in the Libyan context, as well as in other contexts as presented in previous research studies.

#### **2.2.3.1. Teacher initiation**

It is important to remember that, for many learners in countries such as Libya, the only contact with the English language is via the teacher, especially in the EFL context. Therefore, EFL teachers play an important role, if not the most important, in learning English as a foreign language for most learners (Moon 2000). Because of this important role, many researchers have investigated the amount and type of the teacher's talk and its impact on classroom interaction. Most, if not all, classroom observation schemes (for example, those of Flanders 1970; Moskowitz 1971; Sinclair and Coulthard 1975; Chaudron 1988 and Spada and Frohlich 1995) include categories that give specific attention to teacher talk, mainly because of the assumption that it is what the teacher says that determines the course of classroom interaction (Edwards and Westgate 1994). This reflects the teacher-dominant role in classrooms during the time when these instruments were developed (Nunan 1989), as well as best representing current practice in Libyan schools. The coding scheme used in the present study consists of 22 categories, 15 of

which focus on teacher talk as a central aspect of classroom interaction in the Libyan context (see 3.13.1).

As has been mentioned earlier, classroom interaction in Libyan EFL primary classrooms has not yet been systematically investigated, but what happens in the classroom has been described by some educationalists according to their experience as teachers of English language in Libya. Given my own experience, as someone who was trained and taught for a number of years in Libya, and following conversations with several Libyan teacher colleagues, classroom interaction (including teacher talk and learner talk) can be described as follows: classroom talk is completely dominated by the teacher; teachers are considered by the learners to be the main authority and source of knowledge in the classroom regardless of their qualifications or experience. This power that teachers hold is inherited from the social and cultural aspects of this context. Most teachers are adherents of and loyal to the Grammar-Translation and Audio-lingual Methods where the focus is mainly on individual learning rather than dialogic communication which is seen as central in constructing knowledge of language (Mitchell and Myles 1998). Imitation, repetition and memorization are the key tools. No instances were known to occur of any pair or group activity involving games, dialogues, or role play. Teachers seemed to press for rapid answers whenever they asked questions and rushed the process of learning to cover the assigned material in allocated time. Teachers pay great attention to daily homework and monitor pupils' homework individually. Translation is perceived by pupils and teachers as the easiest and quickest way of understanding English lessons. However, although this brief description may not give a comprehensive picture of teacher talk in the Libyan context, hopefully the findings of this study will make the situation much clearer.

The extent to which teacher talk dominates in the classroom has received more attention in other contexts as illustrated in the following examples from previous studies. Chaudron (1988) reported that in L2 classrooms (in different contexts) teachers dominate classroom speech. He summarized the average amount of teacher talk as illustrated in previous studies: for instance, teacher talk took an average of 77% of the time in five bilingual kindergarten classrooms in Canada, 69% in immersion French classes, and 61% in foreign language classrooms. Ramirez et al. (1986; cited in Chaudron 1988) also found that an average of 70% of classroom utterances in 72 kindergarten classes through grade 3 classes of Spanish children learning English were provided by the teachers. In other contexts similar phenomena have been found. Pontefract and Hardman (2005) investigated the discourse strategies of 27 teachers teaching English and science in primary schools in Kenya. The findings showed that teachers dominated most of the talk in the classroom. In a recent study conducted by Hasan (2006) with six non-native English teachers at Damascus University using audio and video recordings, the results of the study were consistent with the claim that teachers in traditional classroom talk most of the time.

From the discussion developed so far, we have seen that in the studies presented teachers dominate most of the talk in the classroom, but a further question is how the teacher's talk is distributed in the class. Several studies have focused on various aspects of teacher talk as an important element of classroom interaction. In the study mentioned earlier conducted by Ramirez et al. (1986), it was found that although there is considerable evidence of variability among different teachers and programmes, teachers are generally most likely to explain, question and command learners to respond; as a result teachers consume about two-thirds of the total talking time. Hardman et al. (2003) investigated the

nature of classroom interaction in interactive whole class teaching as part of the national literacy strategy in England. The study was carried out with 70 primary school teachers from the north-east, north-west and south-east of England. The findings of the discourse analysis showed that explanation by the teacher and teacher-directed questions and answers made up the majority of classroom discourse exchanges, accounting for 83% of the total teacher's talk. In a similar study, Smith et al. (2005) examined patterns of classroom interaction in private schools serving low income families in Hyderabad, India, using an adaptation of Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) scheme in which ten types of functions of teacher utterances were identified. More than 130 lessons were observed and then analyzed using a computerized systematic observation system and 20 further lessons were video-taped and transcribed using discourse analysis. The study found that teacher explanation, teacher direction and questioning were the most common discourse moves in the classroom. Mroz et al. (2000) also investigated the discourse style of 10 teachers of literacy to children aged from 5 to 11 in seven primary schools in the north east of England. The findings indicate that the teacher giving information, and teacher directed questions and answers represented 82% of the total teacher talk. Other studies of classroom interaction from Hong Kong (e.g. Tusi 1985) and sub-Saharan African countries (e.g. Fuller and Snyder 1991; Ackers and Hardman 2001) all revealed that whole class teaching at different schooling stages is dominated by teacher-directed question-and-answers and teacher-presentation.

Hence, as can be seen, questioning is one of the main aspects of teacher talk through which they maintain control over classroom interaction (Nunan 1989). The types of questions that are widely used in the classroom have been classified as display questions (one to which the questioner knows the answer) and referential questions (one to which

the person asking the question does not know the answer) (Brock 1986; Walsh 2006). It was found that display questions are more common and frequent than referential questions in L2 classrooms context (Brock 1986; Johnson 1990). This contrasts with interactions in the world outside, where referential questions characterize free conversation (Nunan 1989 and Seedhouse 1996). The key question is to what extent teacher questioning affects classroom interaction and helps in language learning. Brock (1986) investigated the impact of referential questions on 24 adult ESL learners at the University of Hawaii. The findings of the study revealed that the mean length of the learners' utterances when answering a referential question was much longer than their responses to a display question (10 words and 4.23 words respectively). She stated that an increased use of referential questions may increase the amount and type of learner talk in the classroom that may lead to creating more interaction opportunities which are essential in supporting language learning according to socio-cultural theory (see 2.1). However, Dillon (1994) concluded that question type itself may not be decisive; "what makes the difference is whether the answer to the question is predetermined to be right, whether it is to be recited or discussed" (p.22).

Researchers have also mentioned other types of questions that can be used in encouraging verbal responses in the classroom which could lead to some sort of teacher-pupil interaction. One example is 'cued elicitation' in which the teacher repeats what he/she has presented but omits the final word(s) (usually the target words) with high intonation, as illustrated in the example below.

Example:

T: what do we mean by the world parallel what do we say there are parallel  
what do we mean who can remember

P: the two lines will never meet



T: the lines will never^  
P: (choral few) meet  
(Pontefract & Hardman 2005, P.95)

This type has been found to be very common in different contexts and often functions to reinforce information given by the teacher or elicited from the pupils, and to keep the learners' attention rather than requiring an answer to a question (Pontefract & Hardman 2005; Abd-kadir & Hardman 2007).

#### **2.2.3.2. Pupil Talk**

Pupil talk is another important aspect of classroom interaction included in the coding scheme employed in this study. It refers to the patterns of initiation and response learners display in the classroom, and it is another significant variable in classroom interaction. The various patterns of learner talk in the classroom and their impact on classroom interaction have been investigated in different contexts by many researchers. For instance, Mroz et al. (2000) investigated the discourse style of 10 teachers of literacy to children aged from 5 to 11 in seven primary schools in the north east of England. They found that "pupils are being called on to display their knowledge through responding to teacher-initiated dialogue and questions" (p.385). Similar results were found by Hardman et al. (2003), who looked at the most common patterns of learner talk in interactive whole class teaching in England. They found that when pupils spoke, it was to answer a question 86% of the time. The answer was usually predetermined to be right or wrong (Dillon 1994). The length of learner talk is also used as a criterion in assessing the learners' involvement in classroom interaction. Hardman et al. (2003) measured the length of pupil utterances to explore to what extent pupils were encouraged to elaborate on their answers. The findings revealed that only 15% of responses were of more than three words and only 8% were longer than ten words. This supports the previous findings obtained by English et al.

(2002), which revealed that pupils' answers which were three words or less accounted for 90%, of the total. Later findings obtained by Pontefract & Hardman (2005) also indicated that more than half of both choral and individual responses were of one word. This could be due to a lack of opportunity to respond at length to teacher initiations.

According to my experience as a teacher, young learners in Libya rarely initiate any talk other than asking questions for clarification or obtaining permission. Their talk is dominated by the teacher. They are supposed to sit silently and listen to their teacher. If anyone has a question, he/she has to raise his/her hand to be allowed to ask. Pupil-pupil talk (e.g. pair or group work) is uncommon because it creates a lot of noise and interruption to others, in the opinion of many teachers (Orafi 2008). Pupil talk is generally limited to reciting what they have been asked to learn by heart, reading aloud from course books or the blackboard and choral responses to questions raised by the teacher. Choral responses, however, may encourage learners to participate, especially shy ones, but this is at the expense of their cognitive and linguistic development. Choral responses are marked by their low cognitive value and they are not expected to help students to interact with concepts and language (Pontefract & Hardman 2005). It is apparent that the patterns of interaction and the length of learner utterances depend on the extent to which the teacher controls the talk, type of task and participant organisation. In a teacher-centred class, for example, one right answer is often predetermined by the teacher for all students; whereas in a learner-centred class there could be a different right answer for each learner (Dillon 1994). But if learners are usually restricted to a responding role, therefore few meaningful learning interaction opportunities are available (Tsui 1995). However, in line with a sociocultural perspective, the value of student talk in the classroom has increasingly been recognised in language learning (Pica et al. 1987; Lantolf 1994a; Swain et al. 2002). As a

result, several teaching methods have tried to maximize the amount and quality of speaking by students. Task-based teaching methods, for example, support pair and group-work, which is believed to give each student the chance to talk as much as possible. On the other hand, proponents of some other teaching methods do not share the same opinion that teacher talk should be minimized. Listening-based teaching methods see most value in students gaining information from what they hear rather than in speaking themselves (Cook 2001).

Socio-cultural theory places the role of learners' talk in the classroom at the centre of learning (Vygotsky 1978). Through talk, students learn not only the structural elements of the target language but also their communicative application (Boyd and Maloof 2000). Therefore, it is hypothesized that in order for a learner to acquire a good level of second language competence, not only is comprehensible input or the maximization of planned practice needed, but also the creation of interaction opportunities in which learners can engage in an effort to cope with communication (Prabhu 1987), to make mistakes and explore solutions together. As reported by Al-Buseifi (2003), in each class Libyan teachers usually provide their students with lists of language items such as words, phrases and grammatical rules, with meanings in their native language, to be studied and memorized for the next lesson. Pupils spend considerable time memorizing these language items, yet they very often fail to re-call them over time.

#### **2.2.3.3. Teacher feedback**

Teacher feedback is another notable factor affecting classroom interaction. In addition to its use to obtain and provide information to students, feedback also has the function of accepting information offered by the students themselves and providing comments on their responses (Tusi 1995). However, the major advantage of providing feedback, as

claimed by Nassaji and Wells (2000), is that through it the teacher can extend the conversation and create a greater opportunity for the participation of pupils. In whole class teaching, feedback can also be used to encourage peers to respond to each other's performance by asking for their opinion (Smith and Higgins 2006).

The various types of feedback and their effect on classroom interaction and language learning have been widely studied. In their investigation of the nature of classroom interaction in interactive whole class teaching as part of the national literacy strategy in England, Hardman et al. (2003) found that 'acceptance' was the main type of feedback provided by teachers to pupils' answers, accounting for 57% of the total. Praising pupils for correct answers represented 21%, probing for another answer (from the same pupil) accounted for 14%, whereas criticism represented 7%. More recently, Pontefract & Hardman (2005) investigated the discourse used in classroom interaction in Kenyan primary schools. They found that teachers praised pupils for providing correct answers by inviting the class to clap their hands without giving any comment on the pupil's response. Another strategy was for the teacher to ask the class whether or not the answer was correct. This technique could "stimulate classroom interaction and help to make it less teacher dependent" (P.97). Repeating correct answers given by pupils was another common strategy used by teachers; however, other studies consider the repeating of a pupil's answer as an indication of an incorrect response (Edwards & Mercer 1987). With reference to the Libyan context, feedback as illustrated by the Libyan educationalist colleagues mentioned above (2.2.3.1) can be described as negative and de-motivating. Physical punishment, criticism and overt correction of errors are very common. Some Libyan young learners may remain passive throughout the course in order to avoid the teacher's negative comments, especially if these mistakes are considered to be sins. This

type of attitude makes pupils feel tense, reluctant and not motivated to interact actively (Elharm 2006).

It can be concluded that the type of feedback that a teacher provides affects student learning as well as the classroom atmosphere. A teacher who frequently provides negative feedback is likely to create a sense of failure and frustration among students, and therefore they will participate less. On the other hand, a teacher who appreciates learners' contributions and who provides positive feedback is much more likely to keep learners motivated to learn and participate in class, and this helps to create a warm social environment in the classroom (Tusi 1995).

#### ***2.2.4. Other factors affecting classroom interaction***

Besides teacher and pupil talk, there are other factors believed to be significant in shaping interaction in the classroom, such as those associated with the social and cultural backgrounds of the teacher and pupils, the teacher's beliefs, task type, and participant organization. The following section briefly discusses how these factors may affect classroom interaction with reference to the Libyan context.

##### **2.2.4.1. Social and cultural background of the teacher and pupils**

Social and cultural factors seem to contribute to what is going in the classroom. This is what has been found by Lahlalli (2003), in her study of classroom discourse in Morocco. She argued that the teachers' and students' classroom practice shapes and is shaped by their social and cultural practice. The students believe in the teachers' power. They believe that society has endowed teachers with the right to completely control and dominate classroom practice. On the other hand, teachers blamed the students for being

too passive and also mentioned other factors that seemed to affect students' participation in the classroom. Among these factors are the students' belief that teachers should provide the learning experience and that their role as students is to keep silent and listen attentively, and their awareness of the problem of unemployment which discourages students who think there will be no reward for their hard work. These findings and others provide evidence that the teachers and students' social and cultural background do seem to affect the nature of classroom interaction.

In the Libyan context, it could be argued that most teachers' and students' cultural backgrounds have been influenced by the teachings of Islam, and this requires a careful selection of topics and activities. For instance, topics such as sex, marriage, religion, and certain other cultural elements associated with the target language for native speakers cannot be discussed in the Libyan classroom, especially in a mixed-gender class. However, Shomoossi (2004) suggested that debatable topics such as marriage, religion and politics were found to be among the topics enhancing the amount of interaction in an EFL classroom. Also, asking girls and boys to work together in one group may not be acceptable to students and sometimes to parents as well. Therefore, teachers as well as learners find themselves surrounded by various social and cultural factors that restrict their choices; as a result they resort to the traditional methods where pupils sit individually and the teacher provides them with knowledge, following the course book very closely. However, it is assumed that working in pairs and groups could be much more acceptable in classes of young learners than among adults, because most of the former have not yet been so strongly influenced by their social and cultural background. This is one of the main reasons for choosing young learners as subjects in this study.

It is also important to mention here that in Libyan society it is usual for the male to take a lead and for the female to follow; girls are expected to be quieter and boys louder and more active. This socialized behaviour from the home extends to school. Therefore, it is not strange to find boys dominating the talk while girls just listen when they work together in a group. This behaviour may affect the level of interaction in the classroom. The effect of gender differences was also highlighted in previous research. Norman (1990 cited in Corden 2000, P.97) argued “that boys tend to talk more, interrupt more and be more aggressive while girls defer to others’ ideas and are more tentative”. However, not all boys are aggressive and of a dominant nature, and not all girls are passive. In a study conducted by Khalifa (2002) in which he investigated the effect of using computers in teaching math to Libyan young learners, he found that children usually worked together in pairs. A boy and a girl were observed using the computer, working with a math program. The boy did not dominate the girl, and she offered many suggestions and was able to justify them. However, the existence of these social and cultural restrictions could be due to the fact that pupils in Libya were not used to working cooperatively in pairs and groups, and teachers were not trained to establish such activities. Hence, by introducing language games, I predicted that cultural boundaries will be gradually be reduced and become less influential on pupils of different genders learning together.

#### **2.2.4.2. The teacher’s beliefs**

As already mentioned (see 2.2.3.1) teachers in Libya are considered to be the main sources of knowledge and the only ones who have control over students’ knowledge and the activities in the classroom. Teachers exert this authority in the classroom because the context allows them to do so, and students show no objection to their teachers’ behaviour. Thus, the teacher is considered the key player in the Libyan context and, therefore, their beliefs play a fundamental role in shaping patterns of interaction in the classroom.

Teachers usually formulate their beliefs over time either from their previous experience as students, experience of what works well with them, through practice, personality factors, research or principles derived from various approaches or methods (Richards & Lockhart 2005). It should be added that culture, religion and political orientation are also important factors here. The following discussion gives examples of teachers' different types of beliefs and how they could affect interaction in the classroom with reference to the Libyan context.

According to Richards & Lockhart (2005), the way teachers themselves were taught is the main source of their beliefs. This argument applies in the Libyan context as well. This can be seen from the loyalty of most Libyan teachers to the grammar translation and audio-lingual methods (Orafi 2008), which have been widely used in Libya for decades. They believe that imitation, repetition and memorization are very effective. In her study on the efficacy of grammar instruction in EFL classes in Japan, Takahashi (2005) argued that the Grammar Translation method has over the years had significant success. Huge numbers of people have effectively learnt foreign languages to a high degree of proficiency, and in many cases without any contact whatsoever with native speakers of the target language.

Despite the fact that communicative language teaching does a lot to expand on the goal of creating 'communicative competence' compared to earlier methods that professed the same objective (Brown 1994), some Libyan teachers still doubt this because they believe that vocabulary and grammar rules must be the starting point in learning any second/foreign language, unlike acquiring the first language. They think that students should be provided with large amounts of vocabulary and grammatical rules to be memorized, and then they can start thinking of introducing various activities to practice



the language (Al-Buseifi 2003). Therefore, no opportunities for meaningful interaction may be created when the teacher's main focus is on memorization rather than communication.

Some teachers also believe that pupils' learning errors must be corrected from the beginning, otherwise these errors become bad habits which are difficult to eradicate later, as demonstrated by Teacher B in this study (see 4.3). This belief may be derived from the way the holy book *The Quran* is taught. In learning *The Quran*; students have to imitate and repeat after their teacher very carefully and accurately because errors are not tolerated at the recitation stage. As a result, frequent corrections may make pupils reluctant to contribute, and this therefore reduces the level of interaction in the classroom. In addition, some teachers believe that, in order to gain the respect of pupils, there must be a distance between the teacher and pupils. That is, the relationship between teachers and pupils tends to be formal. Teachers rarely laugh, make jokes or talk about personal issues in the classroom. It is believed by many teachers that highly formal kinds of relationships may hinder interaction in the classroom and make pupils think twice before they participate. Thus, teachers influenced by such beliefs may feel silly when playing a game or making a joke in front of their pupils.

Orafi (2008) investigated teachers' practices and beliefs in relation to curriculum innovations in English language teaching in Libya. The study was conducted with five Libyan secondary school teachers using classroom observation and interviews. The findings show that there was a mismatch between the teachers' practice in the classroom and the principles of the curriculum because of the influence of their beliefs. For instance, the teachers' practice during reading activities was influenced by their beliefs about the nature of teaching reading. The ways they conceived the nature of teaching reading

seemed to be incompatible with the curriculum principles regarding this area of teaching. Instead of emphasizing purposeful reading, as required by the curriculum, they focused on reading aloud, word meaning and translation. Orafi (2008) also observed that teachers controlled the talk and the pattern of classroom interaction. They often asked questions and selected individual students to answer. Students were not given opportunities to work together to do activities even when the curriculum explicitly required the students to carry out activities in pairs or groups. The interviews with the teachers revealed that some of them considered giving the students opportunities to work together as a waste of time (Orafi 2008). The above examples indicate the extent to which teachers' beliefs impact on the implementation of the curriculum.

#### **2.2.4.3. Task type**

The amount of learners' interaction in the classroom may be determined by the degree of learner control over the talk. Cathcard (1986) found that, in situations where the learner had control of the talk (e.g. in role play, information gaps, games, story-telling, or interviews), a variety of communicative acts and syntactic structures were observed. Conversely, when the teacher had control over the talk, learners were found to produce shorter utterances mainly of a single word or short phrases. Thus, it is important to explore the impact of task types on learner interaction in classroom. This could help in constructing an overview about the extent to which tasks based on language games influence the pupils' levels of interaction in the classroom.

Pica et al (1993) classify tasks according to the type of interaction that occurs in task accomplishment:

1. Jigsaw tasks, learners combining different pieces of information to form a whole task. Participants are expected to achieve a single outcome;

2. Information-gap tasks, a participant holds some information but the others must negotiate and find out the information to complete a task;
3. Problem-solving tasks, participants must reach a solution to a problem given through a piece of information;
4. Decision-making tasks, participants are expected to work towards one possible outcome through negotiation and discussion;
5. Opinion-exchange tasks, learners engage in discussion and the exchange of ideas (p.20-22).

As Pica et al (1993) note, problem-solving, decision-making and opinion exchange tasks are less restrictive than jigsaw and information-gap tasks. They provide more learning opportunities and freedom for learners to tackle the task in a variety of ways. There are other classifications of task type as presented by other researchers. Prabhu (1987) used three major task types in the Bangalore Project: information-gap tasks, reasoning-gap tasks and opinion-gap task. He argued that reasoning-gap tasks were most beneficial in creating useful learning opportunities as well as being interesting to students (Skehan, 1998). Nunan (1989b) also divided tasks into two categories: communicative tasks and non-communicative tasks. Communicative tasks have been considered one of the most successful in using the language as a tool of communication rather than as a device to get learners to focus on grammatical features of the language (Loschky and Bley-Vroman, 1993). On the other hand, some researchers believe that no one particular task has precedence over others, arguing that different tasks contribute to language acquisition in different ways. Tong-Fredericks (1984) argues that one task type is not necessarily better or more effective than another. According to him, different types of tasks elicit different kinds of responses which can promote acquisition in different ways (Ellis 1990). Others think that, pupils' perceptions of the task and teacher role can determine the type of

interaction. That is, even though the appropriate task was selected, pupils may not feel able to work collaboratively if they perceived the purpose of the task differently from the teacher's intention. That is, at the initial stage, the child's goal in undertaking the task may not be clear. It may be different from the way the teacher perceives that goal of the task. The teacher may not be able to comprehend the actual motive or the goal of the child. However, in the process of performing the task, the goal of the child will gradually emerge but it may change as the adult continues to interact with the child. The teacher has to be flexible, to adjust to the changing goal of the child through assessing the responses, and the progress as feedback from the child, the pupils' expectations about their audience should be taken into account; the purpose of the task as well as the processes of the discussion should be made clear for all participants right from the beginning ( Westgate and Corden, 1993).

From the literature reviewed, it can be inferred that some tasks are more successful than others in determining the degree of freedom children might have in interpreting and responding in a variety of ways. Free discussion, problem solving, role play, talking about an object with the teacher's scaffolding, and tasks based on games provide more opportunities for students to interact meaningfully in ESL and EFL contexts (N'Zian (1991; Jones 1991; Hedge 2000; Garcia 2007). Thus, it is assumed here that employing activities based on language games with Libyan young learners, in a context where teacher-centred activities normally prevail, could be an appropriate choice in creating an environment where pupils can interact with each other and learn together under the teacher's supervision and scaffolding, so that they have opportunities to improve their metacognitive skills and not only their knowledge (see 2.1 for more details).

#### **2.2.4.4. Participant organization**

Researchers have also found significant associations between classroom interaction and participant organisation (e.g. McKay 1994; Watanabe and Swain 2007). From a theoretical perspective, the use of pair and group work is supported by two major theories of language learning: the psycholinguistic theory of interaction, based largely on the work of Long (1983); and sociocultural theory, which builds on the work of Vygotsky 1978. Both theories emphasize the importance of interaction generated in pairs and groups for learning (Storch 2007). Group work is considered by many researchers to be one of the most useful features of classroom interaction. It helps in creating a positive and relaxed learning environment by reducing the anxiety which prevents some students from speaking up in front of the whole class (Foster 1998). In addition to the pedagogical value of collaborative learning, it has been found that in group work learners have more opportunities to interact orally, do more self-repair, and provide explanations to each other; and quiet children may be more motivated and participate more easily (Brumfit 1984; Pica and Doughty 1985a; Gutierrez 2008).

The effectiveness of working in pairs has also been investigated. For example, Swain and Lapkin (2000) asked a group of young learners studying in a grade 8 French immersion class to participate in a paired task. In this type of task, students listen to a short but dense passage which is read at twice the normal speed. While they listen, they take notes, and later they work in pairs to rewrite the passage. The results revealed that learners were successful in supporting each other with information about language structures and corrective feedback while involved in the communicative task (Lightbown & Spada 1999). With regard to the Libyan context, as explained, pair and group work are

uncommon. Pupils usually sit in rows of paired chairs facing the blackboard and work individually (see 3.5.1).

Despite the findings on the pedagogic value of pair and group work, research on classroom interaction shows that even though children may sit together in pairs or groups, they often do not work as groups. Verbal interaction among children may be much rarer than might be expected (Tizard et al. 1988). Students may focus on the completion of the task rather than producing the necessary linguistic output to complete it (Seedhouse 1999). Therefore, for collaborative work to be effective and achieve its goals, the purpose and the objectives of the task should be made clear for all participants right from the beginning, pupils should understand properly what is expected of them, and also pupils ought to be taught how to work collaboratively and what difficulties they might face during the task (Galton and Williamson 1992; Candlin and Mercer 2001)

#### ***2.2.5. Classroom interaction and language learning***

Over the last two decades, both traditional second language acquisition and socio-cultural approaches to language learning have been interested in the role of classroom interaction in language learning (Pica and Doughty 1987; Swain and Lapkin 1998; Foster and Ohta 2005). Researchers interested in the teaching and learning of second or foreign languages have indicated that learners in different contexts learn better from collaborative dialogue where they can co-construct knowledge by assisting each other with the necessary linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge during solving a problem, correcting each others' mistakes, and encouraging each other to take part actively (Walsh 2006; Watanabe and Swain 2007).

Vygotsky's social interaction theory supports the idea of using group collaboration which offer opportunities for learners to acquire a second language effectively through interacting with group members (Richards & Rodgers 2001). According to sociocultural theory, what is learned collaboratively "might then be appropriated by the individual for future use. Learners are seen to be mutual scaffolders who give and receive support as they interact with their peers" (Naughton, 2006, P.170). A longitudinal study conducted by Takahashi (1998 cited in Lantolf 2000) investigated how students' utterances developed over time in a collaborative context. She looked at videotaped data of the classroom interactions of learners of the Japanese language across three years. The findings showed that, as pupils progress in their language learning, they become more capable in scaffolding each other's production. In the first year, students were able to produce one word at a time, usually by repetition after the teacher. By year two, Takahashi noted that pupils become able to comment on the teacher's utterances and assist each other actively during production. In year three, she observed that the teacher's level of assistance had been reduced and pupils appeared to be more active in the class. However, peer scaffolding and the collaborative construction of knowledge may fail to occur if group interaction is not supported on an affective and social level (Nyikos & Hashimoto 1997). In a similar vein, Bruner (1983) argued that, in acquiring their L1, children do not usually first learn sounds, then words, then sentences and then apply this linguistic knowledge to interact with people around them. They start interacting with people around them before being able to communicate: "Their caretakers typically spend enormous amounts of time in setting up and developing these interactions" (Van Lier 1990, P.229).

It has also been found that students involved in collaborative work did much better than their individual counterparts in a teacher-centred class (Foster 1998; Naughton 2006). Group-work students were successful not only to utter a greater amount but also a greater variety of language than the teacher-fronted class (Lightbown and Spada 1999). It is not enough for students simply to have linguistic knowledge of the target language; they must be able to apply this knowledge in negotiating meaning. It is through the interaction between learners that meaning becomes clear and learning takes place (Freeman 1986).

Most of the studies that have investigated interaction, comprehension and learning have focused on adult learners. However, some studies have examined whether or not opportunities for interaction in the classroom is as important to language learning for young learners as it is for adults. Oliver (1998) for instance, investigated ESL primary school children's behaviour working together on two communicative tasks, and found that interaction has an impact on children's second language learning. Oliver claimed that there is no difference in the effect of interaction on second language learning at different ages. She added that children, like adults, can derive benefits from the negotiation process for their language development. Other studies involving children working in pairs with other children or with adults have been conducted in various contexts (e.g. Van den Branden 1997; Mackey et al. 2003). These studies have investigated different interactional processes, such as giving and receiving feedback, asking questions and negotiating meaning. The findings tend to reveal that children can gain benefits from interacting with both peers and adults and with both native speakers (NS) and non-native speakers (NNS). However, both learner age and interlocutor type are still considered to be crucial variables.



Ellis and Heimbach (1997) investigated the effects of meaning negotiation on young learners' word acquisition. Learners were asked to listen individually and in small groups to their teacher giving directions containing words unknown to them. The findings of the study indicated that children were more active and negotiated more when they were part of a group, and this negotiation facilitated comprehension of the teacher's directions. However, there was no evidence that there was a relationship between comprehension and the acquisition of the target words. The study concluded that meaning negotiation may have less impact on acquisition in children than it does in adults. Nevertheless, these findings support those of previous studies involving L2 adults which have revealed that negotiation apparently works for comprehension for young learners just as it does for adults.

Concerning the utility of classroom interaction for language learning, various studies have reported that interaction could potentially have positive effects on L2 learners' later production (Gass and Varonis 1994). From a sociocultural perspective, the research suggests that learners can work together collaboratively through a process of collective scaffolding to support and extend each other's L2 language learning (Van Lier 2000). Second language acquisition research (e.g. Mackey 1999) has also revealed that active participation in interaction is associated with learning. However, some learners still gain benefits by observing negotiations by others, even though they do not participate actively themselves (Ellis & Heimbach 1997).

The clear importance of classroom interaction in the process of learning has encouraged the present research to investigate the possibility of enhancing classroom interaction in the Libyan EFL context, where learners tend to be passive and spoon-fed information by

teachers (Al-Gadhi 2005). That is, to create more interaction opportunities where pupils can interact with their teacher and with each other using the target language meaningfully towards a purposeful goal. However, what has been left unanswered so far is how classroom interaction can be enhanced. According to the socio-cultural theory of learning, the process of teaching and learning is not effective unless greater emphases on social interaction and communication take place in the classroom (Meadows 1993; Smith et al. 2005). The social-cultural perspective seems to support the present investigation based on the argument that 'language games', described by Roth (1998) as miniature social worlds through which learners can socialize and interact with each other using the target language meaningfully, could enhance classroom interaction and lead to better language learning. Consequently, in the next section relevant studies on the effectiveness of language games in creating interaction opportunities are reviewed. In particular, definitions of language games, rationales for using them, and their impact on classroom interaction and language learning are discussed.

### **2.3. Language games**

Based on the above discussion, talking opportunities where children can socialize and interact with each other in pairs and groups using English as the medium of interaction, are required in ESL/EFL classrooms (Parbh 1987; Corden 2000; Watanabe and Swain 2007). One of the most popular ways through which talking opportunities can be created is by establishing a playful context where pupils can practice the target language interactively and meaningfully in an enjoyable and stress-free climate. According to Vygotsky (1978, P.102) "the context of play creates zones of proximal development of the child". It allows children to behave differently from the way they do in non-play situations.

However, the term 'play' is hard to define. It seems to be a very broad and complex phenomenon and therefore it is difficult to find one precise and comprehensive definition. A most appropriate definition was suggested by Wood and Attfield (1996). According to them, the term play is also used to refer to a variety of activities related to both children and adults not all of which are conducive to learning. Some types of play are trivial and pointless while others are highly serious and purposeful. That is, it can be creative and motivated and, thus, enhance learning or it can be meaningless and futile. In this study, the context of play refers to the use of language games in the classroom, such as movement games and memory games where pupils can work collaboratively in pairs and groups. They scaffold each other under the guidance and support of the teacher using English as mediation towards clear and purposeful goals. Since the focus of the present study is on language games, it is necessary to specify what is meant by language games.

### ***2.3.1. Definition of language games***

In language learning, games may be defined as "activities governed by rules, which set up clearly defined goals ... the achievement of these goals signals the end of the game" (Brumfit et al. 1991, P.143). Langran and Purcell (1994) define a language game as a tool to create a situation in the classroom which provides learners with opportunities for using the target language they have already learnt in a stress-free environment, with the maximum possible free expression in order to carry out a simple task, solve a problem or communicate a piece of information. In Libya games are generally considered as activities practiced by young people usually outside of the classroom in their leisure time. Not much attention is paid to the educational role they may play; no doubt partly due to the lack of awareness in Libyan schools of the use of games in language learning (see 4.3). According to my understanding, the term 'play' refers to the use of various types of

games in the classroom not only for the purpose of fun and competition, but also used to create an enjoyable atmosphere where more learning opportunities can be established, to make lessons attractive to children and to keep them motivated. The playful context is also used to stimulate and encourage children to interact, through which their ZPD can be expanded.

There are various types of games that can be used in the classroom. These games range from very simple ones with straightforward and limited instructions that can be employed with young children and language learner beginners, to complicated ones which are usually used with advanced learners (Langran and Purcell 1994). Generally speaking, games fall into three categories. “In cooperative games players or teams work together towards a common goal; in competitive games the players or teams race to be the first to reach a goal” (Hadfield 1998, P.4); and in individualistic games each learner has his/her own game and whoever finishes first, as when doing a crossword puzzle, is the winner. Another classification of games was proposed by Bedson & Gordon (1999, P.17), in which they suggested ten different types of games as follows: “movement games, card games, board games, dice games, drawing games, guessing games, role-play games, singing and chanting games, team games, and word games”. However, games that include elements of fun, encourage participation, have a clear language objective, and retain the interest of all pupils to avoid boredom, are the ones that language teachers should consider (Cakir 2004). The reason for the usefulness of games could be due to the fact that children, unlike adults, are not yet in control of their lives. At this early age, children do not have specific needs and goals in learning a foreign language (Brewster et al. 2004), and therefore, it is the teacher’s role to create interesting and purposeful activities that motivate and encourage them to learn that language.

Among all of the different types of games, in my view, competitive and cooperative games are in keeping with the socio-cultural view of successful language learning in that they maximize social interactions between learners and stimulate them to communicate meaningfully in the target language to approach a task-based game. This is because such games create an enjoyable learning atmosphere where pupils work in pairs and groups collaboratively towards a purposeful objective, and therefore they feel that they are in a situation where there is no anxiety, as opposed to traditional classes where pupils usually work individually. The relationship between language games and the premises of socio-cultural theory can be seen through the definition of the zone of proximal development (ZPD). Based on the notion of the ZPD, pupils are supposed to have the potential ability to do something on their own. This potential can be expanded when children are involved in a playful environment. Therefore, the relationship between children and play can be exploited by the teacher in providing the necessary scaffolding using the talk generated by pupils during language games as mediation to facilitate the process of learning. Gradually this could help children to become independent in working together and to develop their ability to learn, which is the aim of any learning process (Johnson & Johnson 1987).

### ***2.3.2. Rationale for using language games***

On the basis of the foregoing discussion of the playful context in general and language games in particular, it could be argued that such a motivating context should be available for Libyan young learners who are deprived from learning in a playful environment. It has been found that when children are motivated and interested in what they are learning they show more readiness to participate, desire to be fully engaged in the activity, and

continue with it until the end (Moon 2000). This is very helpful for language learning because if children are keen to continue with an activity for some time it will give them more exposure to the target language and more opportunities to practice what they have learned. Enjoyable activities such as language games could play a fundamental role in developing a positive attitude towards the target language, because children have pleasant experiences during the activities. Generally speaking “if an activity is enjoyable, it will be memorable; the language involved will stick and the children will have a sense of achievement” (Phillips 2001, P.6).

Another important reason for using games is that they can provide young learners with an essential link between their real lives and school, which helps to make them feel more secure and confident about taking part in classroom activities (Brewster et al. 2004). This feeling has a great impact on learners’ participation, as argued by Bruner (1983) who investigated why children find school learning so boring and difficult. He discovered that this was because children experienced it as very separate from the rest of their lives.

Moreover, in my view, for more meaningful classroom interaction to take place in Libyan EFL primary classrooms, it would seem that more responsibility for learning should be placed upon the learners. Therefore, the language games used in this study were intended to help in making a gradual shift away from traditional teaching methods where the teacher is not only the main source of knowledge in terms of the target language, but also in deciding who takes part in interaction in the classroom. This shift would lead to the teacher taking the role of activity organiser and facilitator, motivating and encouraging learners to construct knowledge by working with others, and providing feedback on learners’ performance. This does not mean that responsibility is entirely transferred to the

learners. The learners' involvement will generally be a gradual process, whereas the teacher retains final responsibility for ensuring that effective learning takes place (Tudor 1993).

However, there is some disagreement as to whether play best offers a context for acquiring new, or strengthening existing, behaviours, knowledge and skills (Bennett et al. 1997). Atkin (1991) expressed serious doubts about the effectiveness of using games in classrooms, claiming that play served to distract children from learning. It is usually for leisure and fun, whereas learning is a serious work. Thus, if children are playing, they are not working. Nevertheless, the following discussion of previous research shows that language games have good pedagogical value, motivate learners, and create relaxed learning environments. All of these effects are fundamental in creating more learning opportunities (Atake 2003).

### ***2.3.3. Language games and language learning***

In spite of the fact that there remains little empirical support for the association between play and learning, it is generally accepted that play is an important means for learning in the early years (Thomas et al. 2006). According to these authors, the reasons may be due to the “difficulty of providing an operational definition of play and the issue of isolating the developmental potential of play for experimental manipulation” (P.52). However, the last few decades have witnessed a growth in investigations of the pedagogical value of playful practice using language games in language classes. Evidence from research on the use of games has shown that there is a relationship between language games and language learning. For example, language games were found to be an effective instrument for attaining specific language items such as vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation in a

study of the effect of teaching vocabulary through games by Uberman (1998). Two groups of Polish English language learners were chosen to take part in the study. With one group games were used and with the other translation and context guessing. The study examined the effectiveness of using games for vocabulary presentation and revision. The findings revealed that language games are an effective tool not only in presenting new vocabulary but also in retaining and retrieving the material they had been exposed to. Like Uberman (1998), Yip & Kwan (2006) examined the efficiency of teaching vocabulary using online games. 100 students divided into control and experimental groups participated in a quasi-experimental study for nine weeks. Pre and post-tests were used to assess the students' vocabulary learning at the end of the course. The findings indicated that students in the experimental group out-performed their counterparts in the control group. However, it was found that games not only encouraged pupils to expand their linguistic knowledge, but they also enhanced classroom interaction by providing authentic language use situations where pupils' participation in the classroom could be maximized (Cook1997).

An example of this is a study by Smith (2006) of the interaction while playing a board game between bilingual learners learning English as a second language. Smith (2006) found instances of interactive behaviours in which pupils supported and mediated each other's learning. The study was carried out with 18 small groups aged seven to ten in primary schools in the UK. The groups were video recorded playing the games in the absence of the teacher as well as the researcher, and the recordings were then transcribed and qualitatively analysed. The findings showed that playing a board game is a supportive context through which bilingual pupils learn English through the medium of English. Pupils were able to participate actively during play sessions, responding to each other and



providing each other with critical feedback. They were able to extend and construct sentences based on one another's utterances. The study also proved that pupils were able to interact and work together, scaffolding each other independently. In line with Smith's findings, similar conclusions were drawn by Cekaite and Aronsson (2005). They conducted a study with a group of immigrant children aged 7 to 10 in Sweden. They were beginner learners of Swedish, and the class was run by a native Swedish speaker for five days a week, 4-6 hours a day. The children's participation in the classroom was encouraged during a memory game. The interactions which took place in the classroom were video recorded in three different periods during the academic year, and the data gathered transcribed and then qualitatively analysed. Even though the children were all beginner learners of Swedish, the findings showed that they were able to play with language in different ways. They creatively used newly introduced lexical items, correcting and instructing each other, building upon each other's contributions, producing jokes based on language play and employing a wide range of collaborative strategies.

It is apparent from such studies that, during language-play, learners show more eagerness to participate and use the target language as mediation. Therefore, it can be argued that the more relaxed and pleasant the atmosphere in the classroom is, the more motivated the learners become. On the contrary, a tense classroom creates anxious students, and thus their motivation will be very low, which will affect their learning process and their participation in the classroom (Gardner 1985). Similar results found by Al-Moghani (2003) indicated that the majority of his informants believed that a pleasant atmosphere in the classroom, and especially a supportive classroom where teachers create a safe climate avoiding tension and anxiety, is effective in motivating Libyan intermediate students to learn the English language.

#### ***2.3.4. Limitations of language games***

In spite of the above findings, research has shown that language games techniques are sometimes problematic. Rixon (1988) stated that one of the difficulties that teachers face in employing games is having a large number of students in one class. In big classes not all students get the chance to participate. Classroom organization and layout is another factor that may create difficulties for teachers in using games, especially when children are sitting in regimented rows as in Libya. Learners resorting to their L1 during a game activity may also hinder the learning of the L2 (Brumfit et al. 1991). However, sociocultural researchers (e.g. Anton and DiCamilla 1999) argue that L1 facilitates the learning of L2 and therefore they support the use of L1 during tasks. Similarly, Cook (2001) claims that there is no evidence that using L1 in foreign or second language class is inappropriate. He claimed that L1 can be used to explain difficult grammar, clarify new vocabulary, and manage the classroom. Furthermore, it has been reported that choosing and preparing a language game which is appropriate for your group, judging the logistics and allocating the right amount of time, are among the challenges, especially for inexperienced teachers (Langran and Purcell 1994). On the other hand, the teacher may select a task based on a language game which he/she believes encourages discussion and interaction among learners, but the learners may instead use the simplest possible strategy in performing the task (Murphy 2003). A further problem is that some teachers in Libya view games as activities practiced by young people outside the classroom in their leisure time, as illustrated in the findings of this study. This could be due to a lack of awareness about using games in language learning in Libyan schools. However, I postulate that getting teachers, parents and learners to view games as an acceptable way to learn within the classroom could be the first barrier to overcoming their use in classrooms.

## **2.4. Summary**

This chapter began by providing an overview about the process of language learning as described by sociocultural theorists. The nature of interaction in the classroom as presented in the literature was highlighted. Then the main aspects of classroom interaction (teacher talk and learner talk) based on Sinclair and Coulthard's model were considered. Other factors believed to influence the nature of classroom interaction, such as the social and cultural backgrounds of the teacher and the learners, the teacher's beliefs, task types and participant organisation were discussed. Based on the review of the literature, it was found that classroom interaction determines to a certain extent the students' learning opportunities and use of the target language (Johnson 1995). Since Libyan young learners are usually deprived of the opportunity to work collaboratively, it was important to look for different tactics for enhancing classroom interaction in Libyan primary classrooms. Thus, it was argued that language games may provide children with opportunities for practicing different interaction skills, such as in pair and group work, taking turns to speak, negotiating meaning, and exchanging information and opinions. Above all, games can create a relaxed and motivating learning environment, which is vital for classroom interaction (Langran & Purcell 1994). Therefore, in this study, language games are proposed for use with Libyan primary school students in an attempt to encourage them to take an active part in the process of learning and to enhance classroom interaction. In the next chapter, the methodology and research design of this study will be presented.

## **Chapter Three: Methodology**

This chapter provides an overview of the research design employed in this study and the procedures of data collection. It begins by stating the purpose of the study and the questions to be answered. The rationale for using a multi-method research strategy is then explained, followed by the ethical procedures involved in getting access to schools. A full description of the setting and participants is provided. This chapter also includes a description of the data gathering instruments, including classroom observation, interviews with teachers and the analysis of pupil-pupil talk. The pilot studies as well as the measurement of validity and reliability of the instrument are discussed. The methods used for data analysis are also specified. The chapter concludes by reporting a summary of the difficulties encountered during the field work.

### **3.1. Purpose of the study and research questions**

The present investigation is guided by the assumption that using language games could provide more opportunities for pupil talk and lead to (see 2.3.3) an interactive environment more conducive to language learning than traditionally taught EFL classrooms in Libya. This study involves the use of language games in teaching English to young Libyan learners in two state schools in Libya's capital, Tripoli. Activities based on language games replace some activities which presently exist in the textbook (see 1.4.1 for more details about the curriculum). The main purpose of the study is to investigate the impact of language games on classroom interaction, learning opportunities in Libyan EFL primary classrooms, and teachers' perception about the use of language games in class. This can be broken down into several key questions which form the foundation of this study as follows:

1. What is the nature of classroom interaction in the Libyan EFL primary classrooms, and how is it affected by the introduction of language games in the classroom?
2. What learning opportunities does the language games-based approach provide for pupils in Libyan EFL primary classroom?
3. What are the teachers' perceptions about the use of language games in teaching the English language to Libyan young learners?

### 3.2. Research design

Research design concerns the “logical plan for getting from here to there” (Yin 2002, P. 20). ‘*Here*’ stands for the starting point, which is the formulation of research questions; whereas ‘*there*’ is defined as the answers to these questions. Between ‘*here*’ and ‘*there*’ several steps and procedures need to be followed, such as collecting, analysing and interpreting data (Yin 2002). The distance between here and there in this study is bridged using a multi-method research strategy in which data is gathered from four different sources as shown in table 1 below: i) classroom observation; ii) stimulated recall interviews with teachers; iii) semi-structured interviews with teachers and iv) analysis of pair talk.

**Table 1:** Data collection instruments

Data Collection Instruments	Research Questions		
	Q1	Q2	Q3
Classroom observation	√	√	
Stimulated recall interviews	√		
Analysis of pair talk		√	
Semi-structure interviews			√

These instruments are employed to investigate the opportunities for EFL learning afforded in classroom interaction in both the TCs and the GCs; what this learning in

interaction looks like, i.e. the mechanisms involved in the process of EFL learning; and some measure of the product of this learning in terms of pupils' eventual use of English in a paired task. Reasons for any differences in interactive behaviour and learning opportunities between the TC and GC are also explored.

### **3.3. Rationale for research design**

There are several kinds of research designs used in second language research. I found that the most popular are case studies, experiments, surveys, archival analysis, and multi-method research (Best 1977; Bell & Opie 2002; Bryman 2004). Although each has its distinctive features, there are many overlaps between them. Many researchers believe that certain strategies are most suitable for particular situations (Bell 1999). Case studies, for instance, are appropriate for exploratory research; experiments are suitable in conducting explanatory research; surveys are appropriate for descriptive research; and multi-method research is convenient when a research problem needs to be investigated in depth and from different perspectives.

This study is mainly an exploratory study in which a number of 'what' questions need to be answered. Therefore, any of the above mentioned research methods could be used (Yin 2002). Since both numerical and non-numerical data are required to answer the questions being addressed and to understand the phenomenon from different angles, a multi-method research strategy combining quantitative and qualitative methods was adopted.

Multi-method research can be defined as an approach in which both quantitative and qualitative methods are involved in collecting and analysing data within a single study (Creswell 2003). A prominent example of both qualitative and quantitative methods being

successfully used is Smith et al's (2005) study. They investigated the nature of classroom interaction and discourse in privately-funded schools serving low-income families in Hyderabad. Different data sources were utilised, mainly from classroom observation, questionnaires and interviews. According to the authors, the multi-method approach is an option that leads to greater confidence in the findings. Another recent example where mixed methods have been used is Huang (2007), in which the impact of content-based language instruction on primary EFL young learners in Taiwan in terms of learning motivation and language development was investigated. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed to address the same research problem. The results from the first quantitative phase were used to plan the second qualitative phase.

This study is similarly based on a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods. One reason for adopting this design is that a mixed strategy could best serve the purpose of the study in answering the research questions. Quantitative data, for instance, allow one to code and quantify any discourse acts which take place in the classroom. In my view, numerical data help in providing an overall picture of the nature of classroom interaction, especially when comparison is involved. Qualitative data, on the other hand, supplement the findings of quantitative research by providing examples from transcripts of learning in action and in obtaining explanations for teachers' behaviour in class. Thus, both quantitative and qualitative data can be used to supplement and support each other.

Other factors influencing the decision to utilise a triangulated approach in this study include that it leads to greater validity and reliability than the use of a single methodological approach (Bryman 2004). It can also provide more detailed data and a better understanding of the research problem (Creswell 2003). However, the number of

methods used is not an indicator of research success, since “poorly conducted research will yield suspect findings no matter how many methods are employed” (Bryman 2004, P.464). These reasons are considered to be a justifiable rationale for using a multi-strategy research design, which seems to be more comprehensive and thus could be superior to other kinds of designs for this study.

### **3.4. Ethical issues and gaining access**

The term ‘ethics’ has been defined by Flew (1984) as a set of values by which a particular group or community decides to rule its behaviour to differentiate what is legal or acceptable from what is not. According to Cohen (2000) there are three main areas of ethical issues: obtaining consent, confidentiality, and consequences. With regard to the Libyan context, research for academic purposes is still limited, therefore people still feel sensitive about and reluctant to take part in research, especially if interviews or observations are included.

Therefore, in order to protect myself as a researcher and my participants from the consequences of any latent problems, the following considerations were taken into account. Firstly, written permission for access to schools was obtained from the educational authorities in the areas where the schools were located (see Appendix 1). Then, permission from the heads of schools to enter classrooms was gained. Secondly, the purpose and the nature of the study were clearly identified. Thirdly, the identities of schools and any persons participating in the study were protected by the use of numbers and pseudonyms. Fourthly, participants were informed that any piece of information collected would be kept confidential and would be used only for the purpose of this research. Finally, it is worth mentioning here that obtaining parents’ permission in order



to gain access to young learners in Libya is uncommon, and the school administration is authorised to deal with such issues. However, in spite of all the above procedures and concerns, an unexpected ethical issue arose during data collection. In week four, pupils in the TC in School One started complaining that their teacher was not using games with them, compared to their counterparts in the GC. Therefore, I did my best to explain the purpose of the study and promised them that their teachers would use the same games with them later with the teachers' agreement. Meanwhile, the duration of the intervention was reduced by two weeks in response to the teachers' concerns.

### **3.5. Research setting and participants**

To provide a clear general view of the context in which this study took place, this section briefly describes the setting and the participants of the study.

#### ***3.5.1. Description of the schools***

Two schools were selected from a list of schools provided by the educational authority in Tripoli. These schools were selected according to the following criteria; ease of access, permission given to video-recording, availability of two pupil groups at the same level, and the suitability of the teacher's timetable. The identity of the schools is kept anonymous for reasons of confidentiality. They are named 'School One' and 'School Two'.

The two schools used for this study were mixed-sex primary schools. School One was smaller than School Two in terms of its size and number of pupils. It had about 326 pupils and 56 teachers (unlike in England where primary school teachers tend to stay in the same class all day, pupils in Libya have different teachers for different subjects). The pupils'

ages ranged from between 6 to 15 years. Located in the eastern part of Tripoli, the school is a two-story building with 11 classrooms. The average class size was between 22 and 30 pupils sitting in three rows of paired chairs facing the blackboard. School Two, on the other hand, is located in Tajura (15 km to the east-part of Tripoli) and consisted of about 782 pupils and 148 teachers. Pupils' ages also ranged from 6 to 15. The school is a two-story building with 23 classrooms, the areas of which range from 40 to 50 square metres. The average number of pupils per class was between 25 and 35 sitting in three rows of paired chairs facing the blackboard. The classrooms are very simply furnished with a teacher's desk, which symbolises the authority of the teacher and the pedagogic style according to the ORACLE research in 1976 (Galton et al, 1999), along with 12 to 16 wooden seats for pupils, a blackboard and chalk. There is some decoration and posters on the wall made by pupils under the supervision of their teachers, but none related to the English language. Both schools lacked important facilities such as educational aids, computers, access to the internet, libraries, sports halls, and suitable playgrounds where pupils could play.

### ***3.5.2. Description of the participants***

Two English language teachers and 100 pupils (assigned by the school administration) learning English as a foreign language divided into four classes (traditional (TC) and games (GC) classes in each school) took part in this study. All participants were from the two schools located in Libya's capital, Tripoli. The TC in School One consisted of 22 pupils (13 boys and 9 girls), while the GC consisted of 22 pupils (6 boys and 16 girls). The TC in School Two consisted of 28 pupils (13 boys and 15 girls), whereas the GC consisted of 28 pupils (12 boys and 16 girls). All pupils were studying in year five, and their ages ranged from ten to eleven years. They had been learning English as a foreign

language for two months and therefore were considered to be beginners. Although the pupils were not randomly assigned to a particular class, they were more or less comparable in terms of age, native language, grade, ethnicity, and cultural and socio-economic background, as well as their English language background (none of them had taken private courses or studied abroad). The same teacher taught both classes in each school, and identical course books and similar methods of teaching were used with all pupils, who had four lessons a week of an average of 33 minutes each.

**Table 2:** Pupils taking part in the study (N= 100)

Class	Total number	Male	Female	Average age	Native Language	Grade
T.C.S.1	22	12	9	10.5	Arabic	Five
G.C.S.1	22	6	16	10.8	Arabic	Five
T.C.S.2	28	13	15	10.7	Arabic	Five
G.C.S.2	28	12	16	10.3	Arabic	Five

T.C.S.1 = Traditional Class School One, G.C.S.1 = Games Class School One  
T.C.S.2 = Traditional Class School Two, G.C.S.2 = Games Class School Two

The study was conducted during the autumn term of the 2006/2007 academic year, during November and December. To maintain anonymity, the pupils are here given numbers instead of their real names. Pupils are usually divided into groups of 25-35 at the beginning of the school year (depending on the total number of pupils and the availability of classrooms) by the school administration based on their scores obtained in the previous academic year. According to the head teacher, this procedure has the aim of mixing pupils with different abilities.

However, to enhance the comparability of the groups when subjects cannot be arbitrarily assigned (Seliger & Shohamy 1989), a preliminary test was administered at the beginning of the programme. It aimed to explore the pupils’ actual English level prior to the intervention. The test consisted of 25 English words extracted from the pupils’ course

book materials as authorized by the Ministry of Education in Libya. Based on the objectives of the course book, pupils were asked to recognize the written form and meaning of these words by matching them with pictures. The analysis of the test results demonstrated that there was no significant difference between the TCs and GCs in either school at the beginning of the intervention programme, and therefore they may be considered to be approximately equal (see Appendix 2).

### ***3.5.3 Description of the teachers***

Teacher A was a 27 year-old female teacher with a higher diploma in teaching English as a foreign language with 3 years of experience (see 1.4.3. about teachers' background). Although she was aware of the importance of interactive learning, especially for young learners, she had never used games with pupils in class. However, she was willing to participate in this study in order to familiarise herself with various techniques for teaching the English language. Teacher B gained a diploma in teaching English as a foreign language and social sciences from Alraya Teachers Institute in 1984. She was 42 years old and had been teaching English for 16 years, and geography for 2 years. She had no training in using language games nor had ever used them in class. She was also keen to take part in this study.

### **3.6. Data collection instruments**

Various types of research instrument have been developed over the years to be used in data collection. Each instrument is particularly appropriate for certain sources of data, yielding information of the kind and in the form that could be most effectively used. The data sources for this study are varied and were designed to address the range of research questions. The following is a description of each data source.

### ***3.6.1. Classroom observation***

Classroom observation was utilised in this study to explore the nature of classroom interaction and how it is affected by language games. One advantage of classroom observation is that it may help to explore unanticipated and interesting information (Bell 1999). The literature reveals that carrying out observation is not an easy choice. A lot of planning, preparation and practice is needed to get the most out of this technique (Nisbet 1977; Bryman 2004). However, once the observer has acquired the necessary skills to conduct observation, valuable and rich data can be gathered which would be impossible to obtain by any other method.

There are two main types of observation: participant and non-participant. In participant observation, the observer regularly takes part in the activities he/she is studying. This type of observation generates massive volumes of data not only about the natural behaviour of the people being observed but about their attitudes, opinions and feelings too (Breakwell et al. 2000). On the other hand, it may be argued that data gathered from participant observation can be subjective, biased, and impressionistic, especially when all the members of the group or organization are known to the observer (Bell 1999). Non-participant observation shares some of the characteristics of participant observation. The major difference is that the observer neither takes part in the activities being studied nor pretends to be a participant in them. The observer watches what is going on in the classroom and takes notes (Long & Seliger 1983).

In this study non-participant observation using a computerised observation tool (see below) as well as video recording was utilised in collecting data. The rationale behind using video is: firstly, “video recordings offer a relatively cheap and semi-permanent

record which can be played back repeatedly, allowing for in-depth analysis” (Breakwell, 2000, P.233). Secondly, to look at the teachers’ behaviour more closely from a qualitative point of view. Thirdly, to capture any information missed during the computerised observation sessions. Fourthly, to observe non-verbal actions, as shown in (4.1.1.2), and finally to be used as a recall stimulus for teachers during the stimulated recall interviews. The effect of the observer and the observation equipment will be discussed in a later section (see 3.10).

As explained in section 2.2.3, a primary focus of this study was on the three components of exchanges: Initiation, Response, Feedback (IRF), identified by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975). This involves teacher initiation acts such as, eliciting, checking, direct, informing, modelling, giving clues and nominating. Pupils’ responses involve acts such as spontaneous contributions, responses to teachers’ questions; reactions to teachers’ orders, choral repetition and initiated questions. The teacher’s feedback including, correcting, praising, and criticism were recorded as well (more details about the coding scheme see Appendix 3). For fast and accurate recording of the frequency of any discourse act made by teachers and pupils in class, computerised software, known as The Observer was employed in this study.

The Observer is an observational software program which can be used for live or videotaped data collection (Ice 2004, p.354). It is used by installing the software into a laptop to enable the observer to record what is going on in the class ‘live’ by clicking on the button that represents the discourse move. It was first developed as an automated system to collect observations of behavioural patterns in animals. However, it soon became clear that the flexibility and powerful analysis functions of The Observer made it

suitable for almost anybody involved in collecting observational data. The researcher watches one or a group of people in a certain place (e.g. a classroom) and enters observations of their behaviour in the form of codes which have already been predetermined by the researcher (Noldus Information Technology 2003).

Unlike other observation schemes which involve complex transcription and coding and are extremely time consuming, The Observer is practical and straightforward. Once the observation session is complete, the data are stored in a computer file. From that moment the data can be retrieved and analysed. The analysis functions of The Observer allow the researcher to produce lists, tables, graphical representations or statistical calculations to answer specific research questions (Noldus Information Technology 2003).

The Observer was successfully used in 2001 by Hardman, Smith and Wall to investigate the impact of the National Literacy Strategy (NLS) on the literacy learning of pupils with Special Educational Needs in mainstream schools. The main focus of the study was on the frequency of each discourse move as “it happened in the class” (Smith & Hardman 2003). Two years later, The Observer was employed again by Smith, Hardman and Tooley to explore the nature of classroom interaction in privately-funded schools serving low-income families in Hyderabad, India. One hundred and thirty-eight lessons were observed from which valuable data were obtained (Smith et al 2005).

However, besides all the above mentioned merits of The Observer, there are some risks that need to be highlighted here. For instance: i) “loss of data resulting from battery failure, computer error, or operator error may be expected” (Ice 2004, p.354); ii) sufficient training is required especially for people who lack the necessary computer

skills; and iii) creating a suitable coding scheme is time consuming and needs a lot of testing and piloting, in addition to the caution to be expected when using predetermined coding schemes in general (see Nunan 1989). These risks were avoided by careful planning and training. During the observation sessions, field notes were also jotted down to provide physical descriptions of the classrooms observed, the focus of the lesson, and the time and date of the observation session (see Appendix 4).

### ***3.6.2. Stimulated recall interviews***

Stimulated recall (SR), also used in this study, is a technique in which the researcher audio or video tapes parts of a lesson to be used to prompt participants to recall thoughts and comments on what was happening at the time that the teaching and learning took place (Nunan 1992). It was first used at the University of Chicago by Benjamin Bloom in 1953. He audio-taped lectures at the university and then used the recordings to stimulate students in the class to recall overt events. He found that the SR technique was very effective, especially if the recalls were prompted a short period of time after the experience (Gass & Mackey 2000). SR has also been used as a technique in teacher training to evaluate teaching effectiveness (Peterson and Clark 1978). Some researchers use SR to uncover learners' perceptions towards particular tasks and the extent to which these tasks contributed to their learning (Gass & Mackey 2000).

The main advantage of the SR technique is that it can stimulate the recall of a particular episode, tapping into the teacher's perceptions and theories of learning (Stough 2001). In addition, it might enhance the findings of research by providing more clarifications and interpretations of certain events taking place during classroom observation. The major concern, even with stimulus such as video or tape recordings, is that researchers need to



be aware that SR should be conducted as soon as possible after the teaching episode to maximise accuracy (Polio et al. 2006). In this study SR was utilised to obtain teachers' reflections on their behaviour during their interaction so that we could better understand the nature of their interaction which may not be obvious from the video-recordings and transcript alone (see Appendix 5 for examples of SR).

### ***3.6.3. Semi-structured Interviews***

The term 'interview' refers to the method used by a researcher to obtain information generated from talking with people about a particular topic (Cohen et al. 2000). The interview method has been commonly used as part of the piloting and validation of other instruments, and as the main method of data collection (Breakwell et al. 2000). It is often considered to be superior to other data collection methods. One of the main reasons for this is that people are usually more willing to talk than to write (Best 1981). Clarifying questions posed to the interviewee in the case of misunderstandings is another important feature of interviews. In addition, if the interviewer is able to build up a good relationship with the interviewee, then certain types of confidential information might be obtained which could not be obtained from questionnaires or observation (Best 1981).

There are three types of interviews used in educational and social research: the structured interview, the semi-structured interview, and the unstructured interview. They vary in terms of interviewer control, from a high level of control in the case of structured interviews to less control in the semi-structured interviews, and much less control in unstructured interviews. In this study, the semi-structured interview was employed to explore the teachers' perceptions about the use of language games in teaching English to young Libyan learners, as stated in the third research question. It consists of specific and

defined questions determined beforehand, but at the same time it allows some elaboration in the questions and answers (Seliger and Shohamy 1989). It is open ended and it provides much greater flexibility than a structured interview. According to Burns (1999), this type of interview has the advantage of enabling the perspectives of interviewees, as well as interviewers, to inform the research agenda and therefore gives rise to a more equal balance in the research relationship. Burns further maintains that it allows for the emergence of themes and topics which may not have been anticipated when the investigation began. In administering a semi-structured interview, the interviewer can use an interview schedule which lists the questions to be asked (see Appendix 6) or the topics to be discussed. Moreover, it is expected that more and richer information about the topic can be gathered by using semi-structured interviews than with any other method, especially if the participants are allowed to use their mother tongue (Best 1981). In addition, if the interviewer were able to build a good relationship with the interviewee, then certain types of confidential information might be obtained which could not be obtained from a questionnaire or observation (Best 1981). Another important feature is that if the participant is reluctant to answer a particular question, the same question can be rephrased and presented in a different way. There is also a chance of forming new questions based on the participant's answers which the researcher might not have thought of in advance (Best 1981).

#### ***3.6.4. Pupil-pupil talk***

To evaluate the effect of language games on the use of language by pupils in the process of language learning, and as a product of that learning in TCs and GCs in both schools at the end of the programme, a spot-the-differences game was used. Pupils were divided into pairs. Each pair was given two pictures containing different figures representing words

taught during the course. Pupils were encouraged to work collaboratively in pairs to identify the differences in the two pictures and to write the answers on the sheet provided, as illustrated in Appendix 7. By requiring pupils to write the answer, the aim was to encourage them to generate more utterances while discussing the spelling of the words. Such activities were conducted in the GCs regularly during the course as competitive games; that is, the pair who finished first was considered to be the winner. However, in this instance, pupils were given 15 minutes to complete the game. Six pairs from each group were randomly selected by their classroom teachers to be audio-taped during the activity. Each pair was tape-recorded for five minutes while conducting the game. Then the tape-recording was transcribed and the number of utterances counted to compare the pupils' level of language use, as will be described in section 3.13.3 below.

The task was conducted by the teachers in their normal English classes. Pupils had been given explicit instructions and explanations in their native language on how the activity would be conducted. The activity was conducted in an appropriate atmosphere and without extraneous influences such as noise or other disturbances which may have influenced performance.

### **3.7. Teaching programme:**

The teaching programme was entirely based on the material assigned by the Ministry of Education. The only modification that took place was that language games were integrated into the syllabus to be used with GCs where possible. The following is a description of the main process of selecting, preparing and implementing language games.

### ***3.7.1. Selecting games***

In spite of the fact that games are useful in language learning (Wright et al. 1984; Lewis & Bedson 1999; Cakir 2004), they are challenging in terms of selection and application, especially for inexperienced teachers. Thus, teachers need to be aware of the different types of language games, the purpose and the amount of language items that can be promoted by each type (Brewster et al. 2004). However, if the teacher is unfamiliar with the use of language-teaching games, then it is advisable to introduce them gradually as supplementary activities to whatever course book is used (Wright et al. 1984).

In many countries, teaching English as a second or foreign language is based on a course book in which games can be part of the activities. It is not common to find a course book based solely on games. Therefore, “games can either supplement the core material or replace activities which you dislike or feel uncomfortable with” (Bedson & Gordon 1999, P.6). Meanwhile, games should not be integrated into a syllabus haphazardly. Teachers who intend to include language games into the course book they use should read the latter carefully and determine areas of weaknesses where activities based on games might be appropriate. According to Bedson & Gordon (1999, P.6), “language games can be used in introducing new material, practice recently learnt language items, or practice certain themes”. In this study, most games were used for introducing, practicing or revising different language items such as vocabulary. Although the researcher spent a considerable amount of time in selecting the appropriate games, both teachers were invited to take part in the process of selecting and grading games. This helped a lot in minimizing the time taken in choosing the appropriate games because the teachers were more aware of their pupils’ level and the environment where the games would be employed. However, two criteria based on the principles for teaching young learners were followed for selecting

games: a) their suitability to the pupils' age and level, ease of implementation, availability of materials, and time allowed; and b) their capacity to serve the learning purpose, including the repetition of language items and encouraging pupils to work collaboratively.

### ***3.7.2. Preparing the games***

Having agreed on the games to be used in the study, a list of games with a full description of each was given to teachers. The list included the aims of the game, materials needed and the steps for implementation. In the case of lack of facilities in a school, all necessary materials such as cards, scissors, glue, colours, pens, and pictures were prepared in advance by the researcher. A day before the application of the game, rehearsals were conducted with the teachers. The role of the teacher was clearly explained to them based on the concept of the zone of proximal development and scaffolding as defined by Vygotsky and Bruner; that is, providing pupils with the necessary help and support at the right time. Also, the role of active talk by pupils using the target language as mediation was stressed. To illustrate these things, they were shown videotaped lessons about teaching English in France illustrating how language games can be conducted and collaborative work encouraged.

### ***3.7.3. Implementing the games***

As mentioned earlier, pupils were divided into two TCs and two GCs. They all used the same material which was based mainly on teaching letters, numbers, vocabulary and some phrases. Teachers are required to adhere to the instructions provided by the Ministry of Education in covering certain language items over a particular period of time. Therefore, the teachers and researcher agreed on the language items to be presented, taking into account the teaching plan predetermined by the educational authorities.

Therefore, identical units from the course book were taught in two different ways. In the traditional classes teachers stuck to the normal way of teaching. That is, in theory, lessons very often went through four stages, warm up, presentation, practice and production, as illustrated in the following example (see table 3). However, in practice, it was observed that the production stage very often overlapped with other stages.

**Table 3: Structure of a traditional lesson**

Stage	Teaching activity	Classroom organisation	Time
Warm up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Warm up using certain phrases and questions</li> <li>* Revision of previously learnt language items, or checking homework</li> </ul>	Whole class + individual	5 mins
Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Presenting new information</li> </ul>	Whole class + individual	15 mins
Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Choral repetition</li> <li>* Doing activities based on the workbook</li> </ul>	Whole class + individual	10 mins
Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Memorising word knowledge, reading from the textbook, writing words or phrases dictated by the teacher.</li> <li>* Ending the lesson by assigning a home work for further practice</li> </ul>	Whole class + individual	10 mins

In the warm up stage teachers used routine phrases and questions, such as ‘good morning’ ‘good afternoon’, ‘stand up’, ‘sit down’, ‘how are you?’, ‘what is the day today? Then they revised language items presented in previous lessons, or checked homework. This stage usually lasted for about five minutes. In the second stage teachers introduced the new lesson by writing new language items on the blackboard (e.g. words like, camel, baby, door, house; and action verbs such as, sit down, stand up, clap your hands, etc), read them aloud several times and gave definitions in the pupils’ native language. meanwhile pupils were required to repeat in chorus. Pupils were then asked to copy them

down in their notebooks. This stage took about fifteen minutes. Practising then usually took approximately ten minutes, and was considered to be the third stage in which pupils were individually asked to carry out activities based on the work book with the help of the teacher. In the production stage pupils were asked to memorise pronunciation, meaning and spelling of words, reading words and phrases from the textbook or from the blackboard and writing words or phrases dictated by the teacher. Finally, at the end of the lesson pupils were assigned a take-home exercise as homework for further practice.

Language games-based lessons were taught slightly differently. That is, teachers used language games either in revising language items taught in the previous lesson, introducing new items, at the practicing stage to supplement or replace activities in the course book or at the production stage. It depended on where the games could fit in. The same stages implemented in traditional classes were followed by both teachers in the language games-based classes, as shown in table 4.

**Table 4:** structure of a language games-based lesson

Stage	Teaching activity	Classroom organisation	Time
Warm up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Warm up using certain phrases and questions</li> <li>* Revision of previously learnt language items</li> </ul>	Whole class + pair and group work (language games are involved)	15 mins
Presentation	* Presenting new information	Whole class + individual	10 mins
Practice	* Currying out a task based on language games	Whole class + individual + pair and group work	10 mins
Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Memorising word knowledge, reading from the textbook, writing words or phrases dictated by the teacher.</li> <li>* Ending the lesson by assigning a home work for further practice</li> </ul>	Whole class + individual + pair and group work	5 mins

A warm up stage involved the revision of previously taught items and the checking of pupils' understanding. Unlike in the TC, pair and group work were used in GC during the warm up stage (see 4.1.2.1). In a presentation stage teachers introduced new material; and in the practice stage pupils practised what their teacher had already presented. However, at whichever stage language games were used, this usually took longer, as shown in table 4 above. The programme was conducted in four classes per week for six weeks, with classes lasting an average of 33 minutes each. Eight different language games were employed at various lesson stages and some were repeated following pupils' requests. Full descriptions of examples of the games employed in the study can be found in Appendix 8. There were some other games added by the teachers themselves, such as a scrambled word game and picture-word game (see 4.1.2.2).

### **3.8. The pilot study**

All data-gathering instruments should be piloted to find out how long they take; whether or not the instructions are clear and if any of the items are unclear or ambiguous (Bell 1999). Similarly, Bell & Ople (2002) argued that, all research tools need to be piloted, regardless how small the study. However, due to time restrictions and lack of participants, only the classroom observation in this study was piloted.

#### ***3.8.1. Piloting the classroom observation***

Before the main study was conducted, a pilot study was carried out at the Libyan School in Newcastle to test the procedures and the adequacy of data collection instruments. Permission for access to the school and classroom was gained from the headmaster and class teacher (see Appendix 1). The observation took place during an English language class and lasted for 25 minutes. The participants were studying at year nine, with an



average age of 11.8. The purpose of the pilot study was to check the appropriateness of the coding scheme using The Observer software and video-recording equipment, and to practise data transcription. The pilot study was also needed to explore to what extent pupils would be distracted by the presence of the observer and equipment.

The pilot study proved to be useful in revealing that the coding scheme needed some modifications, but the recording equipment was adequate in terms of sound and picture quality. The data transcription was, however, found to be most challenging (see Appendix 9 for transcription convention). It was also found that the class atmosphere was definitely affected by the presence of the observer and the recording equipment. Therefore, different measures were implemented to minimize the effects of the presence of the observer and the recording equipment, as mentioned below in the procedures for conducting data collection (see 3.10). In general, the pilot study provided a good opportunity to try out the instruments and to gain experience in dealing with potential unforeseen problems that might occur during the actual study. The findings also helped in re-configuring the coding scheme.

### **3.9. Validity and reliability**

Validity is a term describing a measure that accurately reflects what it was intended to measure (Babbie 2004). It is divided into two types, internal validity and external validity. From the viewpoint of the quantitative research internal validity refers to the degree to which the results can be accurately interpreted, whilst external validity refers to the “degree to which the results can be generalised to the wider population, cases or situations” (Cohen et al. 2000, P.109). Reliability, in quantitative research is the degree to which the results of a study are consistent. It is also divided into internal reliability, which

means that if the same data are re-analysed by another one similar results are obtained; whereas external reliability refers to the consistency of the results if the study is replicated by another researcher (Brown and Rodgers 2002).

In qualitative research validity and reliability are also considered, but different terms are used. Lincoln and Guba (1985 cited in Brown and Rodgers 2002, P.242) suggested that validity and reliability as used in quantitative research should be replaced by analogous terminology such as: credibility, transformativity, dependability, and confirmability when we judge qualitative research. They define these terms as follows:

**Credibility** is essentially the believability of the results for a qualitative study, which is roughly analogous to the concept of **internal validity** in quantitative studies. **Transferability** is the degree to which the results of a qualitative study could be transferred to other settings (particularly the setting of the particular reader), which is loosely analogous to the concept of **external validity** in quantitative studies. **Dependability** is the consistency of the results of a qualitative study or the degree to which they can be trusted, which roughly analogous to the concept of **reliability** in quantitative studies. **Confirmability** is the degree to which qualitative results are or could be corroborated, which is roughly analogous to **objectivity** in quantitative studies.

In this study credibility (internal validity) was strengthened through recording and transcribing the data, inviting teachers to watch extracts from the video recording and asking for clarification of ambiguities, and interviewees were also given the chance to listen to the tape recording to verify the accuracy of the data given by them. Transferability (external validity), on the other hand, was enhanced through providing detailed information about the research context, so that anyone interested in transferability will have a solid framework for comparison (Merriam 1998). In addition, for the purpose of strengthening transferability two schools were used and in each school there was a TC and GC. Then findings from School One were compared with and added

to the findings from School Two. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), even if a study's findings are valid and transferable, the notion of pragmatic validity cannot be ignored. To them, knowledge is action rather than observation, and the value of our knowledge is based on the effectiveness of our action. They suggest a series of questions researchers can apply to verify the pragmatic validation (e.g. Do the findings have a catalyzing effect leading to specific actions? Do the actions taken actually help solve the local problem?). In this study pragmatic validity can be verified by observing the changes in teachers' practice and pupils' reactions throughout the different stages of the study.

In order to improve the dependability (reliability) of this study, all the research procedures and the process of analysis as well as the difficulties encountered by the researcher are reported so that the same methods could be followed by other researchers. In addition, two presentations concerning this study have been given at Newcastle University, from which valuable feedback was received from colleagues and teaching staff. To achieve greater confirmability (objectivity) in conducting interviews, any apparent bias was reduced as much as possible by avoiding preconceived attitudes or opinions about interviewees or using leading questions that would support the researcher's own point of view (Cohen at el. 2000). Another way to establish confirmability is for the researcher to talk with participants several times beforehand in an attempt to create good mutual relationships and, therefore, to increase their openness and honesty (Breakwell at el. 2000). Ample opportunities were given to teachers during the interviews to think about and respond to the questions.

With reference to the quantitative part of this study, the reliability of coding was examined in two ways: i) inter-rater reliability, which refers to the consistency of the

results when the same data is analysed by other researchers; and ii) intra-rater reliability which, on the other hand, refers to the stability of the findings when part of the original transcription is re-coded by the same researcher some time later (Robson 1999), as will be discussed below.

**3.9.1. Inter-rater / Intra rater reliability of the coding scheme**

In addition to the amendments made according to the findings of the pilot study, the reliability of the coding scheme had to be assessed. The simplest way is to have a number of coders apply the system to a predetermined part of classroom interaction, and then compute the ratio of items agreed upon to those in disagreement (Frick and Semmel 1978). Therefore, to examine the inter-rater reliability of the coding scheme, two extracts of 10 minutes each from the original data transcription were given to two Libyan teachers (PhD students) who were aware of the Libyan EFL context, to code the data using Sinclair and Coulthard’s (1975) system. Although they were not trained to use the system, they were provided with the definition of each category in the coding scheme. A comparison was then made between their codings and those made by the researcher. Even though there were some differences in the labelling of certain acts, a high degree of agreement (up to 81 %) was achieved between the researcher and the other coders, as illustrated in table 5.

**Table 5:** Level of agreement (inter-rater reliability)

Extracts	Total acts coded by the researcher	Total agreement between researcher and coders ‘A’ & ‘B’	Differences
Extract I	208	173	35
Extract II	197	159	38
Total	405	332	73

In accordance with Scholfield (1997 cited in Bin Ghali 2001), the inter-rater reliability of the coding scheme was calculated by dividing the total number of acts agreed by all by the original number of acts coded by the researcher.

Number of acts agreed by all

-----

Original number of acts coded by the researcher

173 + 159

----- = 0.8 or (81%)

405

The intra-rater reliability of the coding scheme was also investigated. A transcription of the same two extracts was coded by the researcher, and two months later the same transcripts were re-coded in order to compare the degree of agreement between the two codings. The degree of agreement was more than 89% which indicated the reliability of the method, as shown in table 6 below.

**Table 6:** Level of agreement (intra-rater reliability)

Extract	Researcher first coding	Researcher second coding
Extract I	208	187
Extract II	197	176
Total	405	363

The intra-rater reliability was calculated 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 (Scholfield 1997), as illustrated below.

Number of acts coded by the researcher the second time

-----

Number of acts coded by the researcher the first time

363

----- = 0.9 or (89%)

405

According to Scholfield (1995), if reliability is perfect the coefficient would be +1, which is 100%, but in practise it would be between '0.6 to 0.9'. Therefore, it can be concluded that the inter-rater and intra-rater reliability coefficients of the coding scheme are satisfactory since both are greater than 0.6. The reliability of the computerised observation scheme was also checked, though it had already been measured by Smith & Hardman (2003) and found to be reliable. A twenty-five minute lesson was video taped and observed live using The Observer during the pilot study, then the data yielded compared with that gathered by watching the same lesson video-recorded. The agreement was more than 90%.

### **3.10. Procedures for conducting classroom observation**

Classroom observation was conducted to explore what was actually happening in the class so as to answer the research questions concerning the nature of classroom interaction in EFL primary classrooms and how it is affected by the use of language games. After gaining access to the schools (see Appendix 10), the teachers met for a discussion of the timetable and to explain the procedures for conducting classroom observation. Having agreed upon times and dates, classroom observation began with the researcher introducing himself, and he then sat on a chair at the back of the class in a position where the pupils and teacher could be seen clearly. It was noted that the classroom atmosphere was influenced by the presence of the observer and recording equipment. Pupils occasionally laughed and looked at the observer. They wanted to know more about the observer and what he was doing, although the teachers did their best to retain their attention. However, to decrease the impact of the presence of the observer and recording equipment, several measures were employed. Conversations with pupils and teachers were held during break time in which questions raised by pupils were answered.

An inoperative video camera was placed on a stand in front of each class for two days prior to the actual recording, and several sessions of classroom observations were conducted. As time went by, pupils became accustomed to the observer's presence and the visible effect appeared to decline to a minimum.

Twenty-four lessons were observed live; six observation sessions for each class. Twelve of these were video-recorded (three for each class, recorded during weeks 1, 3 and 6). Although, each lesson was supposed to last for forty minutes, five to ten minutes were usually lost at the beginning of the lesson as teachers moved from one class to another. Therefore, the average length of observation sessions was 33 minutes. The actual observation recordings took place in the rooms where pupils normally had their lessons. The video camera was put in front of the class to capture the voice of the teacher as well as those of pupils, and to access electricity sockets which were usually sited at the front of the room. The observer's role mainly focused on observing what was happening in the classroom (e.g. teacher-pupil interaction, pupil-teacher interaction, and pupil-pupil interaction when possible) and clicking on the button, in the laptop keyboard, that represented the appropriate predetermined code (see coding scheme in Appendix 3). All of the observations were conducted live except on one occasion when the observer had to leave the laptop to give assistance to Teacher B who had problems implementing a game. However, this observation session was observed later by watching it video-recorded.

### **3.11. Procedures for conducting the semi-structured interviews**

Both teachers were interviewed twice, before and after the intervention. This procedure aimed to explore their perceptions before and after the course about the use of language games in teaching the English language to Libyan young learners. The interviews began

by asking them some standard questions about their qualifications, teaching experience, teaching philosophy, and their perceptions about language games. Each interview lasted for about 20 minutes and all verbal responses were tape-recorded. To avoid any language barriers and to gain more detailed information, the interviews were conducted in the teachers' native language. A list of questions was prepared beforehand (see Appendix 6) and this was used as guidance, whereas extra questions based on the teachers' responses were also generated. However, both teachers were asked the same basic questions.

### **3.12. Procedures for conducting stimulated recall interviews**

Both teachers were invited individually twice, at weeks three and six to watch extracts from the video recordings captured during classroom observation in the presence of the researcher. The extracts represented what was happening in the class during the process of teaching. The researcher stopped the video-tape at certain events and asked for reasons and clarifications, using open-ended questions based on the teachers' behaviour observed during their interaction such as *Why did you repeat the same word more than 10 times?* *What are the reasons behind using cued questions?* The instructions for stimulated recall procedures were explained in the participants' native language. All extracts, observer questions and teachers' responses and comments were tape-recorded and then transcribed (see Appendix 5 for examples of SR). In order to gain more detailed comments from teachers, all sessions were conducted in the teachers' native language.

### **3.13. Procedures of data analysis**

This study employs both quantitative and qualitative methods to investigate the impact of language games on classroom interaction and learning opportunities in Libyan EFL primary classrooms. As each data collecting method was designed to find answers for



each research question, it was thus necessary to make clear how each source of data generated by different instruments was analysed.

### ***3.13.1. Procedures of analysing classroom observation***

The analysis of all 24 observations sessions began by counting the teacher's and pupils' frequency of use of different acts as captured by the computerised observation system based on a predetermined coding scheme. It is important to note that it was hard to capture the talk between pairs and groups using The Observer during pair and group games in the GCs. This is also true of the video recordings which, due to sound quality problems (see 3.14), were unable to capture pair and group talk in the GCs. Hence the amount of data collected using The Observer and the video recordings was greater in the TCs as there was no pair or group work involved. Consequently, the frequency of acts were converted into percentage scores for comparison between classes. Such information is believed to be useful in language learning research, where the researcher is often interested in finding out how frequently certain behaviours occur in classrooms (Seliger & Shohamy 1989). However, it was reported by Nunan (1989) that using a predetermined coding scheme may not help in providing a comprehensive picture of what is going on in the classroom. An alternative is to get such information from a textual analysis of the transcripts obtained from video-recorded classroom interaction (Nunan 1989). Therefore, eight video-recorded lessons, four each from the TCs and GCs, were transcribed and then coded. The first lesson of each group was excluded to minimize the possible effect of the presence of the researcher and recording equipment. One of the main advantages of the transcription is that the overall features of the learning and teaching process became apparent and more details of certain characteristics could be identified during the transcription process. Via transcription, it was possible to find out about issues such as the

type of questions asked, whether questions were directed to the class as a whole or individuals and whether pupils responded individually or in chorus. Because Arabic and English were used during classroom interaction, both were initially employed to transcribe the actual verbal interaction. Then utterances produced in Arabic were translated into English by the researcher.

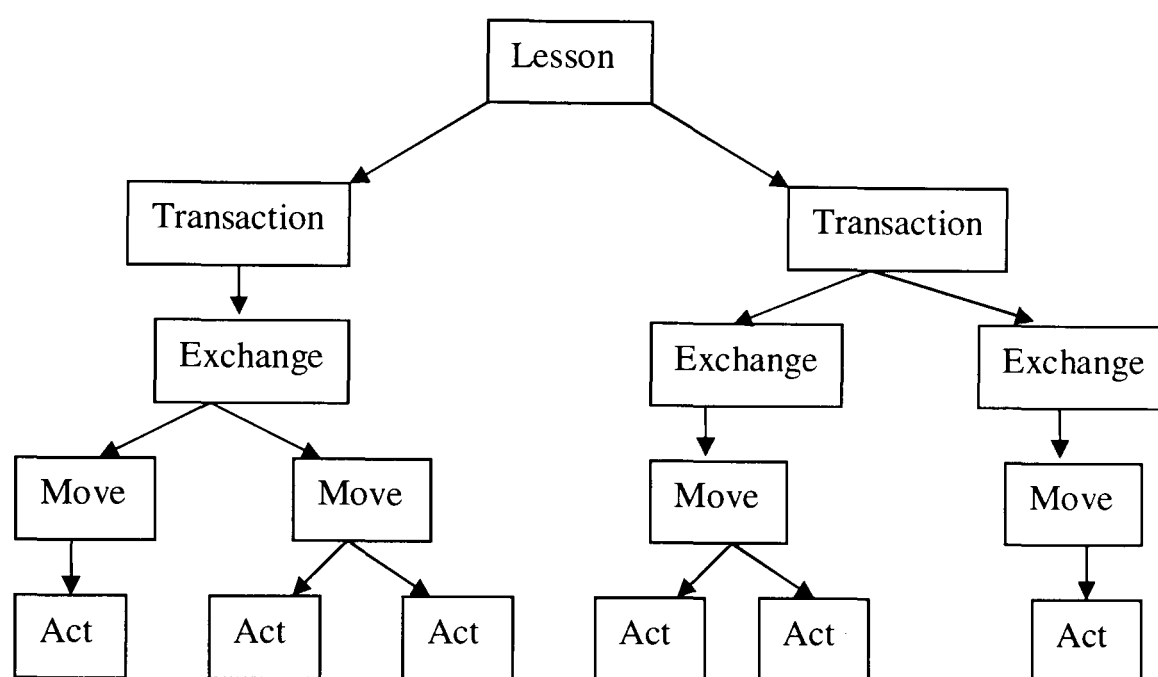
The coding scheme used as a general framework in this study was adapted from the work of Sinclair and Coulthard (1975). The rationale for its use will be discussed shortly. The system primarily focused on the three elements of exchanges: initiation-response-feedback (IRF). Teacher initiation was coded and categorized according to the following acts: marker, starter, elicit, check, direct, inform, teacher reply, prompt modelling, clue and nominate. Pupils responses were coded in relation to their bids, spontaneous contributions, responses to teachers' questions; reactions to teachers' orders, choral repetition to a model provided by the teacher, and whether or not they initiated questions. The teachers' feedback was coded according to their praise of correct answers and good attempts, acceptance of pupils' responses, evaluation of pupils' responses, and criticism of pupils for wrong answers and bad behaviour, and the use of different error correction techniques. The latter included whether the teacher provided the correct answer, transferred the question to another pupil, gave the same pupil another chance to give the right answer, or ignored the error (see Appendix 3 for a full description).

#### **3.13.1.1. Rationale for using Sinclair and Coulthard (1975)**

Based on Halliday's (1961) *Categories of a Theory of Grammar*, Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) developed a hierarchical ranking model to analyse classroom discourse. The

model is divided into five levels termed ranks. These ranks are Lesson, Transaction, Exchange, Move and Act. Figure 1 below gives an overview of the system.

Figure 1: Levels of discourse analysis



(Hardman et al 2003)

The lesson consists of one or more transactions, which are composed of a number of exchanges. An exchange comprises of one or more moves, which consist of one or more acts” (Hardman et al 2003, p.200). These are related to one another in a hierarchical relationship (Sinclair and Coulthard 1975). A transaction is a series of sequences or exchanges concerned with a single topic (Sinclair and Coulthard 1975). Each exchange is either a boundary or a teaching exchange. A boundary exchange usually consists of two parts: framing moves and focusing moves. Framing moves are signals used by the teacher to indicate the movement from one stage of the lesson to another and marked by features such as ‘ok’, ‘well’, ‘now’, ‘good’. Focusing moves show the focus of the speaker on the subject matter. They are usually marked by features like ‘our lesson today is ...’, ‘today

we are going to study ...'. Teaching exchanges on the other hand combine three different moves. The teacher initiates (I), the pupils respond (R) and then the teacher provides feedback (F). Apparently this exchange pattern (IRF) offers teachers the opportunity to make more than one move (initiation and feedback), whereas pupils can only use the responding move. Related to this, McCarthy (1991) claimed that powerful participants dominate turns by initiating more than one turn.

In Sinclair and Coulthard's model, the act is the smallest unit. According to Coulthard (1992), acts are defined as the lowest rank of discourse structure, and classify the functions of utterances produced by the teacher and pupils in the classroom. Elicitation, for instance, has the function "to request a linguistic response"; directive "to request a non-linguistic response". However, in this study, transcripts were coded and analysed at the level of acts, as these seem to be more comprehensive and to carry all of the key information.

The model has been widely and successfully used by many researchers in EFL and ESL contexts (e.g., Tusi 1985; Smith et al 2005; Abd-Kadir and Hardman 2007; Ruby 2008) for a number of reasons. For example, Hardman et al (2003) claim that the model is flexible in that it can be used in both quantitative and qualitative research at different levels (e.g. lesson, transaction, exchange, move and act). McCarthy (1991) also provides support for the use of Sinclair and Coulthard's model in language classrooms, when he argues that it is very useful for analysing patterns of interaction especially in a context where speaking patterns are highly structured. Among other proponents of the model, Coombs and Alty (1985) claim that at its lower ranks – acts and moves – the model is relatively easy to apply, even by non-experts.

In this study, it was difficult to decide which approach was more suitable than others in analysing the interaction patterns in Libyan EFL primary classrooms. Firstly, this was because of the huge number of coding schemes and approaches available for investigating interaction in the L2 classroom. According to Brown and Rodgers (2002, cited in Walsh 2006), more than 200 observation instruments exist. Secondly, time restrictions were relevant in this study. However, several relevant models and approaches were reviewed, such as those used in Flanders (1970) and Moskowitz (1971). Based on the literature reviewed, these observation instruments are obviously biased heavily towards teacher talk and give little coverage of pupil talk (Walsh 2006). Another instrument known as Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (Spada and Frohlich 1995) was also reviewed. Although it is considered to be one of the most sophisticated observation instruments (Nunan, 1989b), it appeared to be inappropriate to serve the purpose of the study as it was developed to describe activities and processes in a communicative language classroom.

Conversation analysis, which has been identified as a powerful methodology for analysing talk and social interaction (Seedhouse, 2004), was also considered. It was found to be inappropriate in this study because it is more linked to natural conversation and communicative teaching, whereas the interaction patterns in Libyan primary classrooms are static, directed and controlled by the teacher, and pupils have very little space for interaction. There is no equal turn taking in the class, as most turns are dominated by the teacher (e.g: question and answer sequences, modelling, no pair and group work). Therefore, Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) model, which was originally developed to investigate the discourse in traditional classes such as those in Libya, seems better suited to the purpose of the current study. Firstly, the model is flexible in that it can be used in

both quantitative and qualitative research at different levels (e.g. lesson, transaction, exchange, move and act). Secondly, and perhaps most importantly, it offers a more comprehensive description of classroom interaction compared with other coding schemes such as Flanders' 1970 model (FIAC) and Moskowitz's 1971 model (FLINT), especially in a context where the interaction is totally controlled by the teacher as in Libya (UNESCO 2002; Orafi 2008).

#### **3.13.1.2. Limitations of Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) model.**

Despite its enormous contribution in exploring the nature of classroom discourse in different contexts, the Sinclair and Coulthard system has been criticized by conversation analysts (e.g. Levinson 1983) for employing traditional linguistic concepts based on the decomposition of the sentence into small units, rather than a more data driven approach. Another limitation of this system is that it does not consider the fact that conversations are interactively achieved by interactants' collaborative actions. According to Seedhouse (2004), the course of interaction cannot be explained by discourse analysis due to its static nature through which interaction can only be seen as a rigid coordinate on a conceptual map. Discourse analysis was mainly designed for L1 classrooms and later adopted for L2 classrooms, and using the same approach to describe the distinction between L1 and L2 classroom interaction is deemed difficult. Similarly, Walsh (1987, cited in Walsh 2006) claimed that the Sinclair and Coulthard system is based on data derived from traditional primary classrooms during the 1960s where teacher-fronted presentation was prevalent, unlike today when there is far more learner-initiated communication. Therefore, Walsh doubts whether the framework could adequately describe the nature of interaction in a communicative classroom. Another limitation that

needs to be highlighted here is that it was problematic to categorise some acts produced either by the teacher or learners because of their multi-functionality (Walsh 2006).

In addition to the above limitations, some others were experienced during the employment of Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) model in this study. These include:

1. It does not provide information about pupil-pupil interaction.
2. Non-verbal actions cannot be labelled.
3. The system ignores choral repetition, though this is one of the distinctive features of traditional Libyan classes.
4. There are some ambiguities in assigning data to the categories in the model.

The following extract taken from the traditional class provides examples where assigning an act to the right category was challenging or problematic:

#### Example

- |   |    |  |
|---|----|--|
| 1 | T  | <p><i>write the missing spelling of the following words</i> [ اكتب الحروف الناقصة في ]<br/> <i>The first one starts with 'c' and then missing letter and</i><br/> <i>then 'k' and then missing letter</i> [ الكلمة الاولى تبدأ بسي بعدها الحرف الناقص و ]<br/> <i>So try to find the missing letters in the first</i><br/> <i>word</i> [ بعدها ك بعدها الحرف الناقص ]<br/> <i>(( teacher moves between rows and monitors pupils while working individually))</i> (.....)</p> |
| 2 | PP | 000  |
| 3 | T  | ok finished, ok read Ahmed   |
| 4 | P  | cake   |
| 5 | T  | cake, yes (..) now repeat after me (..) cake   |
| 6 | PP | cake   |

In turn 1 the teacher monitoring pupils doing an activity was problematic; however, it was categorised as 'check'. It was difficult to categorise the command, "Read, Ahmed", as in turn 3 because the teacher ordered one of the pupils to read. This is closer to 'direct', but direction is usually used to request non-verbal response. Therefore, it was labelled as

‘elicit’ and the pupil’s response categorized as ‘reply’. In turn 5 the teacher ordered the whole class to repeat in chorus after her, by saying “Repeat after me”. It was difficult to consider this utterance as ‘direction’ because a verbal response is required. It was also difficult to label it as ‘eliciting’, because it was not a real elicitation. Therefore, a new act, ‘model’, had to be added to fit the system. However, it has been argued by Myhill and Burns (2004, p.45) that “the same utterance could function in a different way in different contexts”. Thus these difficulties could be due to a specific context where different discourse exchanges occur.

To minimize these limitations, some adaptations at the level of acts were made to enable the data to be coded, since the original model did not cover some of the behaviours present in this study. Based on several training sessions under the guidance of the researcher supervisor and self-training through observing video-recorded lessons and the findings of the pilot study, certain acts taken from other observation schemes were added to Sinclair and Coulthard’s list of categories; and, conversely, some categories were withdrawn which were not used in the pilot study and by the coders who checked the reliability of the coding scheme, as illustrated in table 7 below.

**Table 7 : Modifications to Sinclair and Coulthard Model**

Acts added to S & C list of categories	Acts withdrawn from S & C list of categories
Teacher reply	Cue
Model	Acknowledge
Spontaneous contribution	Comment
Choral repetition	Silent stress
Pupils elicit	Metastatement
Praise	Conclusion
Criticise	Loop
Correct	Aside



Even though the Sinclair and Coulthard system has been criticised by many researchers, it appears to be the most appropriate model to be used as a framework in this study. The decision to use the Sinclair and Coulthard system was based on several training sessions using video-recorded lessons and on the data derived from the pilot study as well as my experience as a teacher where teacher-fronted classes are dominant in Libya.

### ***3.13.2. Analysis of the interviews***

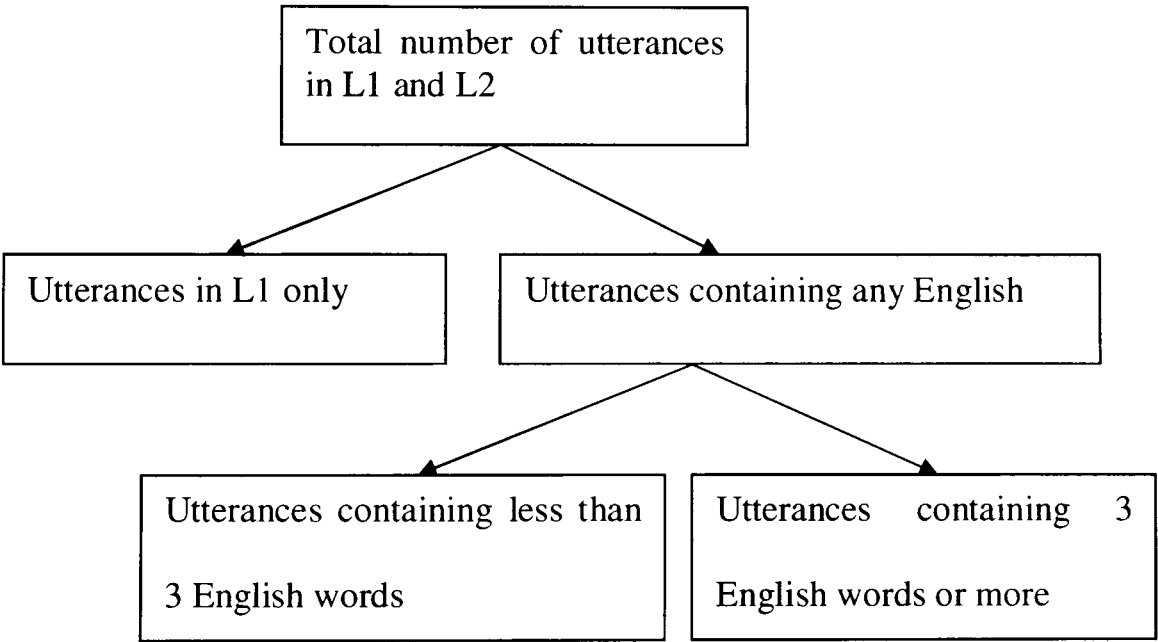
According to Seliger & Shohamy (1989), there is no one standard way of analysing qualitative data, since it is possible to analyse any phenomenon in more than one way. The data yielded from the semi-structured and stimulated recall interviews in this study were transcribed, and translated into the English language. Although this method is time-consuming, it ensures an accurate and detailed record of the actual data (McDonough and McDonough 1997). The findings of the stimulated recall interviews were then categorised based on a question and answer format and were used to supplement and interpret the data obtained by classroom observation (see Appendix 5). The results of the semi-structured interviews were categorised in terms of themes which emerged from the data themselves (see 4.3).

### ***3.13.3. Procedures of analysing pair talk***

The amount of language produced by pupils during the spot-the differences game, as evidence of the product of their learning, was evaluated by adopting a method of analysis developed by Ohta (2001), in which she transcribed the recorded data and then counted the lines containing English and turned them into percentages. According to Ohta's system, "the presence of a single word of English in a line of transcript was counted as a line containing English. In the same way, a line that was entirely in English was also

calculated as a line containing English” (Ohta 2001, P.237). Since the word ‘line’ used by Ohta was not defined, it was substituted by ‘utterance’ as defined by Coulthard (1992, P.2) as “everything said by one speaker before another began to speak”. In order to give a comprehensive picture for pupils’ language use, the method of analysis was slightly modified. The process of analysis began by finding out the total number of utterances produced by each pair. Utterances in L1 only and then utterances containing any English were calculated. The latter was further analysed by counting utterances containing less than three English words and utterances containing 3 English words or more, as illustrated in figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Framework for analysing pupil language production



Once the tape-recorded data was transcribed, quantified and turned into percentages, statistical analysis using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) software was conducted. Tables of descriptive statistics displaying the means (*M*) and standard deviations (*SD*) were presented. Then an independent sample t-test statistical analysis was conducted to test the significance of differences between the mean results from the TCs

and GCs to compare levels of performance (see Appendix 11). For statistical purposes, the TCs in both schools were combined as were the GCs. In order to get further insights about the quality of the language produced by pupils during the task; how they used language to solve the problem together as evidence of the process of language learning, extracts from the transcripts were qualitatively analysed. The analysis is based on audio-taped recordings from TCs and GCs during a spot-the-differences game (see Appendix 7). The data gathered from the two classes was transcribed and then compared to find out if there were any differences in performance between pupils in the TCs and GCs, in terms of their approach to the task, support for each other and their use of the target language (see 4.2.2).

### **3.14. Field work challenges**

While multi-method research offers a great opportunity to investigate a phenomenon from different angles, and enhances the validity and reliability of the findings, it is subject to unexpected challenges and constraints during application. Several difficulties occurred throughout the process of conducting this study, as indicated below.

1. Although all necessary permission was obtained to video-record the lessons, some girls from the GC in School One refused to be video-recorded; therefore, the video camera was directed away from them towards the other side of the class;
2. Observation was made much more difficult due to questions asked by pupils and teaching staff, such as why are you video-recording us? How long are you going to stay with us? Can I have a copy of the cassette? Can you show extracts from the video-recording? As a result the number of video-recorded sessions was reduced to the minimum;

3. In week four, pupils in the TC in School One started complaining that their teacher was not using language games with them, compared to their counterparts in the GCs. Consequently, the duration of the intervention was reduced by two weeks;
4. There was a lack of trained teachers to help implement language games;
5. Teachers were sometimes absent without notice;
6. It was quite difficult to manage observations of more than two teachers, because of conflicts in teachers' timetables;
7. Convincing teachers about being video-recorded was difficult;
8. Time restrictions were considerable;
9. Bureaucracy was a problem. For example, in order to get access to schools, the educational authorities had to be approached several times explaining the purpose of the research;
10. There was a serious lack of facilities in schools. The researcher had to purchase, print and photocopy all of the necessary materials needed for the games;
11. Lack of ventilation in classrooms forced teachers to leave windows open; as a result the sound quality of the video-recordings was influenced by external noise;
12. Lack of experience on the part of the researcher led to delays, and waste occurred due to buying materials which were unnecessary or misused.

### **3.15. Summary**

This chapter has provided an overview of the research design employed in this study. The use of a multi method research strategy was justified. A full description of the setting and participants was provided. This chapter also included descriptions of the data gathering instruments, including classroom observation stimulated recall interviews, semi-

structured interviews and analysis of pupil-pupil talk during a spot-the-differences game, and then the procedures of data collection were detailed. The pilot study as well as issues of validity and reliability of each instrument were discussed. The methods of data analysis were also highlighted. This chapter concluded by providing a summary of the difficulties encountered during the field work. In the following chapter, the data obtained by the above mentioned methods will be analysed and discussed.

**Chapter Four: Data Analysis and Discussion**

This chapter presents and discusses the results of the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data collected using the research tools (classroom observation (computerised and video-recorded), interviews with teachers and analysis of pair talk) employed in this study to answer the research questions. The chapter is divided into three main parts which correspond to the research questions posed in this study. Part one is devoted to answering the main research question concerning the nature of classroom interaction in a traditional class (TC) compared with that in a language games-based class (GC). Part two presents the results of the pair talk during a spot-the differences game to find out if there were any differences between pupils’ language production in the use of the target language in the TC and GC in terms of amount and quality. The final part presents the findings of the interviews conducted to discover the teachers’ perceptions about the use of language games in teaching English in Libyan primary classrooms.

**4.1. Classroom Observation**

The findings were obtained by counting the frequencies of the teachers’ and pupil use of certain acts in 24 observation sessions using The Observer, in two schools as illustrated in table 8 below.

**Table 8:** Distribution of classroom observation sessions

School	Number of observations in the Traditional Class	Total minutes	Number of observations in the Games Class	Total minutes
School 1	6	198	6	186
School 2	6	204	6	192
Total	12	402	12	378

Computerised recording of observations (using the observer software) based on Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) coding scheme of discourse analysis was employed to record the teachers' as well as the pupils' behaviour in the classroom (as explained in 3.13.1). The frequencies were then converted into percentage scores for comparison between classes. To supplement the quantitative findings, the verbal interaction in eight video-recorded lessons out of the 24 lessons observed (four each from the traditional classes and games classes) were transcribed and coded using the same framework adapted for the computerised recording observations. The coding scheme primarily focused on three elements of the exchanges: teacher initiation (I), pupils' response (R), and teacher feedback (F). According to Sinclair and Coulthard's system, lessons could be analysed and coded at the levels of transactions, exchanges, moves or acts. However, in this study, computerised as well as video-recorded observations were coded and analysed at the level of acts, as this seemed to be more comprehensive in capturing all of the key information (see 3.13.1). To make it easier for the reader to follow the analysis, the quantitative and qualitative findings have been integrated and presented one after another, as follows.

#### ***4.1.1. Nature of Classroom Interaction in the Traditional Classes (TCs) in Schools One (S1) and Two (S2).***

The results of the observation sessions (computerised and video-recorded) conducted in the Traditional Classes (TCs) in Schools One (S1) and Two (S2) are considered together and the main features of classroom interaction are presented in this section. These data are primarily used as "the bases against which we make comparative claims about how different or unusual the phenomena we have seen may be" (Allwright and Bailey 1991). As mentioned in chapter (3.13.1), the findings are presented here in sequence based on the three elements of exchanges in the pattern identified by Sinclair and Coulthard

(1975): teacher initiation, pupils' response, teacher feedback (IRF). The graphs display the mean percentages derived from the frequency of each classroom discourse as captured during the computerised observations using the observer software. These are followed by discussions of some episodes from the transcripts (chosen from different video-recorded lessons at different stages) to provide a comprehensive picture of what actually happened in the classrooms. Meanwhile, data gathered from stimulated recall interviews and video-recordings are also integrated to provide further explanations of certain behaviours.

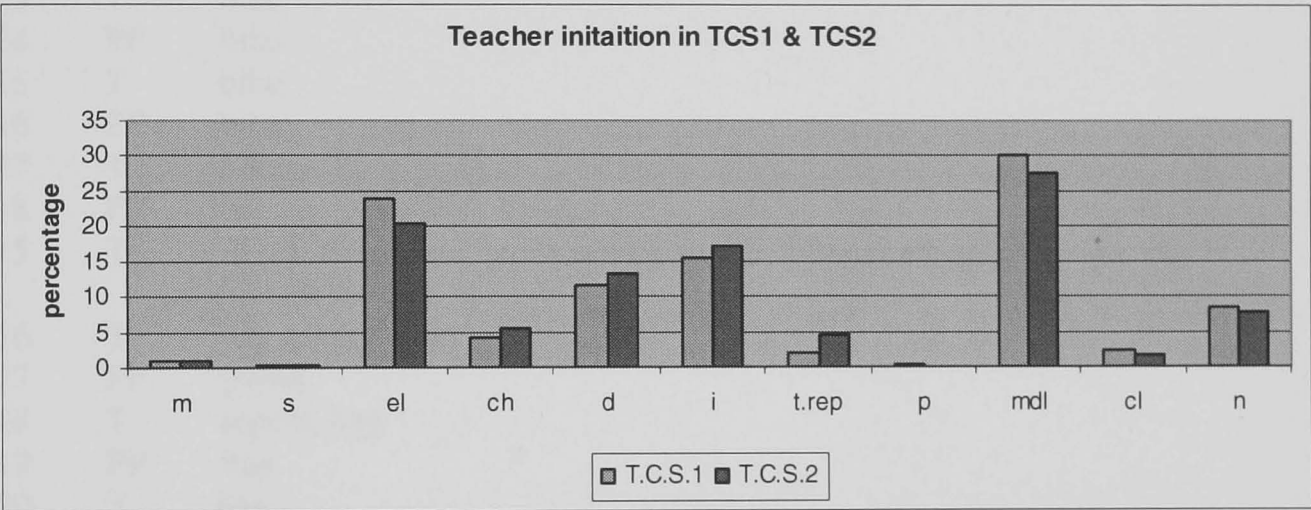
#### **4.1.1.1. Teacher Initiation**

The data analysis showed little variation in the nature of classroom interaction across the lessons observed in the Traditional Classes in Schools One (TCS1) and Two (TCS2). The video-recordings revealed that both teachers adhered closely to the course book to teach English to pupils. No other materials such as cards, posters or media were employed. Pupils were sitting in rows listening to the teacher, and sometimes engaged in individual written work based on the course book or by reading or copying from the blackboard. Neither pair nor group work were used in any of the lessons observed. The focus of the lessons observed was on producing and writing the alphabet, numbers, simple words, and simple sentences such as 'How are you?', 'What is your name?'. The lessons observed followed very similar structures, in that there were routinised classroom activities. The teacher usually began by greeting pupils, checking for absentees, and then quickly revising the previous lesson, usually by checking the comprehension of certain language items (see 3.7.3 for more details about lesson structure). After that, pupils were instructed to look at their course books and follow as the teacher introduced the target language items (e.g. vocabulary) by reading them aloud from the course book, then giving definitions in the pupils' mother tongue. Subsequently, pupils were asked to practice the



new words by repeating them chorally after the teacher several times, while the teacher circulated to monitor the pupils' pronunciation. As illustrated in figure 3 below, modelling (teacher-led repetition) was the most dominant discourse move used by both teachers in the TCs, representing 30% and 28% respectively of all initiating acts.

**Figure 3:** Distribution of teacher initiating acts in TCS1 and TCS2 (computerised observations)



Key: *m* - marker; *s*- starter; *el* - elicit; *ch* - check; *d*- direct; *i* - inform; *t.rep* - teacher reply; *p* – prompt; *mdl* - model; *cl* - clue; *n* - nomination

During the stimulated recall interview, Teacher A (T) in School One argued that modelling was used mostly in enhancing the learning of pronunciation and to get the pupils (PP) to understand the new information. This is in line with the findings of Pontefract and Hardman’s (2005) study. They reported that modelling or (direct repetition as defined by them) was one of the most prevalent strategies used by teachers in Kenyan primary schools in all the subjects they observed, and especially in English lessons. Direct repetition was also found to be the most frequent exchange move used by English teachers in EFL classrooms in Taiwan (Lin 2003). Extract 1 below demonstrates how the model exchange was used by Teacher A in this study to consolidate the learning of pronunciation and spelling.

Extract 1:

- |    |    |  |
|----|----|--|
| 1  | T  | These are some new words (...) the first one is bike (...)<br><i>bike means</i> [تعني دراجه] (...) repeat after me (..) bike |
| 2  | PP | bike   |
| 3  | T  | bike   |
| 4  | PP | bike   |
| 5  | T  | bike   |
| 6  | PP | bike   |
| 7  | T  | bike   |
| 8  | PP | bike   |
| 9  | T  | b-i-k-e  |
| 10 | PP | b-i-k-e  |
| 11 | T  | b-i-k-e  |
| 12 | PP | b-i-k-e  |
| 13 | T  | bike   |
| 14 | PP | bike   |
| 15 | T  | bike   |
| 16 | PP | bike   |
| 17 | T  | bike   |
| 18 | PP | bike   |
| 15 | T  | (....) the second word is bag, bag (...) this is a bag (...) <i>bag means</i><br>[تعني حقيبه]                                |
| 16 | T  | bag means what^  |
| 17 | PP | [حقيبه]  |
| 18 | T  | repeat, bag  |
| 19 | PP | bag  |
| 20 | T  | bag  |
| 21 | PP | bag  |

As we can see in the above extract, after giving the definition of the word ‘bike’ in turn 1, the teacher spoke the word aloud 4 times as a model to be imitated by the pupils. Then the spelling of the word was said aloud several times and again the pupils repeated in chorus, and again said the word three times. What is different from Pontefract and Hardman’s (2005) study, is that in this study modelling is not limited to the repetition of the word as a whole but also the spelling. This reflects the way Teacher A was herself taught by a method which is very common in Libyan schools (Al-Buseifi 2003). According to the present author’s experience, the successful memorisation of spelling is considered by many Libyan teachers as an indication of word acquisition and is a common way of evaluating pupils’ language learning (see 1.2.7 for more details about assessment).

Modelling, in this study, was not only used for consolidating the pronunciation and spelling of words. It was also used when teachers realised that pupils faced difficulties in understanding what they were saying. Although the teachers seemed to believe that repeating their own utterances would help the pupils' comprehension, repetition did not always lead to an improvement of understanding. Modelling was also used as a correction technique when a pupil failed to pronounce a word correctly, and in this case the teacher provided the correct pronunciation as a model and asked the whole class to repeat the word chorally, as indicated in extract 2 turns 7 to 12.

Extract 2:

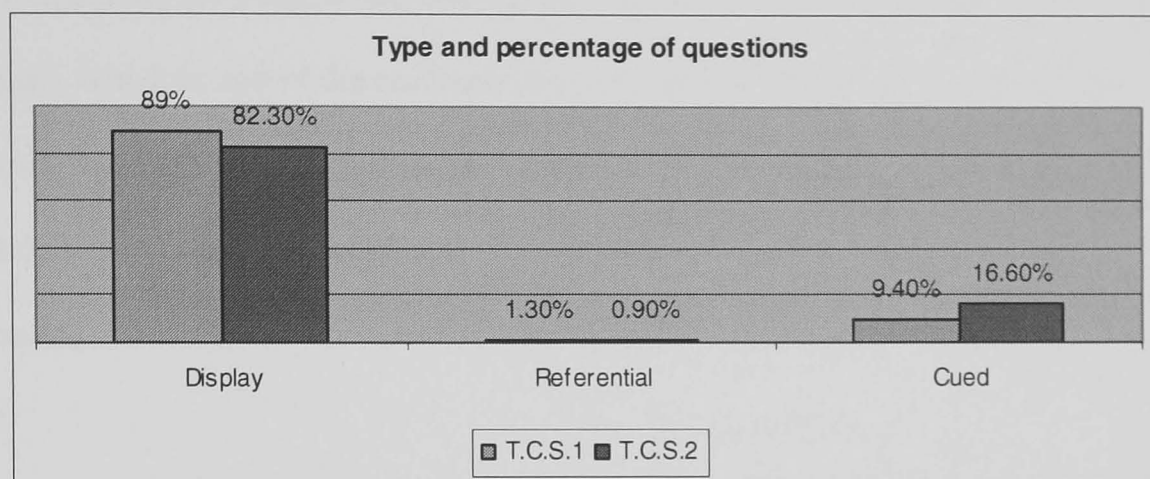
- |    |    |   |
|----|----|---|
| 1  | T  | read and match (...) <i>read and match</i> [اقرأ ووصل]. Fatima <i>can you read the first word?</i> [هل تستطيعي قراءة الكلمة الاولى] |
| 2  | P  | bicycle   |
| 3  | T  | yes, bicycle <i>match with the picture</i> [وصل مع الصورة]  |
| 4  | P  | 000 (.....)   |
| 5  | T  | next one Ali, <i>read it.</i> [اقرأها]  |
| 6  | P  | blan  |
| 7  | T  | plane not blan Ali (..) plane, plane, p-l-a-n-e. repeat after me, plane   |
| 8  | PP | plane   |
| 9  | T  | plane   |
| 10 | PP | plane   |
| 11 | T  | plane   |
| 12 | PP | plane   |

In a similar way to the situation in TCS1, modelling (in which the pupils' choral repetition was required), represented more than a quarter of the teacher's initiation acts in the TCS2. In many cases pupils were exposed to the same language model over fifteen times in one exchange. What is interesting here is that Teacher B in School Two was very surprised when she watched extracts from the video recordings (during the stimulated recall interview) that she repeated the word 'you' seventeen times, explaining that she was not consciously aware of doing so. According to her, the main purpose of repetition is to enhance the learning of pronunciation, to promote pupils' language production and

memorization of spelling and meaning of words. She added that repetition is useful when pupils are fully engaged and know the exact meaning of what they are repeating. This clearly reflects her beliefs concerning the use of traditional methods of teaching which concentrate on form rather than communication, as illustrated in the semi-structured interviews (see 4.3).

The findings of the analysis also show that eliciting linguistic responses from pupils was another common feature in the TCs in both schools, representing 24% and 20.5% of the teacher's initiating acts. Elicitation covers all queries for information, including what Walsh (2006) calls display questions (questions where the answer is known by the teacher) and referential type questions (genuine questions to which the teacher does not know the answer). Elicitation in this study also includes cued questions (used to elicit a direct repetition of the teacher's explanation or for pupils to answer through a choral response (Abd-Kadir & Hardman 2007) (see 2.2.3.1). Therefore, elicitation was coded according to whether the question was a display, referential or cued question. Figure 4 below shows the frequencies and percentages of each type of question produced by Teachers A and B during the lessons observed in the Traditional Classes as captured during the computerised observations. It is clear that display questions were the most frequent type of questions used by both teachers. Referential questions, on the other hand, were extremely rare. These findings are consistent with results of previous studies in both EFL (e.g. Shomoossi 2004) and ESL classrooms (e.g. Abd-Kadir and Hardman 2007).

**Figure 4:** Type and percentage of questions asked by both teachers in traditional class as recorded during computerised observations



Moreover, the transcripts revealed that most of the display questions used by the teachers were repeated and required relatively short answers consisting of a single word or phrase to name an object or spell a word. Teacher A acknowledged that she did not know the difference between referential and display questions; however, she generally used questions to encourage pupils to participate and to push them to practice and reproduce the language models. In extract 3 below, Teacher A used display questions, as in lines 1, 3, 5 and 7, not because she wanted to know the answer but for practising the word ‘door’.

Extract 3:

- 1     T     What is that? (...) what is that? (...) what - is- that?  
              ((points to the door in the class))
- 2     PP     000
- 3     T     That is a door (...) that is (..) a door
- 4     T     What is that?  
              ((Points to the door))
- 5     PP     That is a door
- 6     T     What is that Amina? What- is- that?
- 7     P     That is a door
- 8     T     What is that Ali?
- 9     P     That is a door

In line 1, she asked the question and prompted the pupils by pointing towards the door of the classroom. Practising new language items could be another function of display questions in addition to seeking pupils’ answers and checking their comprehension (Tsui

1995). It could be argued that this type of questioning followed by prompting could assist pupils' language learning and therefore, in this context, could be considered as scaffolding. By pointing to the real object, the 'door', the teacher was trying to simplify the task, which is one of the characteristics of scaffolding defined by (Wood et al. 1976). It could be argued that, this support provided by the expert to the novice could help association between the word and the real object, which might enhance the process of learning.

Cued questions, in which the teacher repeats the same piece of information but omits the final word (usually the target word) in the sentence with a rising intonation, accounting for about 13% of the total elicitation questions in TCs. In extract 4 below, Teacher B in School Two provided new information about the pronoun 'you' and then immediately raised a question in which she repeated the same sentence omitting the target information (male and female) and with rising intonation (lines 1,3 and 5).

Extract 4:

- |   |    |  |
|---|----|--|
| 1 | T  | 'you' <i>can be used for male and female</i><br>[انت تستخدم للمذكر و المؤنث]   |
|   |    | 'you' <i>can be used for</i> ^ [ لي ؟ انت تستخدم ]   |
| 2 | PP | <i>male and female</i> [ للمذكر و المؤنث ]   |
| 3 | T  | 'you' <i>is a pronoun used for</i> ^ [ لي ؟ انت ضمير يستخدم ]  |
| 4 | PP | <i>male and female</i> [ للمذكر و المؤنث ]   |
| 5 | T  | 'you' <i>is used for singular, plural, male and female</i><br>[المفرد و الجمع و المدكر و المؤنث انت تستخدم<br><i>used for what</i> ^ |
| 6 | P  | singular, plural, male and female<br>[المفرد و الجمع و المدكر و المؤنث]  |

Pupils understood that an answer was required and therefore they provided their reply chorally. In the interviews the teachers claimed that cued questions were used to check pupils' comprehension, to retain their attention and involve them in the process of

learning in the classroom. In their study of the discourse styles of 20 Kenyan and Nigerian primary school teachers, Abd-Kadir and Hardman (2007) also found a similar use of such cued questions. According to them, cued questions were common and were “designed to retain the pupils’ attention and as a re-initiation move embedded within a teaching exchange rather than requiring an answer to a question”.

It is obvious that both teachers used significantly fewer referential questions than display questions. Teacher B argued that referential questions were not used in the class as they require a good command of English. She also did not want to embarrass and frustrate her pupils as they were still beginners. She added that she had to use whatever fitted the pupils’ level of English. This confirms that, unlike Teacher A, Teacher B knew the difference between display and referential questions. However, some referential questions were used (e.g. ‘where did you go yesterday?’ or ‘what did you do at the weekend?’). These types of questions were rare in the TCs and tended to be used when pupils had not done their home work. The function of referential questions as used by Teacher B related to behaviour and the maintenance of the teacher as someone ‘in control’. It maintains and supports a particular power relationship between pupils and teacher. However, If we consider the nature of the referential questions which are believed to encourage talk for learning (see 2.2.3.1) as suggested by Clifton (2006) in his study of classroom talk at a language school in the north of France, it could be argued that the lack of purposeful use of referential questions by Teachers A and B may mean that pupils had fewer opportunities to interact meaningfully with the teacher and produce longer more complex utterances.

From the computerised observations it was noted that explanations, or ‘informative exchanges’ as coded in Sinclair & Coulthard’s (1975) system, in which the teacher provides new information, ideas and facts or reads from or writes on the blackboard, accounted for about 16% of the teacher’s initiating acts in TCS1 and more than 17% in TCS2. Although both teachers followed very similar procedures during the presentation stage (see section 3.7.3), it was found that Teacher B tended to give more detailed information. This can be seen in extract 5, turn 17, when she gave detailed information about the sound ‘c’.

Extract 5:

- |    |    |  |
|----|----|--|
| 1  | T  | good morning every body  |
| 2  | PP | good morning teacher   |
| 3  | T  | how are you?   |
| 4  | PP | fine, thank you  |
| 5  | T  | (.....) lesson number two, <i>our lesson today is number two</i><br>[درسنا اليوم رقم اثنين] what is our lesson today?  |
| 6  | PP | number two   |
| 7  | T  | page number six <i>look at page six</i> [انظر صفحه سبعة]   |
| 8  | T  | (.....) the first word is cake, cake, <i>cake means</i> [تعني كعكه]  |
| 9  | T  | repeat after me cake   |
| 10 | PP | cake mdl x 6   |
| 11 | T  | cake   |
| 12 | PP | cake   |
| 13 | T  | c-a-k-e mdl x 6  |
| 14 | PP | c-a-k-e  |
| 15 | T  | cake mdl x 4   |
| 16 | PP | cake   |
| 17 | T  | The ‘c’ sound here is pronounced as ‘k’. ‘cake’, ‘car’ <i>It is only pronounced ‘c’ when it is followed by ‘e’, ‘i’, and ‘y’.</i> As in city, centre [هذا الحرف ينطق<br>ك, e, y] [الكتاب علي اقرا الكلمه من] |
| 18 | T  | ok, now, <i>Ali read the word from the book</i>  |

She claimed that giving detailed information and explaining everything to pupils was her priority, but sometimes the pupils’ age and low level of English prevented her from doing this. Extract 5 above was taken from a typical traditional lesson taught by Teacher B and shows the extent to which the classroom discourse is made up of teacher informative



exchanges. In line 7, she began a new lesson by instructing pupils to look for page 6 and started to read the new words from the course book starting with the word 'cake'. Then the definition of the word was given in the pupils' mother tongue (line 8). After that, she asked the whole class to repeat the word 'cake' as she was saying it as a model. Then she nominated pupils in turn to read the word from the course book, as in line 18. This procedure was repeated with almost every word. The data shows how Teacher B sometimes went into detail in her explanation so as to provide extra information about the different ways of pronouncing certain sounds or grammatical items as above in line 17 (extract 5). She gave examples of when the 'c' sound can be pronounced as 's' and as 'k'. As shown in the extracts above, teachers tended to use a lot of Arabic in explaining new language items and instructing pupils. According to them, the purpose of using the pupils' mother tongue is to make the new information easier and more understandable and to save time. Pupils, on the other hand, seemed to appreciate the use of L1 by their teachers, as commented by both teachers during the stimulated recall interviews. Previous research (e.g. Knight 1996), however, reveals that there has been considerable debate over the use of L1 in L2 classrooms, though most teaching methods encourage the use of the target language, especially in EFL where "learners have little opportunities to meet and use the L2 outside the classroom" (Nation 2001). From the socio-cultural perspective, interaction in L1 can play an strategic role in the collaborative performance of tasks in L2 and, hence, in constructing effective opportunities for learning L2. "L1 is seen as a means to create a social and cognitive space in which learners are able to provide each other and themselves with help throughout the task" (Anton and DiCamilla 1999, P.245).

Directing pupils to do something or to perform an activity was another significant exchange, accounting for about 12% of the teacher's initiation acts in TCS1 and 13% in

TCS2. It was the fourth most frequent act after modelling, eliciting and explanation (inform) in both schools. The following extract (6) reveals how the teachers directed pupils to perform an activity.

Extract 6:

- 1    T            in number two underneath we have 'look' and 'match',  
we have 'a' and 'b', it was very similar to the test  
*given by the teacher* [ في رقم اثنين يوجد انظر ووصل و اي و ب شبيهة بلامتحان ]  
match means [ وصل ] means what ^
- 2    PP           [وصل]
- 3    T            here we have different people and different names we want  
to match the appropriate name with the appropriate person,  
we have six names and six pictures, every one of you should  
work individually.
- 4    PP           000
- 5    T            I repeat again, you need to match the name with the person.  
We have 6 names and 6 pictures, match each name with the  
picture it is clear; you have to draw a line between the name  
and the picture that is all.  
[نريد توصيل الاسم مع الصورة نعيد مره اخرى  
ارسم خط ما بين الاسم و الصور - عندنا ست اسماء و ست صور - وصل كل اسم مع كل صوره]
- 6    PP           ok teacher *it is clear now* [واضح الان]

Extract 6 above demonstrates that Teacher B gave instructions and then repeated them several times in different forms in English and in Arabic. Then she gave more information concerning how the activity could be performed. Pupils appeared to still be confused, so she repeated the commands again, as illustrated in lines 1, 3 and 5. The expected response to such a directive move is a reaction which is defined as a non-verbal action, which shows that the initiation has been treated as a directive move. However, direction is very often produced in the pupils' L1, and is used to instruct pupils to conduct an activity and for discipline purposes (e.g. keep quiet, sit down, look at your book, and open your book on page 10). It could be argued here that classroom management would be better uttered in the target language so the pupils could learn certain expressions which

are frequently modelled, because teachers tended to use certain expressions repeatedly (e.g. be quiet, look at your book, listen to me, etc.).

Checking moves, which enabled the teacher to ascertain whether or not there were any problems preventing the successful progress of the lesson, were the least frequent move among the main acts used by Teacher A in TCS1, accounting for 4%. This was the case in TCS2 as well. Both teachers commented on the lack of checking pupils' comprehension by saying that very often it could be understood from the pupils' reactions and their facial expressions whether or not they understood the point. However, there were some examples of checking pupils' understanding. Extract 7 below is an example of the Teacher B's use of questions to check comprehension.

Extract 7:

- |    |     |   |
|----|-----|---|
| 1  | T   | do you understand? (...) do you understand?           |
| 2  | PP: | 000   |
| 3  | T   | do you understand?                                    |
| 4  | PP  | what?   |
| 5  | T   | <i>raise your voice, raise your voice</i> [ارفع صوتك] |
| 6  | PP  | <i>is this clear?</i> [هذا واضح هل]                   |
| 7  | T   | no, no  |
| 8  | PP  | <i>easy or difficult</i> [سهل ام صعب]                 |
| 9  | T   | no, no  |
| 10 | T   | do you understand the lesson? Yes or no               |
| 11 | PP  | 000   |
| 12 | T   | do you understand the lesson?                         |
| 13 | P   | [فهمتم]   |
| 14 | PP  | yes, yes  |
| 15 | T   | do you understand? <i>Means</i> [هل فهمتم تعني]       |

In line 1 the teacher explicitly asked pupils whether or not they understood her explanation by saying 'Do you understand? In this case, the teacher usually expected a reply from her pupils which could be either positive or negative, and verbal or non-verbal.

after which feedback is not essential. Turns 2, 4, 6, 8, 11 show that pupils did not understand the question even though it was repeated several times. The teacher used English to check comprehension, and this led to confusion. Therefore, the teacher tried to scaffold by repeating the same question in the target language several times and evaluating the pupils responses in each attempt. Attempts continued until one of the pupils voluntarily provided the translation of the teacher's question to the rest of the class through which the pupils understood the question and the teacher received a reply as illustrated in turn 13. According to the coding scheme used in this study (see Appendix 3), this assistance is classified as spontaneous contribution. It could be argued that this spontaneous contribution acted as a scaffold, demonstrating that pupils can achieve their learning goal through the support provided by peers and not necessarily always from an expert. Thus, it can be argued that pupils in the classroom can share their weaknesses and strengths with each other in producing higher levels of performance than that of any individual involved (Ohta 2001), but this was rare in the TCs, due to the tight control of language production by teachers.

The data further show that both teachers largely determined which individuals would take part in the classroom talk by nominating pupils to answer an eliciting question or directing them to do something. According to the teachers, nominating pupils who rarely participate was an effective strategy to involve them in the process of learning. It was also used as a message to other pupils to pay more attention in class. It was observed, however, that teachers, very often, nominated competent and active pupils to participate first to act as a model for the rest of the class (e.g. answering a question, reproducing a language model). It could be argued that nominating may in general restrict the flow of interaction in the classroom, but nominating active pupils first may consolidate the

process of learning by exposing the rest of the class to the same language model several times. It could also encourage less active pupils to participate by imitating their classmates who were nominated by the teacher.

The findings also demonstrate that the teacher replying to pupils' questions accounted for 2% of the teacher's initiating acts in TCS1. This low percentage reflects the fact that questions asked by pupils were relatively rare as indicated in (4.1.1.2) below. Most of these responses were to clarify things or to give permission, such as when asked for a page number, repeating instructions for an activity, or giving permission to leave the classroom. However, Teacher B provided more answers to questions from pupils than Teacher A. This difference may be because of the class size in S2 (see 3.5.2). In both classes, most of these questions were for clarification or to obtain permission. It was also noted that the teachers sometimes ignored pupils' questions. Extract 8, in turn 1, a pupil asked for clarification and the teacher answered the question. However, in line 6 we can see that the teacher simply ignored the pupil's question and started directing pupils to a written activity.

Extract 8:

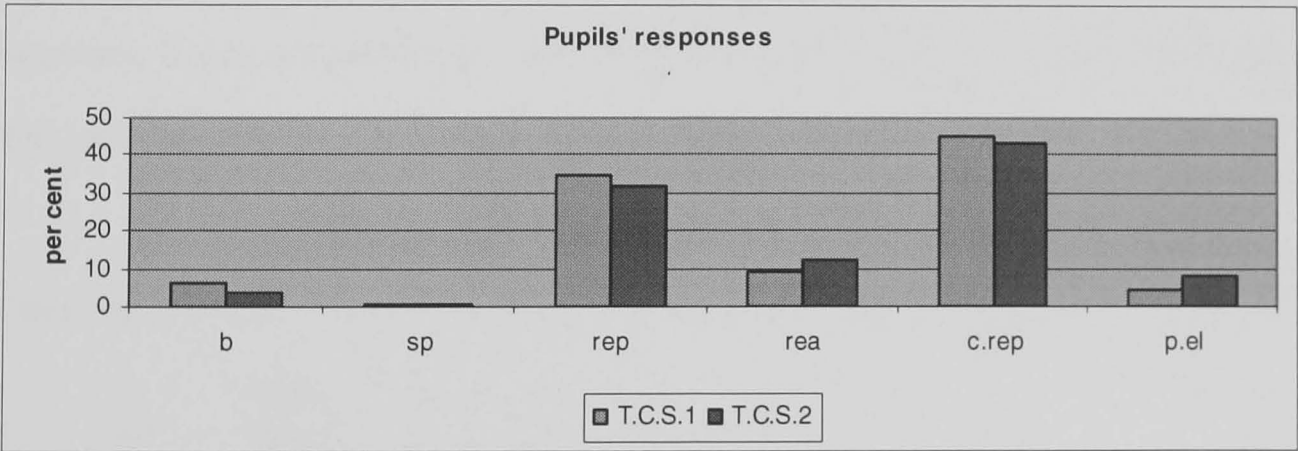
- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | P | <i>what to do teacher, shall I copy down what is written on the blackboard or what?</i> [ماذا نفعل هل ننسخ المكتوب ام ماذا علي السيوره ام ماذا ]  |
| 2 | T | <i>write the date of today, lesson number two, English and then make a line to close the box, then write underneath new words</i> [ واكتب الكلمات الجديده2 تاريخ اليوم الدرس رقم ]                          |
| 3 | P | <i>which words teacher?</i> [اي كلمات ]   |
| 4 | T | <i>words we had last lesson</i> [ الكلمات التي اخذناها الدرس السابق ]   |
| 5 | P | <i>shall we write in the same page or in a new page?</i> [ في صفحه جديده هل نكت في هذه الصفحه ام ]  |
| 6 | T | <i>we have already said that the letters of a word usually written very close to each other, we leave a space between words.</i> [ الحروف تكتب قريبه من بعض بينما يترك فراغ بين الكلمات قلنا في السابق ان ] |

It could be argued that ignoring pupils' questions may lead to frustration on the part of the pupils, making them hesitant about asking further questions. Consequently, the amount and type of pupil talk, which is essential in enhancing classroom interaction to promote pupils' language learning (see 2.2.3.2), could be reduced. The following section discusses the nature of pupils' talk in the classroom, as recorded in the TCs.

4.1.1.2 Pupils' talk

Pupils' talk is another important aspect of classroom interaction. It refers to the patterns of initiation and responding learners display in the classroom. Pupils' talk, in this study, was coded according to whether they initiated questions, contributed voluntarily, replied and reacted to teachers' and peers' questions and orders, and repeated teacher's and others' language models. Figure 5 below displays the most frequent responses that could be categorised as part of pupils' talk.

**Figure 5:** Distribution of pupils' responses in the Traditional Classes in Schools One ((TCS1) and Two (TCS2).



Key: *b* – bid; *sp* – spontaneous contribution; *rep* – reply; *rea* – react; *c. rep* – choral repetition; *p. el* – pupil elicit.

The most common pupil discourse act in TCS1 and TCS2 was repetition of a word or phrase modelled by a teacher as exemplified in extract 1 earlier. This act represented 45% and 43% respectively of all pupil utterances. Although repetition was dominant in all the lessons observed in the TCs, the video-recordings revealed that pupils were often not fully engaged while they were repeating language models provided by the teacher. It was observed that some of them were drawing, playing with their classmates, or looking out of the windows. Replies to the teacher’s different elicitation questions made up more than one third of all responses in TCs in both schools. Most of these tended to be choral, though there were individual answers. Most choral and individual responses were short and based on comprehension checks and elicitation questions controlled by the teacher. However, choral responses, as claimed by Pontefract and Hardman (2005), are unlikely to encourage pupils to be engaged in the process of learning and to practice the target language because of their low cognitive nature. The subsequent extract (9) from TCS1, for example, demonstrates that the teacher addressed a number of questions to the whole class in which the responses were choral and consisted of a single word. This pattern of responses occurred in the TCS2 as well. In spite of the low cognitive nature of choral responses, it was noticed that less motivated and shy pupils were involved in practicing the target language when a question was addressed to the whole class.

Extract 9:

- |    |    |                                 |
|----|----|---------------------------------|
| 1  | T  | how                             |
| 2  | PP | how                             |
| 3  | T  | if I ask you, how are you?      |
| 4  | PP | fine                            |
| 5  | T  | what is the meaning of how?     |
| 6  | PP | <i>how are you</i> [كيف حالك]   |
| 7  | T  | what is the meaning of how?     |
| 8  | PP | <i>how</i> [كيف]                |
| 9  | T  | we knew that ‘are’ means [تكون] |
| 10 | PP | <i>are</i> [تكون]               |

11	T	<i>what</i> <sup>^</sup> [ماذا]
12	PP	'are' [تكون]
13	T	'you' means ^
14	PP	'you' [انت]

Although spontaneous contributions were uncommon in TCS1, some attempts were made to reproduce what was uttered by the teacher, which indicates that pupils were trying to comprehend and use the target language. For example, they reproduce target forms like 'be quiet', 'sorry', 'please', and 'speak up' as private speech (Lantolf 1997), as the video recordings revealed pupils mouthing and whispering words and phrases to themselves immediately after teacher talk. Pupils in TCS2, like their counterparts in TCS1, seldom contributed voluntarily; however, there were a few attempts at spontaneous contribution such as giving an interpretation while the teacher talked in English. When the teacher said 'open your books', one of the pupils in School Two translated it into Arabic language 'افتحوا كتبكم'. Another example can be found in extract 7 above when one of the pupils voluntarily translated the teacher's questions thereby supporting other pupils' comprehension and enabling them to give the right answer. The possible interpretation for such contribution is that there were some pupils who were more confident and eager to learn the English language than others in the class. However, the lack of spontaneous contribution from pupils could support Teacher B's reasoning for her nomination of pupils to participate.

Furthermore, the findings of the study reveal that pupils in the TCS1 rarely initiated questions other than for purposes of clarifying a preceding utterance, accounting for 4% of the pupils' talk, all of which were addressed to the teacher. Extract 10 below from TCS1 shows a pupil apparently failing to hear a definition of a word given by the teacher:



therefore he asked for a repetition. This type of pupils' elicitation was the most common in the traditional classes observed.

Extract 10:

- |   |    |  |
|---|----|--|
| 1 | PP | <i>link</i> [وصل]  |
| 2 | T  | <i>look and match</i> [انظر ووصل] (...) <i>look at the first one</i> [اولا انظر هنا] |
| 3 | P  | teacher, <i>can you repeat?</i> [ممکن تعيدي]   |
| 4 | T  | repeat what?   |
| 5 | P  | <i>the meaning of match</i> [معني ماتش]  |
| 6 | T  | <i>match means</i> [وصل ماتش معناها]   |
| 7 | P  | <i>shall we draw a line between words?</i> [هل نرسم خط بين الكلمات]                  |
| 8 | T  | <i>yes, exactly</i> [نعم بالضبط]   |

Even though pupils in TCS2 rarely initiated questions it was found that they raised almost twice as many questions as those asked in the TCS1, all of which were addressed to the teacher. Although Teacher B did not provide any explanation for this phenomenon, possible reasons may be related to class size or that pupils in S2 may have been more motivated and eager to understand everything, or possibly the teacher's instructions and explanation were vaguer and less clear to them. However, most were clarification questions, which were usually raised when a pupil did not understand part of an instruction, or when further repetition or explanation was required. Pupils very often used their mother tongue in asking questions, or just said 'What, teacher?' or 'What?'. It was noticed during the lessons observed that the teachers lost their temper very readily when pupils asked a lot of questions, especially when the same question was repeated by several pupils. Again this behaviour may restrict pupils from initiating questions.

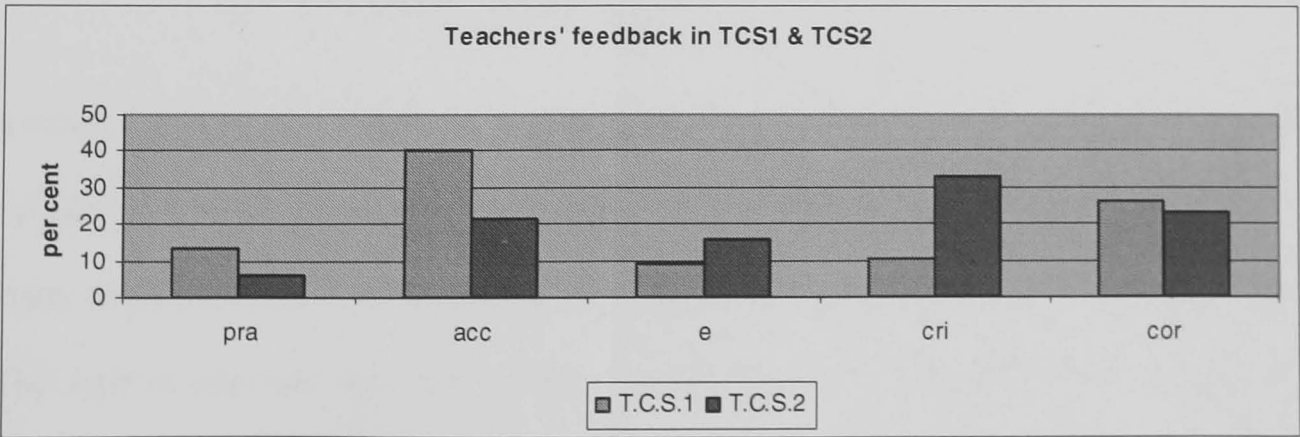
Bidding also appeared when the teacher addressed questions to the whole class (e.g. saying 'me teacher', and raising their hands). Interestingly, Teacher A commented on pupil bidding by saying that not all pupils who bid knew the answer, but some of them pretended that they knew the answer in order to please their teacher. Non-verbal reactions

to teachers' directions were also found, accounting for 9% in the TCS1 and 12% in the TCS2. These included pupils nodding their heads when the teacher provided vague instructions, using facial expressions to express their frustration when the teacher required them to do a lot of homework, fulfilling the teacher's commands such as, opening or closing the windows, cleaning the blackboard or standing up to greet the teacher.\_\_\_\_\_

4.1.1.3. Teacher feedback

In general, teacher feedback refers to “the response given by the teacher to efforts by the learner to communicate” (Ellis, 1985, P.296). It may involve functions such as reinforcement, criticism, correction or requests for clarification. The teacher's feedback in this study was coded according to whether the teacher praised, accepted, evaluated, criticised or corrected the pupils' answers. However, some of the pupils' responses received no feedback especially when the responses were chorally performed. Unlike the teachers' initiation acts, teacher feedback appeared to differ in TCS1 and TCS2. Figure 6 below shows that overt criticism was the most common type of feedback in the lessons observed in the TCS2, accounting for 33% in the TCS2, while in the TCS1 this only accounted for 10% of cases.

Figure 6: Distribution of teacher feedback in the Traditional Class in Schools One ((TC S1) and Two (TCS2)



Key: pra – praise; acc – accept; e – evaluate; cri – criticise; cor – correct

During the stimulated recall interview both teachers stressed the value of praising pupils for correct answers or good attempts, but in practise this was extremely rare, especially in TCS2. It occurred only a few times during the lessons observed, accounting for 6% in TCS2 and 14% in TCS1 of the feedback. Although Teacher B did not give a clear explanation for criticizing and not praising pupils, this behavior probably reflects the authority of the teacher in the classroom, the very formal relationship between the teacher and pupils, and/or the teacher's personality (see 2.2.4.1 for more details about the social and cultural background of the teachers and learners). The transcripts as well as the video recordings illustrate that most of the criticism was addressed to individuals, mainly because they had not done their homework or had forgotten to bring their books. Extract 11 below exemplifies how a pupil was criticized by his teacher because he forgot to bring his notebook.

Extract 11:

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| 1 | T | you boy, where is your book?   |
| 2 | P | <i>I forget it</i> teacher [نسيته]   |
| 3 | T | <i>you forget it, that is great, why did you</i><br><i>come to school, why, tell me why?</i><br>[نسيته هدا عظيم- لماذا اتيت اخبرني لماذا]<br><i>and you, where is your book?</i> |
| 4 | P | <i>I forget it teacher too</i> [ايضا نسيته يا ابله]  |
| 5 | T | <i>that is very bad of you, I'll show you, just a minute</i><br>[هدا سئ جدا منك - ساريك - لحظه]  |

It can be seen in turn 3 that the teacher used implicit criticism by saying '*that is great*' [لماذا اتيت الى المدرسه اخبرني لماذا] and '*why did you come to school?, Tell me why*' [عظيم هدا]. In many cases pupils preferred to keep silent or just say '*I forget*', [نسييت] '*sorry*' [اسف]. This type of criticism was very common in the TCS2 taught by Teacher B. It was also observed that physical punishment was very common in TCS2, although it is illegal according to Libyan law. Teacher B used to punish her pupils physically using a stick and

beating them on their hands, particularly when they had not done their homework or if they misbehaved such as by making a noise or disturbing other pupils. According to her, this had proved to be an effective way to deal with her pupils. Although pupils in TCS2 were subject to a lot of criticism and physical punishment, they asked twice as many questions as those in TCS1, as shown in figure 5. It is important to clarify here that criticism and physical punishment are widely used in most Libyan schools. Consequently pupils do not reject such behaviours because they consider them as related to the teacher's authority in the classroom. Pupils expect criticism and physical punishment if they do not do their homework or make trouble at school. Therefore, they do not have any alternative except to cope with such learning environments, and participate in the classroom accordingly. This does not mean that teachers do not need to change their behaviour, as establishing good relationship with learners is extremely important in creating a conducive learning atmosphere in the classroom (Al-Moghani 2003). In an informal talk with some pupils who had been punished in this way, they said that "*we would prefer to be punished than sit for hours doing the daily homework*". This reflects the pupils' attitude towards doing their homework, which was usually assigned by the teacher at the end of every lesson. Pupils may be required to write a list of words, or copy pages from the course book several times or memorize the meaning and spelling of words. This could also explain the apparent anomaly between the amount they are criticised and the amount of questions asked in TCS1 and TCS2. In short, such teacher feedback would not necessarily impact adversely on pupils' questioning within the Libyan context.

Criticising pupils by blaming them for their carelessness or for not paying enough attention to the teacher explaining new information or giving instructions was also used by Teacher A in TCS1, but was not as common as in TSC2. Unlike Teacher B, Teacher A

used to hold a stick and pretend to use it, but she never actually used it for physical punishment during the observation sessions. The data also show that accepting pupils' answers appeared to be the most frequent feedback technique used by Teacher A in TCS1, as demonstrated in figure 6 above. The teacher very often repeated the pupil's answer or just said 'yeah', 'mm' or 'OK'. In other instances, Teacher A requested that the same pupil or the whole class repeated the utterance in order to confirm the acceptance of the answer. However, there were some instances where pupils received no feedback regardless of whether the answer was wrong or correct. A possible explanation is that the teacher limited her feedback to less active pupils in class to encourage them to contribute, or perhaps because of the class size the teacher found it difficult to provide feedback to every pupil.

Correcting errors, on the other hand, accounted for 26% of the teacher's feedback in TCS1. The transcripts reveal the way in which Teacher A dealt with learning errors. It was found that the teacher herself corrected the error (especially if it was related to the main pedagogical purpose) and only very rarely rephrased the question or gave pupils the chance to try again. According to the teacher's commentaries, this was due to time restrictions. Extract 12 below gives an example.

Extract 12:

1	T	what is this Ahmed? ((points to a picture in the course book))
3	T	<i>you learned this word yesterday</i> [انت قراءته امس]
4	P	it is a (...) it is kou
5	T	it is a camel.
6	T	it is what ^
7	PP	it is a camel
8	T	what is this Ahmed?
9	P	it is a camel
10	T	that is right, good
11	T	camel (.) repeat camel
12	PP	camel

13	T	camel
14	PP	camel

In the above extract the teacher came across the word ‘camel’ while she was reading from the course-book, and to check pupils comprehension she asked one of the pupils whether he could retrieve the word ‘camel’. While the pupil was still thinking, she provided him with the answer ‘camel’ (as in lines 4 and 5). Then she addressed a cued question (as in line 6) to the whole class to which they replied chorally. Again she went back to the same pupil to ensure that he got the right answer. When teachers answer their own questions without allowing enough time for pupils to think of a response, it is unlikely that pupils even try to think of the answer, since an imminent response from the teacher is expected (Black & William 1998). In line 10 the teacher evaluated the pupil’s answer by saying ‘that’s right’ and immediately provided positive feedback. It is unclear if this mode of correction encourages pupils to self-repair thereby fostering language learning. Previous research has suggested that pupils should be given enough time to think of the answer and teachers should be aware of the value of increasing their wait time (Garton 2002; Walsh 2006).

In dealing with errors made by pupils in TCS2, the transcripts show that Teacher B used different patterns of correction methods compared with Teacher A, as in extract 13 presented below. A possible interpretation for this difference may be related to Teacher B’s long teaching experience (see 3.5.3). However, different approaches to errors may reflect individual teachers’ attitudes and assumptions about language teaching, for example depending on whether they regard language learning as the mastery of forms or as the communication of meaning (Nystrom 1983).

Extract 13:

- |    |    |  |
|----|----|--|
| 1  | T  | Sami, <i>we use 'am' with what?</i> [نستخدم ام مع ماذا؟] |
| 2  | P1 | 'am', 'am' <i>use it with you</i> [مع انت تسخدم]         |
| 3  | T  | no, no <i>we use 'am' with what</i> Kamel?               |
| 4  | P2 | <i>I do not know</i> teacher [لا اعرف]                   |
| 5  | T  | <i>who knows?</i> [من يعرف]                              |
| 6  | P3 | teacher, teacher, <i>with I</i> teacher [مع]             |
| 7  | T  | yes, <i>we use 'am' with 'I'</i>                         |
| 8  | PP | 000  |
| 9  | T  | Sami, <i>we use 'I' with what?</i>                       |
| 10 | P1 | <i>with 'I'</i> teacher                                  |

As in turn 2, a nominated pupil failed to provide the correct answer, and the teacher directed the question to another pupil (turn 3). If he/she also failed to provide the right answer, then the teacher addressed the question to the whole class to find a volunteer by saying 'who knows?' as in turn 5. Returning the question to the whole class is a technique that effectively places the responsibility for knowledge on the learners, which is considered to be a kind of scaffolding for pupils who cannot answer the question (Anton 1999). In line 6, one of the pupils voluntarily provided the answer to the rest of the class. By doing this, the teacher involved as many pupils as possible in thinking about the answer. As positive feedback, the teacher then repeated the correct answer and went back to the pupil who first made the error to confirm that he/she understood the correct answer, as in turns 7 and 9. However, the aim of providing this type of feedback was to ensure that pupils achieved the correct answer and produce it accurately, as claimed by Teacher B. Again, this perception reflects her beliefs about the use of traditional methods of teaching in which the focus is usually upon form and accuracy, as indicated in the semi-structured interviews with the teachers (see 4.3).

#### 4.1.1.4. Summary

In this section, the nature of classroom interaction in the traditional classes in Schools One and Two was investigated. The main reason for this investigation was to answer the

first part of the key research question (what is the nature of classroom interaction in Libyan EFL primary classrooms?). The overall findings show that interaction in all the lessons observed was tightly controlled by teachers. Teacher-led repetition and question-and-answer exchanges between the teacher and the pupils dominated the classroom interaction. Neither computerised nor video-recorded observations show any interaction opportunities where pupils had to work together collaboratively. Examples of pair and group work, which have been found to be facilitative of language learning and provide peer-peer interaction opportunities (e.g. Foster 1998; Storch 2007), were not found in any of the lessons observed. The Arabic language was often used by both the teachers and the pupils in the classroom as the medium of interaction. Teachers have justified the use of L1 in terms of saving time and making the information easier and more comprehensible. It is arguable that the use of L1 in a foreign language classroom is unavoidable especially in a context where the facilities and educational aids that could be used in facilitating the process of learning are less readily available.

The role of the learner is seen as the passive receiver of knowledge conveyed by the teacher. Choral repetition of language models provided by the teachers was the most significant feature of pupils' talk in the traditional classes. Pupils' responses were restricted and limited by the predetermined questions raised by the teachers. Responses usually required short answers of one word or a phrase. Clarification questions produced by some pupils can be described as the only opportunity where pupils were involved in meaningful communication with teachers.

With regard to the teacher's feedback, the findings demonstrate that a variety of feedback patterns were used by both teachers. Frequent criticism and physical punishment were the



most distinctive characteristics of TCS2 taught by Teacher B, whereas accepting pupils' responses was the most common type of feedback in TCS1 taught by Teacher A. Praising pupils was uncommon in both traditional classes though it was more frequent in TCS1. Correcting errors, on the other hand, represented a large proportion of the teachers' total feedback in both schools. The transcripts reveal that teachers corrected errors themselves, and only very rarely provided clues or gave pupils the chance to try again. However, there were a few occasions where scaffolding was offered to the pupils by the teachers, or where pupils supported each other. Eventually, the findings of this section will be used as baseline to be compared with the nature of classroom interaction in the games classes which will be presented and discussed in the following section (4.1.2).

#### ***4.1.2. Nature of Classroom Interaction in Games Classes (GCs) in Schools One (S1) and Two (S2).***

This section of the data analysis aims to answer the second part of the first research question concerning how whole class interaction in Libyan EFL primary classrooms is affected by the introduction of language games as a teaching resource. In order to answer this question, 12 lessons in games classes (GCs) were observed and then the data obtained was compared with that from the traditional classes (TCs). The frequencies of specific behaviours of the teachers as well as the pupils were recorded using the same software adopted with the traditional classes. Four lessons out of twelve were video-recorded and then transcribed and coded according to Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) model. Extracts of interactions were examined to find out whether or not there are any differences between the two types of classes in the nature of classroom interaction as a result of implementing language games (see 3.13.1). Due to the difficulties presented in capturing, pupil-pupil talk during pair and group work using a video-camera placed in front of the

class because of noise interference (see 3.13.1), the focus of the classroom observation was mainly on the changes in patterns of whole class interaction. However, some examples of pupil-pupil interaction during pair and group work are provided where possible. For this reason, in order to gather more detailed data, pupil-pupil interaction was audio-taped and analysed in a separate section (see 4.2).

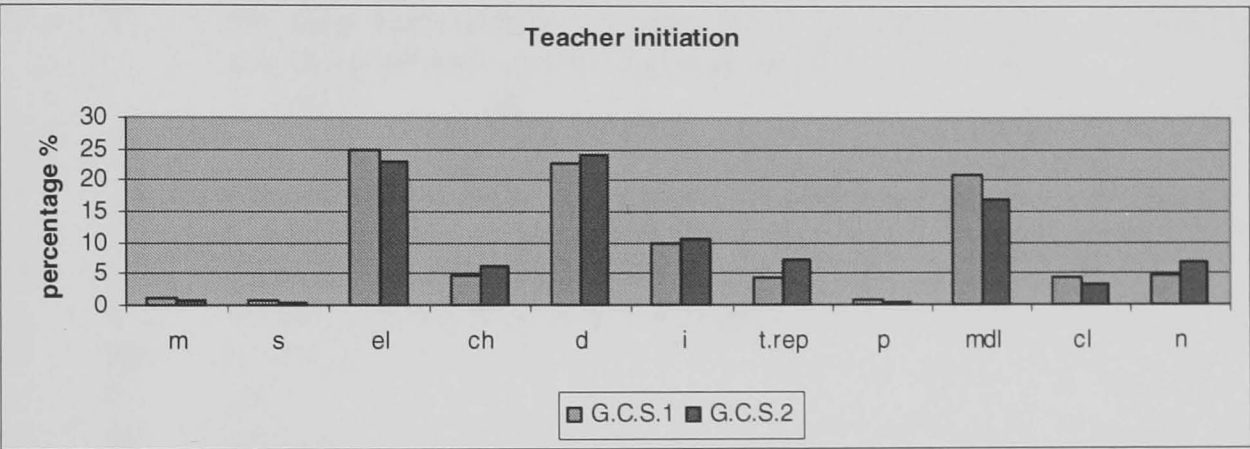
#### **4.1.2.1. Teacher Initiation**

The data revealed that similar course books with a similar language focus were used in both traditional and games classes. Pupils normally sat in rows unless they were asked to work in pairs or groups. In general, all the lessons observed in GCs had a similar structure to the TCs, starting with a review previously learnt language items, then introducing new language items followed by practising the latter and finished by the production stage. For more details about structure of a language games-based lesson see 3.7.3.

In contrast to TCs where individual work dominated, in the GCs pair and group work was conducted throughout the different stages of the lesson, as indicated in table 4 section 3.7.3. For example, in one of the group work activities, Teacher A showed a series of pictures to the whole class, asking for the word and the spelling to which pupils answered chorally. Then she asked them to work in groups of four. Four pictures and alphabet cards were distributed to each group; the pupils were then required to write down the spelling of the word that represented the picture using the alphabet cards. Although the activity was form focused, the pupils had the opportunity to discuss the spelling with each other. However it was difficult to recognize what type of speech took place among the pupils because of the noise and the sound quality of the recordings (see 3.13.1).

Several differences were observed in teacher initiation acts between the TCs and GCs. As demonstrated in figure 7 below, elicitation was found to be the most dominant discourse move used by Teacher A in GCS1, representing 25% of all initiating acts; whereas in TCs in the same school modelling was most frequent. Elicitation was also common in the GCS2, representing the second largest proportion of the teacher's initiation acts after direction, accounting for 23% of the total.

**Figure 7:** Distribution of teacher initiating acts in GCS1 and GCS2



Key: *m* - marker; *s*- starter; *el* - elicit; *ch* - check; *d*- direct; *i* - inform; *t.rep* - teacher reply; *p* – prompt; *mdl* - model; *cl* - clue; *n* - nomination

As in TCs, display questions were the most common eliciting technique used to introduce and practice new language items, to consolidate the pupils' comprehension and to establish routine words. Extract 14 below is a good example where Teacher A in School One used different elicitation questions for different pedagogical purposes in GCS1 during the practise stage.

Extract 14:

- |   |    |                                     |
|---|----|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | T  | what is that? ((points to his bag)) |
| 2 | PP | this is a bag                       |
| 3 | T  | that is a ^                         |
| 4 | PP | bag                                 |
| 5 | T  | what is that Nuri?                  |
| 6 | P  | that is bag                         |
| 7 | T  | that is a^                          |
| 8 | P  | that is a bag                       |

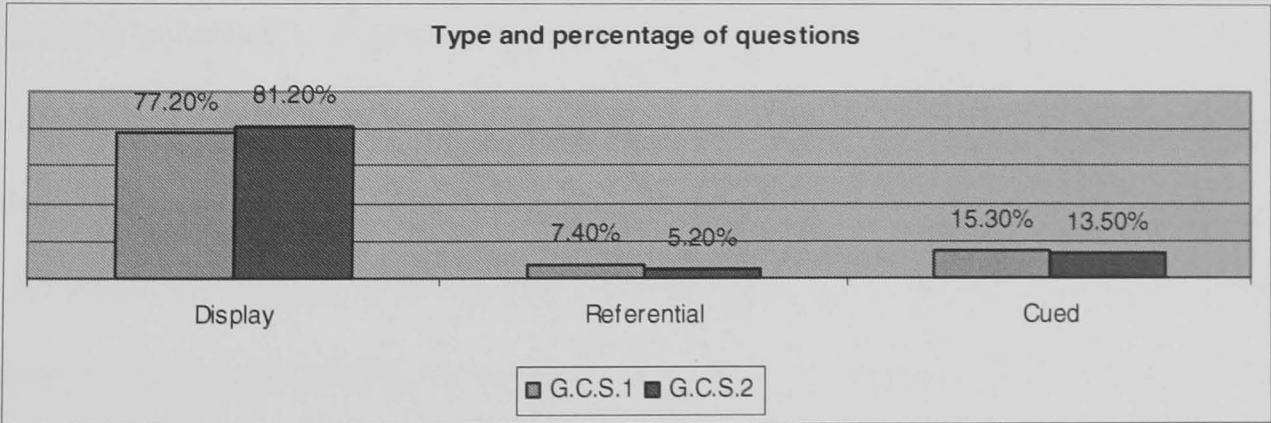
9	T	this is my bag. This is my^
10	PP	bag
11	T	all right (...) and what is this? ((Holds a book))
12	PP	book
13	T	can you think of other words start with 'b' (..) <i>can you think of other words start with 'b'</i> [هل يمكنكم التفكير في كلمات اخرى تبدأ بـ ...] who knows? we learned many words that start with 'b'. <i>With the person next to you think of words start with 'b'</i> [مع الشخص الذي بجانبك فكروا في كلمات اخرى تبدأ بـ ...]. <i>You have two minutes</i> [عندكم دقيقتان]
14	P	<i>how many words</i> teacher? [كم كلمه]
15	T	<i>as many as you can</i> [اكبر عدد ممكن] (...) ok, ok quickly, yes Ali
16	PP	((pupils work in pairs)) (.....)
17	T	((Monitors and gives example of how to drive a bike))
18	PP	bike teacher bike
19	T	yes, <i>bike starts with 'b'</i> [دراجه تبدأ بـ ...] other words (...) Ahmed can you think of other words? <i>can you think of other words?</i> [هل يمكنكم التفكير في كلمات اخرى تبدأ بـ ...] <i>Kıy</i>
20	P	(...) bus
21	T	bus, correct
22	P	(.....) plane
23	T	plane, p-p-plane, it starts with 'p' not 'b'
24	T	waa waa ((makes a sound of a baby))
25	PP	(..) baby
26	T	yes
27	PP	banana
28	T	that is right

In line 1 the teacher began by asking the class a display question, 'What is that?' and pointing towards her bag. Pupils replied by saying 'That is a bag'. After getting the pupils' response she used a cued elicitation as in line 3 so that they would repeat the answer to enhance the input. In line 5 she nominated one of the pupils to answer the same question in order to retain his attention. In line 13 the teacher addressed a question to the whole class, asking them to think of other words that started with the 'b' sound. To create opportunities for interaction, she asked them to work in pairs to discover as many words starting with 'b' as they could. While pupils worked in pairs she monitored the class and provided them with clues, such as giving examples (line 17), making sounds (line 24), and showing pictures in order to encourage them to interact with each other and facilitate learning. From the above examples, it could be concluded that different types of questions

were used for different purposes. Display questions were used for revising and practising words (line 1), cued questions were used to keep the pupil's attention (line 5), and referential questions to encourage pupils to contribute further (line 13). The extract also illustrates how the scaffolding provided by the teacher was important in 'simplifying the task' (Wood et al, 1976). By playing a role of a bike driver and imitating a crying baby the teacher facilitated the pupils' ability to build on their prior knowledge and retrieve the words. Again it was not possible to identify exactly what happened between each pair during the task, but by interacting and supporting each other, they were able to produce the words in the target language during the whole class interaction after the paired talk, as in lines 18, 20 and 25.

Even though display questions dominated the teachers' range of questions in both classes, a significant increase in the use of referential questions was noticed during the lessons observed in GCs as compared with TCs, as shown in figure 8 below. This could be due to the more enjoyable and motivating atmosphere developed in the classroom.

**Figure 8:** Type and percentage of questions asked by both teachers in the Games Class



According to the stimulated recall data, referential questions were sometimes used at the beginning of the lesson to warm pupils up (e.g. Where did you go yesterday?), and at the

end to find out the pupils' points of view about certain tasks (e.g. How did you like the 'Simon says' game?) or for gaining information that the teacher needed (e.g. Was he absent from morning or after the break?). By asking such questions, Teacher B in School Two tended to create more talk opportunities for pupils to practice the target language. In contrast, in the TC, the purpose of referential questions as used by Teacher B related to behaviour and the maintenance of the teacher as someone 'in control' rather than learning (see 4.1.1.1). Almost all of the referential questions were produced in English and then translated into Arabic by the teacher. As in the TCs, pupils' responses to referential questions were mainly in their L1. By uttering referential questions in the L2 and then L1 the teacher appeared to scaffold pupils understanding of the question and to generate more talk for learning opportunities. But since the pupils were still beginners and did not have enough English to express themselves properly, they resorted to their L1 to continue communicating with the teacher. However, the use of L1 as a resource for communicating and learning when pupils do not have sufficient English to express themselves is regarded as helpful for pupils to keep talking (Moon 2000). It is arguable, however, that caution should be observed about the frequent and systematic use of L1, because the pupils may rely on the translation provided by the teacher rather than trying to understand the question produced in English, since they could predict in advance that the teacher will reproduce the same question in L1. Therefore, it would be better if the teacher produced the question in English and then waited for longer. Then if the pupils found it difficult to understand the teacher could apply different techniques (e.g. breaking down the question, simplifying it or translating it into the L1) to make the question understandable. Extract 15 below is an example taken from GCS2 where Teacher B used referential questions.

Extract 15:

- |    |    |  |
|----|----|--|
| 1  | T  | what is the day today?   |
| 2  | PP | <i>Thursday</i> [الخميس]   |
| 3  | T  | what is الخميس in English?   |
| 4  | PP | (.....)  |
| 5  | T  | we have Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and (....) th – th  |
| 6  | PP | Thursday   |
| 7  | T  | yes, what is the day today?  |
| 8  | PP | today is Thursday  |
| 9  | T  | very good (....) ok, ishshsh, who is absent today?   |
| 10 | PP | Rami is absent   |
| 11 | T  | was he absent from morning or after the break ? <i>was he absent from morning or after the break ?</i> [غائب من الصباح او بعد الاستراحة] |
| 12 | PP | <i>from morning</i> [من الصباح]  |
| 13 | P  | <i>he is sick</i> teacher [هو مريض]  |

The question presented by the teacher in line 1, ‘What is the day today?’ is considered as a display question because the teacher already knew the answer. Although repeating such questions in every lesson did not seem to generate genuine conversation in the classroom, they seemed to be helpful in opening a new lesson and establishing routine words. In line 2 the pupils replied using their mother tongue, but the teacher wanted the answer in English. When the teacher realised that it was difficult for them to answer, she reminded them with the days of the week as a clue (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and th - th ), as indicated in line 4. Again with the teacher’s scaffolding the pupils were able to activate their prior knowledge and answer the question in English. In line 9 the teacher praised the pupils for their correct answer and asked a further referential question, ‘Who is absent today?’. The pupils answered ‘Rami is absent’. In line 11 the teacher asked for more clarification ‘Was he absent from morning or after the break?’ followed by a translation into the pupils’ L1. The pupils again answered the question and then one of the pupils voluntarily added more information, ‘He is sick, teacher’, as in line 13. In spite of the fact that the interaction in this instance appeared to be still controlled by the teacher, a genuine conversation started to be develop because of the use of referential questions which characterize free conversation, as described by Nunan (1989) and Seedhouse (1996).

Generally, elicitation was employed to a similar extent by both teachers in the GCs. The only difference noticed was that Teacher B addressed more questions to nominated pupils while Teacher A addressed most questions to the whole class. Teacher B argued that by asking questions, regardless of type, opportunities for practising the target language are created.

The data analysis further revealed that the highest percentage of Teacher B's initiation acts in GCS2 was devoted to directive exchanges, representing about 24% of total initiating acts compared to 13% in the TC in the same school. These were used to direct pupils to learn things by doing and to carry out the teacher's total physical response (TPR) commands when performing movement activities such as using action verbs (stand up, sit down), role play and activities based on games in which pupils were required to perform different actions, such as Simon says game. Although the directive exchange was used slightly less often in the GCS1 than in the GCS2, the data analysis showed a variety of directive moves used in the GCS1. These were used in instructing pupils to perform an activity, play a game, come and write on the blackboard, practise action verbs, and for discipline purposes. Commanding learners to respond has been found to be common in other studies as well (Ramirez et al. 1986; Smith et al. 2005). Extract 16 below is an example of Teacher B's use of the directive exchange as a strategy for teaching the words for colours (red, yellow and green) using a movement game.

Extract 16:

- |   |    |   |
|---|----|---|
| 1 | T  | <i>we are going to play the traffic light game. Make a circle please [ (كلكم اعملوا دائره) سنلعب لعبه اشاره المرور اعملوا دائره]</i> all of you make a circle<br>ok, Sara stand in the middle (.) here, here. Now Sara raise the yellow colour. |
| 2 | P  | ((raises the yellow colour))  |
| 3 | PP | yellow ((pupils ready to walk))   |
| 4 | T  | Sara, raise the green colour  |
| 5 | P  | ((raises the green colour))   |



6	PP	green ((pupils started to walk))
7	T	<i>without noise</i> , no noise [ بدون صوت ] (....) raise the 'red' colour
8	P	((raises the red colour))
9	PP	red ((pupils stop))
10	T	very good

In line 1 the teacher gave the instructions for conducting the game and then one of the pupils was nominated to play the role of traffic police. The pupils were requested to stand in a circle while the nominated pupil stood in the middle holding the three colours (yellow, green and red). Pupils managed to react to the teacher's instructions very quickly because they had played the same game the previous day. The teacher ordered the pupil to raise the yellow colour as a sign for the pupils to be ready to walk, as indicated in line 2. Then the same pupil was ordered to show the green colour for the class to walk, and finally the red colour as a command to stop. As soon as the pupil raised the colour, the whole class said it out loud. In this instance the pupils played the game with the help of the teacher. As the pupils' ability to play the game increased, the teacher's scaffolding was gradually withdrawn. As a result, the following day they performed the same game independently, where the teacher instead played the role of facilitator. That is, the teacher asked one of the pupils to play the role of the teacher to give orders whilst another pupil played the role of the traffic police. Even though use of extended teacher directives, does not at first glance appear to support pupils learning of English, as the teacher does most of the work, the subsequent handing over of responsibility after several attempts at a game, did support pupil participation. The shift of the teacher role offered a great opportunity for the pupils to practise the target language meaningfully and independently in a stress-free atmosphere. Indeed, pupils seemed to enjoy playing the game very much, and as a result it was regularly played later. The teacher commented on the repeated use of role play and movement games, seeing them as beneficial and having a pedagogical value through which pupils learned different colours and action verbs in a short period of

time. This may have represented the beginning of a different perception towards language games developing in Teacher B, as will be seen in section 4.3 below.

Modelling a word to be repeated by pupils in chorus was significantly less frequent in the games classes. As demonstrated in figures 3 and 7, modelling represented 21% of the total initiating acts by the teacher in GCS1 compared to 30% in the TC in the same school. Similarly in GCS2, modelling was used much less, accounting for 17% compared to 28% in TCS2. According to Teacher B, the decrease in the use of modelling was due to the fact that language games took a considerable amount of time in organising the class, explaining the purpose and giving the instructions of the game, and as a result little time was left for modelling. Teacher A, on the other hand, argued that modelling is essential, especially when the target language is not used outside the classroom. However, after she had watched the video-recorded extracts from the class during the stimulated recall interviews, she realized that some pupils were repeating the model passively without paying much attention. Thereafter she reduced the amount of modelling and emphasised the use of other techniques such as using flash cards to elicit responses, and games to encourage pupils to reproduce the language input. On the other hand, in TCs the same teacher tended to introduce the target language items (e.g. vocabulary) by reading them aloud, then giving definitions in the pupils' mother tongue. Subsequently, pupils were asked to repeat them chorally after the teacher several times (see 4.1.1.1). This change of opinion could again be considered an indication of a shift in Teacher A's perceptions towards the use of traditional methods of teaching (see 4.3. for more details concerning teachers' perceptions). However, according to the data analysis, although there was less modelling in the GCs, it was employed in the same way as in TCs (i.e. the teacher

provides a model and pupils repeat in chorus), and more or less for similar purposes (i.e. learning pronunciation).

The frequency of checking pupils' understanding remains almost the same in TCs and GCs in both schools. Teachers may still rely on the pupils' reactions and facial expressions rather than asking them explicit questions, as they confirmed in the stimulated recall interviews (see 4.1.1.1). They also believed that pupils' level of comprehension can be inferred from the teachers' use of display and cued questions in the classroom. However, examples of checking understanding were found when the teacher asked pupils whether or not they were able to reproduce a word or a phrase already presented by the teacher. It was observed that Teacher A preferred to check pupils' comprehension in the class as a whole rather than individually, to avoid embarrassing them. Checking pupils' comprehension was also uncommon in the GCS2; representing 6% of the teacher's initiating acts; most of which were with individual pupils. However, in the TCs in the same school checking questions were usually addressed to the whole class, because pupils sat in rows and the teacher stood in front of the class. This difference could be due to the effect of games and participant organisation, where the teacher monitored pupils working in pairs and groups checking their performance.

Providing clues to help pupils answer elicitations or to comply with directives made up about 4.5% of the exchanges in GCS1 and 3% in GCS2, compared to only 2% and 1.5% in the TCs. The classroom observation revealed that the increase in giving pupils clues and hints to help them answer questions and participate took place gradually and reached its peak in weeks 5 and 6. This is another significant difference between TCs and GCs in terms of the teachers' strategies in eliciting responses from pupils. Extract 17 below

demonstrates how the teacher provided different clues to help pupils retrieve a word they had already learned.

Extract 17:

- 1 T ok students, *listen to me* [اسمعوا لي]. *Now, I am going to show you a picture and tell me the word* [الآن سنريكّم صورّه وقولولي الكلمه]. *For example, this picture is bike* [مثلا هذه صورّه دراجه]. *Ok what is this?* ((shows a picture))
- 2 PP boy
- 3 T and this ((shows a picture))
- 4 PP car
- 5 T who can spell the word car?
- 6 PP me teacher
- 7 T Mazen, spell it
- 8 P c-a-r
- 9 T good (...)
- 10 T ((shows a picture))
- 11 PP (.....) 000
- 12 T who knows? (....) *no one knows*^ [ لا احد يعرف ] (....) *it starts with 's'* [ تبدأ ] (... ) ssstt (... )
- 13 P star
- 14 T nononono (...) the last letter is 'y'
- 15 P sriborry teacher
- 16 T yes, strawberry, strawberry (...) again what is this?
- 17 PP Strawberry
- 18 T good. *It's a difficult word* [انها كلمه صعبه]

After holding up a picture of a strawberry which nobody was able to name, the teacher made an attempt to facilitate learning by simplifying the task in providing them with the first sound 'it starts with 's' and subsequently provided the first two sounds 'st'. One of the pupils gave an answer which was evaluated by the teacher in line 14 as incorrect. Eventually the teacher provided them with another clue 'the last letter is 'y' whereupon one of the pupils gave the correct answer (line 15). As we can see the scaffolds provided by the teacher encouraged pupils to try and eventually they were able to build on their prior knowledge and answer the question. Without the teacher's assistance no one would have been able to retrieve a word considered to be difficult for beginners, as the teacher herself admitted in line 18. We can see in the above example how many attempts were

made by the teacher in order to support her pupils to find the right answer. After each attempt she had to wait for several seconds to give the pupils enough time to think. What is interesting here is that this type of scaffolding was never offered during the lessons observed in TCs, even though the same teachers were involved in the process of teaching. Although all instances of scaffolding provided so far seem to represent a rather simplistic notion of scaffolding, it was observed that they did encourage pupils to contribute and engage more in the process of learning. That is, pupils in the classroom appeared to behave as if they were in a competition. The more clues the teacher provided, the more pupils became interested in knowing the answer. They were active, building on prior knowledge and constructing new knowledge.

It was also observed that Teacher A used less control over pupils' participation in the GCs than in the TCs. Instead of allocating turns and nominating particular pupils to answer questions, she addressed questions to the whole class and looked for volunteers (e.g. 'Who wants to play first?', 'Who can tell me how this game is conducted?'). Teacher B, on the other hand, still preferred to nominate who would participate. She argued that controlling the allocation of turns is unavoidable for discipline purposes, given that language games are new to them, otherwise control would be lost and the class would subside into chaos. She added that nominating pupils to participate is also important in providing equal opportunities, because some pupils may not participate voluntarily. According to the data, there was a negative relationship between nomination and spontaneous contribution. That is, when teachers used more nomination, fewer spontaneous contributions by pupils were observed and vice versa. For example, nominations in GCS1 accounted for about 5% of the teacher's initiation acts, whereas spontaneous contribution in the same class represented approximately 3%. Similarly, in

GCS2 nomination accounted for about 7% whilst spontaneous contribution represented only 2%. Comparable findings were also found in the TCs in both schools. Thus, it could be argued that by using more nomination, more control over pupils' contribution may be exerted by the teacher and therefore less spontaneous contribution occurs because pupils know that they have to be nominated and should not speak voluntarily.

It was also witnessed that teachers in GCs showed more tolerance towards pupils' questions than they did in the TCs. This could be due to the enjoyable atmosphere created by the implementation of language games. Teachers replied to pupils' questions more often in GCs than in TCs in both schools. As illustrated in extract 18 below, most of the teacher's responses were clarifications of instructions to questions asked by pupils during an activity, or giving permission to do something, as in turns 6, 9 and 13.

Extract 18:

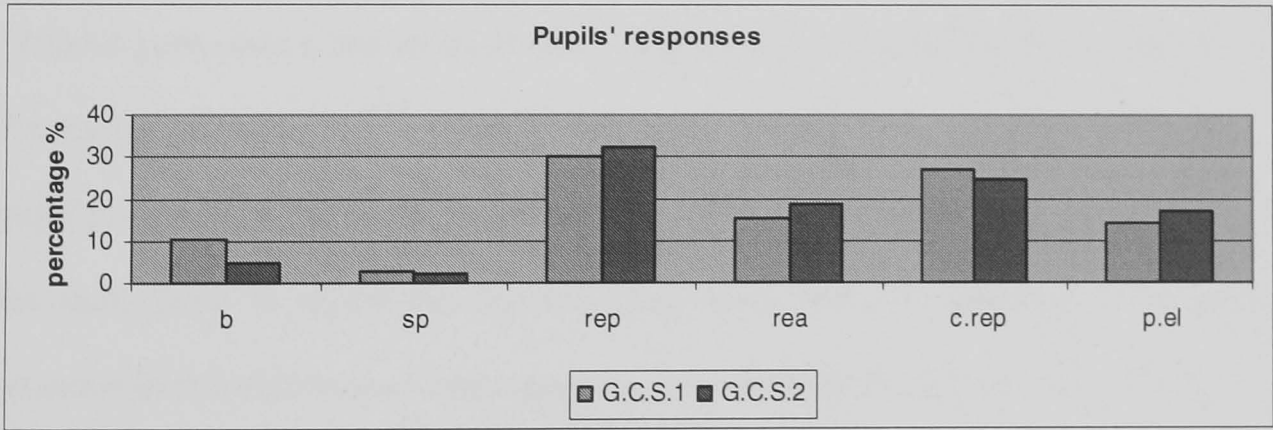
- |    |    |   |
|----|----|---|
| 1  | T  | now, <i>each group has a number of cards on which there are squares for letters, the letters are already written in dots, you are going to write the letter you hear following the dots I'm going to dictate a letter and write it down</i><br>[للحروف كل مجموعة عندها عدد من الكروت ومربعات الحروف مكتوب بالنقاط اكتب الحرف علي النقاط عندما تسمع الحرف ]<br><i>are you ready?</i> [ هل انتم مستعدون ] |
| 2  | PP | yes teacher   |
| 3  | T  | write 'm'   |
| 4  | PP | m' ((write 'm'))  |
| 5  | T  | now, write 'a' and 'b'  |
| 6  | P  | 'P' teacher ^   |
| 7  | T  | no, no 'b' not 'p'  |
| 8  | PP | ((write 'b'))   |
| 9  | P  | <i>two letters</i> ^ [حرفين]  |
| 10 | T  | yes <i>can I see how did you write them?</i> [ كيف كتبتها اريني ]   |
| 11 | PP | 000   |
| 12 | T  | b not d, b as in book, bag and bird   |
| 13 | P  | teacher, <i>can I borrow a rubber from Ahmed?</i> [ هل يمكنني استعاره مساحه من احمد ]   |
| 14 | T  | yes, <i>you can</i> [تستطيع]  |
| 15 | PP | 000   |
| 16 | T  | have you got any questions before we move on (.) <i>have you got any questions before we move on</i> [ هل عندكم ايه اسئله اخرى ]  |
| 17 | P  | shall we write them in small or capital [ هل نكتبوهم صغيره ام كبيره ]   |
| 18 | T  | small, small  |

In line 16 the teacher addressed a question to the whole class asking if they had any more questions. This reflects the teacher’s willingness to reply to pupils’ questions. Conversely, in TCs the teachers, and especially Teacher B, were not as flexible towards pupils’ questions as they were in GCs (refer to 4.1.1.1 for more details). However, this behaviour encouraged the pupils to initiate more questions, as will be seen in the following section.

4.1.2.2. Pupil talk

The quantitative as well as the qualitative results revealed that there were considerable changes in terms of pupil talk in GCs compared to TCs. For example, the extent of pupil participation in GCS2 shown in figure 9 reveals that replies to teachers’ and peers’ questions made up about one third of their talk. This was the case in S1 as well. In TCs, virtually all pupil replies were responses to the teacher’s questions, while in GCs some of the responses were to questions asked by pupils, as revealed by the video-recordings.

**Figure 9:** Distribution of pupils’ responses in Games Classes in Schools One (GCS1) and Two (GCS2).



Key: b – bid; sp – spontaneous contribution; rep – reply; rea – react; c.rep – choral repetition; p.el – pupil elicit.

Extract 19 below is an example taken from GCS1 which shows the extent to which pupils replied to elicitation questions asked while playing a game. It is clear that most of their responses were addressed to each other when they worked in pairs and groups, though

some responses were addressed to the teacher as well. However, the majority of their responses were used for the purpose of practicing certain language structures (e.g. What is your name?; ‘My name is ...’), as shown in turns 2, 4 and 7. This pattern was distributed around the group so that each member had to ask and answer questions.

Extract 19:

- |    |    |  |
|----|----|--|
| 1  | P1 | My name is Ali, what is your name? ((throws the ball))     |
| 2  | P2 | my name is Mustafa, what is your name? ((throws the ball)) |
| 3  | P3 | Laila, what your name?                                     |
| 4  | T  | my name is Salma, what is your name?                       |
| 5  | P3 | my name is Laila, what is your name?                       |
| 6  | T  | again  |
| 7  | P3 | my name is Laila, what is your name? ((throws the ball))   |
| 8  | P4 | my name is Fatema, what is your name? ((throws the ball))  |
| 9  | P5 | my name is Waleed, what is your name? ((throws the ball))  |
| 10 | P6 | my name is Marwa, what is your name? ((throws the ball))   |

After introducing the instructions for the game, pupils are asked to stand in two straight lines facing each other. The first pupil holds a soft ball and starts the first round. In line 1, pupil 1 said ‘My name is Ali’ then threw the ball to another pupil saying ‘What is your name?’ Pupil 2 replied ‘My name is Mustafa’ and threw the ball to the next while saying ‘What is your name?’, and so on. In line 3, pupil 3 was unable to say the pattern correctly; the teacher intervened and exemplified the pattern again. This type of support helped the pupil to reproduce the sentence correctly, as indicated in line 5. Then the teacher asked the same pupil to repeat the sentence once more, which suggests that the teacher’s attention in this drill was on language form. Even though this drill seemed to be more like following a pattern than ask and respond in terms of discourse analysis, it provided good opportunities for pupils to practice the target language, however, some of them were rather careless in repeating the model. This could be due to control exerted by the teacher over the language in this drill. Therefore, it could be more cognitively beneficial if the



teacher gave pupils more freedom to use or to add other words and not necessarily stick to one particular structure.

Choral repetition of models provided by the teacher significantly declined in GCs, comprising about 27% of total pupil responses in GCS1, compared to 45% in TCS1. Similar results were also obtained in GCS2. Obviously, this decline in the use of choral repetition was due to the major reduction in teacher-led repetition in both schools (see 4.1.2.1). In addition, the findings of the study demonstrated that pupils in GCs initiated more questions than their counterparts in TCs. These were mostly for clarification, usually when a pupil did not understand part of an instruction, or when further repetition or explanation was needed. Initiating questions by pupils for the purpose of practice were also frequent, as illustrated in extract 19 above. Unlike in TCs, there was some pupil-pupil questioning, especially when they were involved in pair or group work. Extract 20 below taken from GCS2, while pupils were playing a competition game, provides a good example of pupil-pupil questioning. A pair of pupils was asked to exemplify the game in front of the class. They were given cards of scrambled words (e.g. 'good', 'morning', 'this', 'is', 'a', 'book', 'what', 'is', 'your', 'name', '?') by which they were required to form complete phrases and sentences.

Extract 20:

- |   |    |   |
|---|----|---|
| 1 | P1 | <i>look, is this correct?</i> [ انظر هل هذا صحيح ]                            |
| 2 | P2 | <i>I think, it is correct</i> [ انا اظن انه صحيح ]                            |
| 3 | P1 | <i>teacher, teacher is this correct?</i> [ هل هذا صحيح ]                      |
| 4 | T  | <i>think of it</i> [ فكر فيها ]   |
| 5 | P2 | <i>no, no, 'this' goes with these words</i> [ لا لا هذه تمشي مع هذه الكلمات ] |

In line 1, the pupil was not sure where to put the word 'this', and therefore asked pupil 2 for help (Look, is this correct?). Pupil 2 replied (I think it is correct), but pupil 1 realised that his classmate was not sure either, so he addressed the same question to the teacher.

The pupil's request to the teacher was not fulfilled immediately, because she wanted them to keep trying and carry out the task independently. Instead, pupil 2 provided him with the answer: 'this' goes with these words. Such interaction could be facilitated by the more enjoyable and less stressful atmosphere created by language games and participant organisation. This instance shows that, pupils eventually succeeded in putting the scrambled words in order as a result of peer scaffolding which the teacher supported by not providing an answer. This is consistent with previous empirical studies of L2 learning, which indicate that effective assistance can be provided by equal peers and non-experts as well as those who are more knowledgeable and expert (Van Lier 1996; Ohta 2001). However, this is one of the few examples of pupil-pupil interaction captured by the video recording during classroom observation in GCs. Because the video-camera was placed on a stand in front of the whole class, the talk occurring between pupils while working in pairs and groups could not usually be captured due to sound quality.

The computerised observations show that, acts such as reactions to directive moves, spontaneous contributions and bidding were more frequent in GCs than in TCs. For example, spontaneous contributions, in which a pupil offered relevant information or ideas about the topic of learning, made up about 3% of the pupils' talk in GCS1 compared to less than 0.4% in TCs. This particular act, as revealed by the video-recordings, was very often used during pair and group work activity when pupils exchanged relevant information spontaneously, as illustrated in extract 21 below. This extract was taken from GCS1 during a game play. The teacher distributed different words written on cards and put different pictures on a long 'boardroom table' (Galton et al 1999). Then she asked pupils to find the picture that corresponded to the word. The first one to find all the pictures was the winner.

Extract 21:

- 1      T      look at me (...) *this is how we are going to play the game* [هكذا سيتم لعبه هده [اللعبه]
- 2      P      *again* teacher [عاود]
- 3      T      ok *do it like this* [اعملها هكذا]. Do you understand?
- 4      PP     *clear* teacher [واضح]
- 5      T      *work individually* [كل واحد يشتغل لوحده]. Ok. Listen please (...) one – two – three – start
- 6      P1     Mazen, Mazen *I found the right card* ((dances and claps his hands))  
[انا وجدت الكرت المناسب]
- 7      P2     *oh great, I did not find my card* [عظيم انا لم اجد كرتي]
- 8      P2     oh, oh *I found my word too, its here, yaaaaa* [انا وجدت كلمتي ايضا]
- 9      P1     *come Hesham come, I'll show you* [تعال يا هشام سوف اريك]. Mrs Laila, Mrs Laila, *can I show my classmates how I did it* [مممكن اريك كيف عملتها]

In line 1 the teacher requested all pupils to look at her as she was giving an example of how the game could be played. After she had ensured that the whole class understood the instructions she asked them to start. In line 6, pupil 1 proudly shouted to his classmate Mazen saying 'I found the right card' and then he expressed his considerable interest and enjoyment during the game by dancing around and clapping his hands. This behaviour, it is safe to assume, would not have occurred if language games had not been used. In line 9, the same pupil voluntarily offered to help Hesham, who seemed confused. Then, he realised that he had to get the teacher's permission, because she had asked them to work individually. From the above example we see how the context of play encouraged pupil 1 to contribute spontaneously, and how he was willing to help his classmate. This phenomenon seemed to be as a result of the impact of language games and the lower level of control exerted by the teacher over pupils.

It is important to mention that the video-recording data revealed that boys contributed voluntarily much more than girls during the language games-based tasks. Girls tended to be shy and most reluctant in week one, but gradually they started to become integrated and to participate actively, especially in weeks five and six. This hesitation may be due to

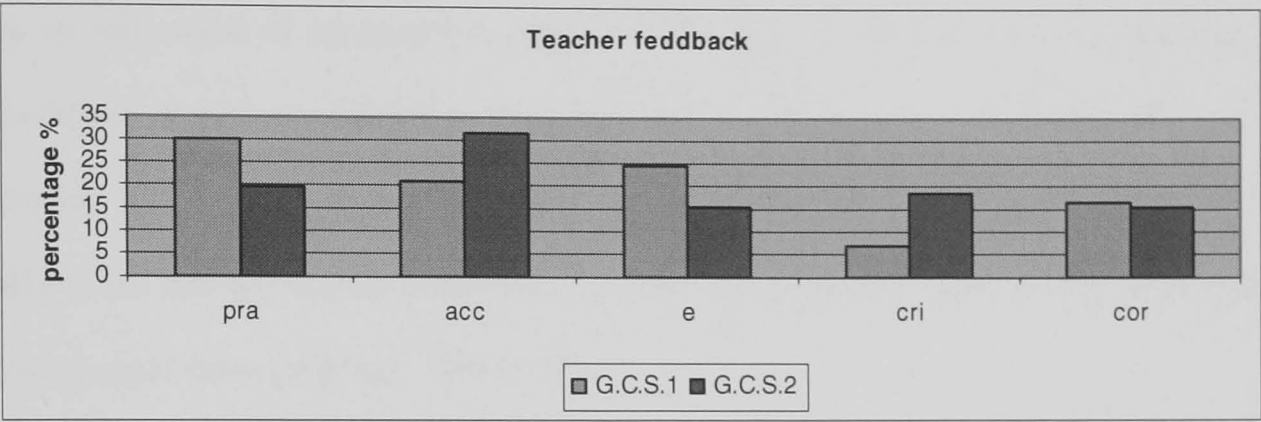
social and cultural factors where it is considered usual for males to take a lead and for females to follow, so that girls are expected to be quieter and boys louder and more active (Khalifa 2002). Unlike the TCs, in which teachers nominated active pupils first, teachers in GCs were found to direct boys first to exemplify tasks based on games. This could have had a negative impact on participation by girls in the classroom and consequently on the levels of interaction in general. Possible explanations include that boys may be more confident and eager to take risks, or that the teacher did not want to embarrass girls because of social and cultural concerns. In this regard, Yepez (1994) argued that: “gender-differentiated classroom behaviour that favours males, however, could cause female second language acquisition to suffer, since interaction is crucial in the ESL classroom and language learning is an interactive skill”. However, this issue needs more investigation in further research.

#### **4.1.2.3. Teacher feedback**

Teacher feedback is another notable aspect of teacher talk in the classroom. The common functions of teacher feedback are usually associated with evaluating, reinforcing and providing information and comments related to students’ responses (Tusi 1995), extending the conversation (Nassaji and Wells 2000), and encouraging peers to respond to each other’s performance by asking for their opinion (Smith and Higgins 2006)(for more details about teacher feedback see 2.2.3.3). The data analysis in this study revealed a variety of feedback types provided by Teachers A and B in the GCs, such as praising, accepting pupils’ answers, criticising them and evaluating their responses. However, what is important here is that there were considerable differences in the nature of teacher feedback between the TCs and GCs, as shown in the computerised and video-recorded classroom observation sessions. As displayed in figure 10 below, using explicit rewarding words such as, ‘good’, ‘excellent’, ‘fine’ and ‘great’, representing the teacher’s

encouragement and praise, were much more frequent in GCS1, accounting for 30% of the total feedback compared to only 14% in TCs in the same school.

**Figure 10:** Distribution of teacher feedback in games classes (GC) in Schools One and Two.



Key: *pra* – praise; *acc* – accept; *e* – evaluate; *cr* – criticise; *cor* – correct

This significant difference was also noticed in School Two. In comparison with TCS2, Teacher B tended to provide a lot more encouragement and positive feedback for correct answers to questions and for good reactions to commands and orders during the lessons observed in GCS2. This accounts for just over 19% of the teacher’s total feedback, compared to only 6% in the TC in the same school. Teachers commented on the noticeable increase in praising pupils by saying that, since tasks based on language games were new, pupils needed to be encouraged and motivated to take part during a game play. This is an indication that the teachers have realised the positive effect that praise could have on pupils’ performance. In contrast, very little praise was provided by teachers, and especially Teacher B, in the TCs even though the teachers expressed their theoretical belief in positive reinforcement (see 4.1.1.1).

Accepting pupils’ answers and reactions was the most common type of feedback provided by Teacher B, at about 32%. In many instances the teacher repeated the pupil’s utterance

or asked another pupil to repeat it as an indication of acceptance of the answer. According to her, in doing this she is confirming the accuracy of the answer and giving another chance for pupils to acknowledge it. She also considered this repetition as positive feedback for the pupil. However, other studies consider the repeating of a pupil's answer as an indication of an incorrect response (Edwards & Mercer 1987). Evaluating the quality of pupils' responses by saying 'no, that is wrong' or 'yes, that is correct' was the second most frequent kind of feedback, accounting for more than 24% in GCS1. It was also noted that the teacher sometimes evaluated and praised pupils in the same answer, for example, by saying 'yes, very good'.

Both teachers showed more tolerance towards the pupils' learning errors and misbehaviour in GCs. The data revealed a considerable difference between the GC and the TC in terms of negative feedback in the form of criticism and physical punishment. For example, instead of punishing pupils physically when they made a noise, as she used to do in TCS2, the same teacher excluded them from the game and asked them to stand aside quietly and watch their classmates performing the game. When the game was finished the excluded pupils were invited to conduct the game alone while others observed them. This method seemed to be helpful because noise was reduced to a minimum and those excluded were able to observe their classmates more carefully, since they knew that they would soon be playing the game in front of the class. This significant change in dealing with pupils' errors and discipline issues could be due to the different perceptions teachers had developed from the implementation of language games, as indicated in the interviews (see 4.3). However, physical punishment continued to occur even in GCS2, although much rarer than in TCS2. The following two extracts (22 and 23)

are examples taken from traditional and games classes, illustrating how Teacher B dealt with pupils who had forgotten to bring their course books.

Extract 22:

- |    |   |  |
|----|---|--|
| 1  | T | <i>start writing from left to right, we said we start writing from left to right</i> [ ابدو الكتابه من اليسار الي اليمين حني قلنا نبدو من اليسار الي اليمين ]<br>where is your book? |
| 2  | P | <i>I did not bring it with</i> [ لم احضره معي ]  |
| 3  | T | <i>that is fine. Open your hand</i> [ هذا تمام افتح يدك ]  |
| 4  | P | ((opens his hands))  |
| 5  | T | ((beats the pupil with a stick four times))  |
| 6  | T | and you where is your work book? [ وانت وين كتابك ]  |
| 7  | P | <i>I have not brought it with me today teacher</i> [ اليوم ماجبتاش اليوم معاي ]  |
| 8  | T | <i>that is great, open you hand</i> [ هذا عظيم افتح يدك ]. Open your hand  |
| 9  | P | ((open hands))   |
| 10 | T | ((beats the child))  |
| 11 | T | and you Mohamed where is your book?  |
| 12 | P | <i>here it is</i> [ اهوا هني ]   |
| 13 | T | <i>it is not well organized</i> [ مش منظم كويس ]   |

Extract 22 above was taken from the TC taught by Teacher B. Turn 1 shows that while pupils were doing an activity in the work book the teacher was monitoring and asking pupils for their work books and checking tidiness. This result appears to be very similar to that found by Galton et al (1980) in the 1976 ORACLE study. It was found that teachers spent most of their time moving around the class, going from pupil to pupil, monitoring children's activities or housekeeping. Twenty years later Galton found that the amounts of time teachers spent on monitoring children's activities and questioning them about their work had decreased (Galton et al, 1999). In line 2 the pupil replied that he had not brought it. The teacher criticised him implicitly by saying 'that is fine' and, without asking for a reason, immediately ordered the pupil to open his hand for a punishment. As shown in lines 4 and 5 the pupil opened his hand and the teacher hit him with a stick four times. The teacher then realised that there were other pupils who had not brought their work books, and consequently she started punishing them. However, physical punishment

was applied to boys and girls alike. Even though one of the pupils had brought his book (lines 11-13) he was still subject to the teacher's criticism because the book was not well organised. From the above example we can see that a zero tolerance policy was practised by Teacher B in dealing with pupils who forgot their books, misbehaved or had not done their homework. The following extract (23) shows how the same teacher dealt differently with similar problems in the GC.

Extract 23:

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | T | Goat and gun <i>start with the same letter</i> [تبدأ بنفس الحرف] what it is Ebraheem?   |
| 2 | P | 'g' teacher   |
| 3 | T | yes, good. Now, <i>we have completed lesson two</i> [ لان انتهينا من الدرس الثاني ا] <i>let us do the activities on page</i> [14 <i>Open your workbook on page 14</i> [افتح كتابك صفحه] quickly <i>your book</i> [ افتح الكتاب بسرعة] |
| 4 | P | teacher <i>I forget my workbook</i> [نسيت كتابي ا]  |
| 5 | T | <i>it is not your first time</i> [ هذه ليست المرة الاولى ]  |
| 6 | P | what to do teacher? [ ماذا افعل ] <i>shall I copy down what is written on The blackboard or what?</i> [ماذا نفعل هل ننسخ المكتوب علي السبوره ام ماذا]   |
| 7 | T | you do not need to look at the book of your mate, do not <i>forget it next time</i> [ لا تحتاج ان تنتظر لكتاب زميلك لا تنساه مره اخرى ].  |

In line 3 the teacher directed the whole class to open their work books on page 14. As demonstrated in line 4, one of the pupils brought up his missing workbook rather than waiting for the teacher to notice this. This is again an evidence of a change in relations. The pupil appeared to be encouraged by the relaxed learning atmosphere created by language games. The teacher criticised him by reminding him that this was not the first time he had forgotten his book; she provided him with a warning but she did not beat him. In line 6 he enquired what he should do adding a suggestion. The teacher asked him to share his classmate's book. In spite of the fact that the pupil was criticised, because the criticism was not as harsh as the one provided by the same teacher in the TC, the pupil felt confident and comfortable enough to ask a question and give a suggestion. It can be concluded as claimed by Tusi (1995), that the type of feedback provided by the teacher



could play a fundamental role in encouraging pupils to make further contributions or in restricting them. This particular change in the teacher's behaviour towards pupils is considered one of, if not the most important changes which took place in the GCs. It can be argued that the increased flexibility shown by Teacher B could represent a first step in bridging the distance in teacher-pupil relationships in the Libyan context.

Correcting errors was another type of feedback that occurred in GCS1, but was significantly rarer than in TCS1. The findings reveal that Teacher A dealt differently with pupils' errors in the GCs. Like Teacher B, Teacher A either gave them another chance to answer or gave a clue as a hint to help the pupil get the right answer. Using pupils' L1 in prompting pupils to provide an answer was also used (e.g. 'you are about to get it' [قريب], 'very similar' [مشابها جدا], 'almost correct' [قريب تكون صح]). Extract 24 below shows that the teacher asked one of the pupils to read the word 'Wednesday' during a puzzle task, but the pupil was unable to do so.

#### Extract 24:

- |    |    |   |
|----|----|---|
| 1  | T  | look at me please. <i>In this puzzle, we have letters in the box and we have words underneath. Work in pairs and find the words using the letters in the box.</i> [في هذه اللعبة عندنا حروف في الصندوق وكلمات تحتها اشتغلوا كل اثنين مع بعض] [استخدموا الكلمات في الصندوق]  |
| 2  | PP | teacher <i>not clear</i> [غير واضح]   |
| 3  | T  | <i>let us have an example</i> [دعنا نأخذ مثال]. Can you read the first word Qusai   |
| 4  | P  | w (...)   |
| 5  | T  | wed   |
| 6  | P  | wed   |
| 7  | T  | wed what ^ (.....) 'you are about to get it' [قريب توصل ليها] say one more letter [مازال حرف واحد]  |
| 8  | P  | wednz (...)   |
| 9  | T  | wednz yes, yes  |
| 10 | P  | Wednesday   |
| 11 | T  | Yes, that is right. <i>Look at letters in the box w-e-d--n-e-s-d-a-y. (.....) to do the task more quicker, it is better to start with the words you know first. To eliminate the number of words do the words you know first then do the rest. This way is much easier. Work in pairs. You have five minutes to</i> |

*finish the puzzle.* [ انظروا الى الحروف الموجوده في الصندوق لكي تعملوا التمرين بشكل ]  
اسرع من الا فضل ان تبداءوا بالكلمات التي تعرفونها اولاً لكي تنقصوا من الكلمات ابداءوا  
بالكلمات التي تعرفونها اولاً ثم بعد البقيه هذه الطريقه اسهل بكثير اشتغلوا كل اثنين مع بعض  
[عندكم خمس دقائق لانهاء اللعبه]

The teacher gave a clue ‘wed’ (line 5), but the pupil still did not know the answer. The teacher subsequently used a cued question in an attempt to elicit the answer, but again the pupil failed to give the answer. The teacher waited for a while and eventually prompted him by using encouraging expressions in the pupil’s L1 ‘*you are about to get it*’ [ قريب ] *say one more letter* [مزال حرف واحد]. The pupil hesitantly added one letter, ‘wednz’, and the teacher confirmed that he was on the right track, after which the pupil was able to give the correct answer. As we have seen, after providing different clues and waiting a longer time, the pupil was able to think and retrieve the pronunciation of the word ‘Wednesday’. By providing the pupils with the first syllable ‘wed’, the teacher broke down the word into syllables, which can be considered as ‘task simplification’ scaffolding as described by Wood et al (1976). Surprisingly, the same teacher rarely provided a clue or gave pupils the chance to try again in TC. She used to correct the pupils’ errors herself, especially if they were related to the main pedagogical purpose at hand (see 4.1.1.3 more details). In line 11 in the same extract the teacher advised her pupils to start with the familiar words first, to be able to solve the word search puzzles more easily and quickly. In this example the teacher seemed not only to ‘help pupils completing the task’ (Bruner et al. 1976), but also to equip them with strategies for future learning independence.

Likewise, Teacher B used different corrective feedback in the GC compared to the TC. She promoted self-correction by providing a clue or extending her waiting time to give pupils enough time to think of the answer, as illustrated in extract 25, while in the TC she used to simply correct the error herself.

Extract 25:

1	T	Mona, what colour is this? (....) what <i>colour is this?</i> [مالون هذا] (...)
2	P1	white
3	T	no, no (...)
4	P1	yellow
5	T	very good, and this?
6	PP	<i>green</i> [اخضر]
7	T	what colour is this? (..) it starts with 'r'
8	PP	<i>red</i> [احمر]
9	T	say it in English, <i>any colour you know</i> [اي لون تعرفونه]
10	P2	red
11	T	yes, red. What is this? Can you say it in English?
12	PP	000
13	T	no, <i>try again</i> , who knows? [حاول مره ثانيه]
14	PP	a aa
15	T	traffic light, what is this?
16	PP	traffic light

In line 1 the teacher asked one of the pupils about the colour of a piece of yellow paper. She first produced the question in English, waited for a while, and then realised that the pupil did not understand the question, so she repeated it in Arabic. The pupil replied, 'white', as in line 2. Instead of correcting the error, she evaluated the answer and then provided more waiting time for pupil's response. Eventually, the pupil succeeded to give the correct answer, as shown in line 4. What is important to highlight here is that the waiting time of the teacher in such cases markedly increased. As we have seen, in the TCs, teachers did not give enough time for pupils to think of the answer. They tended to give the correct answer or just transfer the question to another pupil (see 4.1.1.3). Research has shown that in typical classrooms, teachers wait rarely lasted more than one second for pupils to reply to their questions (Rowe 1986). If instead, teachers were trained to wait longer, students might fail to respond less often and the average length of students' responses might extend (Nunan 1991; Walsh 2002; 2006). Although it was not clear in the present study why pupils in GCs were given a longer time to answer questions or react to commands, it could be that the more enjoyable atmosphere created by the use of

language games, and possibly the friendly relationship starting to develop between teachers and pupils that impacted on the time teachers were prepared to wait for pupils' responses in games class discourse.

#### **4.1.2.4. Summary**

The nature of classroom interaction in traditional classes (TCs) and games classes (GCs) in Schools One and Two has been investigated and then compared according to the IRF patterns at the level of acts. The findings have revealed that there were variations in the nature of classroom interaction between the two classes. For example, more eliciting questions were used in GCs than in TCs. Although cued and referential questions were used in the GCs, display questions were the commonest in all lessons observed in both schools. The data further showed that more directive moves were used in GCs than in TCs. On the other hand, less teacher-led repetition occurred in GCs than in TCs. Both teachers presented new information in GCs differently from the way they did in TCs. They used flash cards, movement activities and games. Generally, teachers exerted less control over pupil participation and language in GCs compared to TCs.

The overall findings concerning pupil talk showed that more replies were made by pupils in GCs than in TCs. While pupils' responses in TCs were limited by the predominance of questions asked by the teacher, in GCs there were some pupil-pupil questions and answers during less controlled tasks such as language games. Examples of pair and group work, where pupils interacted and supported each other, were regularly seen in GCs. In contrast, individual work was dominant in TCs. In the majority of the lessons observed, choral repetition accounted for a significant proportion of the pupils' responses, especially in TCs. Although pupil participation was restricted, since they had to raise their

hands to get permission to speak or to be nominated by the teacher, considerable increases in the rates of pupils' spontaneous contributions, bidding and asking questions were found in GCs.

With regard to feedback from the teacher, the findings demonstrated that praising pupils was far more common in GCs than in TCs. On the other hand, criticism was much rarer in GCs compared to TCs, particularly in school two. Error correction was less frequent in GCs and different methods of correction were adopted by both teachers. The levels of acceptance of answers by teachers increased in GCS2 compared to TCs in the same school, but decreased in School One. The most distinctive differences were that both teachers became more tolerant in dealing with pupils' errors and misbehaviour in GCs, increased the amounts of time waiting for answers and provided more scaffolding to pupils such as in giving clues, examples, and simplifying the tasks. It is possible that the changes observed in the teacher's practise and pupil participation could have resulted from the following. Firstly, the atmosphere created after the implementation of language games in GCs was comparatively more encouraging; and secondly, the teachers may have developed different perceptions about their practise (see 4.3 for more evidence), and thirdly the teachers watched their performance in the stimulated recall interviews and may have adjusted it accordingly.

This section has been devoted to answering the first research question concerning the nature of classroom interaction in the Libyan EFL primary classrooms, and how this is affected by the use of language games. The following section aims to more directly answer the second research question concerning the impact of language games on pupil language learning in Libyan EFL primary classrooms. Since most of the discourse

observed so far was whole class interaction, it was difficult to provide evidence of pupil language use. This was due to the difficulty in transcribing pupil-pupil talk in GCs because of sound quality (see 3.13.1), and restrictions of the I-R-F framework as a tool for understanding L2 language 'learning in action'. Therefore, pupil-pupil talk was analysed separately. That is, pupil-pupil interaction of 12 pairs from each class during a spot-the-differences game was audio-taped, transcribed and analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. The findings were then compared to find out whether or not there are any differences in the language produced by pupils in TCs compared to their counterparts in GCs.

## **4.2. Analysis of pair talk**

Both quantitative and qualitative approaches to analysis were adopted in analysing data obtained from peer-peer interactions among pupils using a spot-the-differences game (see 3.6.4 for more details). The objective of the quantitative analysis is to find whether there are any overall differences between pupils in TCs and GCs in terms of the amount of English produced, whereas the qualitative analysis aims to shed light on the quality of language produced by pupils in terms of how they used language to work together to solve problems in the task; evidence of EFL learning in action.

### ***4.2.1. Quantitative Analysis***

The process of quantitative analysis began by recording 12 pairs of pupils from each class, for five minutes each, while they conducted the spot-the-differences game. The data was then transcribed and the total number of utterances produced by each pair was calculated. Utterances in L1 only, and then utterances containing any English were also counted. The latter instances were further analysed by counting utterances containing less

than three English words and those containing 3 English words or more (see 3.13.3), as illustrated in figure 2.

**Table 9:** Comparison of the overall performance of the pupils in the traditional classes (TCs) and games classes (GCs) in Schools One and Two.

Utterances produced by pupils during the game	Traditional Class		Games Class	
	M	SD	M	SD
Total number of utterances	57.9	7.9	56.5	9.3
Utterances in L1 only	36.2	4.2	30.0	6.8
Utterances containing any English	21.6	4.4	26.5	5.3
Utterances containing less than 3 English words	16.9	4.2	17.5	4.0
Utterances containing 3 English words and more	4.7	2.0	8.0	3.0

M= Mean; SD= Standard Deviation

The statistical analysis of the data displayed in table 2 showed that pupils in TCs made a mean of ( $M=57.9$ ) utterances, compared to slightly fewer ( $M= 56.5$ ) produced by pupils in GCs. This indicated that although more utterances were produced by pupils in the TCs this difference was not statistically significant as determined by the independent samples t test ( $t = 0.376$ , ns). The data also shows that pupils in TCs seemed to rely more on their native language in carrying out the task. The mean number of utterances containing any English produced by pupils in TCs ( $M=21.6$ ) was lower than that of pupils in GCs ( $M=26.5$ ). The difference was examined using an independent samples t test and was found to be statistically significant ( $t = -2.40$ ,  $p< 0.05$ ). Furthermore, the data revealed that although pupils in GCs produced fewer utterances in total, they managed to generate more and longer utterances containing English. They produced a mean of ( $M=8.0$ ) utterances containing 3 English words or more, compared to TCs with a mean of ( $M= 4.7$ ). By applying the independent samples t test, it was again found that this difference was statistically significant ( $t = -3.15$ ,  $p< 0.05$ ; as shown in Appendix 11.

Generally, it could be concluded that pupils who were using language games were more successful than their counterparts from traditionally taught lessons in producing more and longer utterances containing English. Pupils in TCs appeared to rely on their L1 in conducting the task; a possible reason why they produced slightly more utterances overall. It seems that the use of language games led to more interaction in English among pupils in GCs which, it has been argued (see 2.3) from the socio-cultural perspective, gives better access to language learning. However, the subsequent qualitative analysis was expected to give more insight into the quality of the language produced by pupils during peer-peer interaction.

#### *4.2.2. Qualitative Analysis*

Although the pupils under investigation were still beginners, and therefore not much interaction in L2 was expected because of their low English proficiency, it was of particular interest to examine the type of language they produced and the assistance they provided to each other during the game; in short how they used L1 and L2 in meaningful communication to approach the task and facilitate L2 language learning. The analysis of the qualitative data is based on audio-taped recordings from TCs and GCs during a spot-the-differences game. The data gathered from the two classes was transcribed and then compared to find out if there were any differences in performance between pupils in the TCs and GCs.

The discussion here centres around two issues: i) how pupils approached the task; and ii) to what extent they were able to support each other and use the target language. The transcripts show different ways of approaching the task used by pupils in the two classes.



For example, pupils in TCs relied very much on their teachers to support them in carrying out the task, as in extract 26.

Extract 26:

- 1      P1      *we want to find out the differences first, and then write them* [ نريد تحديد  
[الفروق اولا ثم نكتبهم]
- 2      P2      *plane*
- 3      P1      *write it* [اكتبها]
- 4      P2      *how to write it* [كيف تكتبها] (...) *this way?* [هكي]
- 5      P1      *God knows, I do not know* [الله اعلم الله اعلم شن يكتب مانعرفش]
- 6      P2      *teacher how can I write plane* [كيف نكتب]
- 7      T      *plane starts with p* [تبداء ب]
- 8      P2      *p-l-a-n*
- 9      P1      *write car* [اكتب]
- 10     P2      *Ok, c-a-r*
- 11     P1      *write pencil* [اكتب قلم]
- 12     P2      *how* [كيف]
- 13     P1      *I do not know, ask the teacher* [لا اعرف اسئل المدرس]
- 14     P2      *teacher, teacher, how can I write pencil* [كيف نكتب قلم]
- 15     T      *this is a test, I can not tell you. If you do not know how to do the task I  
can explain to you more* [هذا امتحان مانقدرش انقولك اذا مش عارف كيف تحلل التمرين  
[نشرحلك اكثر]

In line 3, P1 asked P2 to write the word 'plane', but P2 did not know the spelling. He went back to P1 and asked him 'how to write it?' P1 did not know the spelling either. P2 sought help from his teacher who provided him with the first letter 'p' as a clue. The same thing was repeated in lines 11-13, when P1 suggested that P2 ask the teacher. This pattern of seeking help was very common in TCs. This may reflect the traditional way of teaching used by teachers in TCs, where teachers exert control over pupils' learning, and pupils become overly reliant on the teacher to provide knowledge, rather than be involved in the co-construction of knowledge as indicated in (4.1.1.2.).

On the other hand, pupils in the GC resorted to their teacher to confirm what they had done together, as illustrated in lines 4 to 9 extract 27 below.

Extract 27:

- 1 P1 what is this?
- 2 P1 this is *pencil* [قلم]
- 3 P2 speak English no Arabic
- 4 P1 pencil, p-e-n-s or c
- 5 P2 *I'm not sure, write it and then show it to the teacher* [انا لست متأكد لكن اكتبها ووريها للمدرس]
- 6 P1 ok ok , p-e-n-s-l
- 7 P2 *is this correct* teacher [هل هذا صح]
- 8 T no, *try again* [حاولوا مره ثانيه]
- 9 PP ok teacher
- 10 P1 *write it this way* 000 [اكتبها بهذه الطريقه]
- 11 P2 how? how?
- 12 P1 write p-e-n-c-l (...) ok ok *leave it let us do the next one* [اتركها دعنا نعمل التاليه]
- 13 P2 what is this?
- 14 P1 this is cow. *easy* c-o-w [سهله]
- 15 P2 camel, c-a-m (...)
- 16 P1 e-l
- 17 P2 ok *write them*, write fish, write umbrella [اكتبهم]
- 18 P1 u-m-b
- 19 P2 umbrella *wrong* [خطاء] (...) *it starts with 'a'* [تبداء بي]
- 20 P1 ammmm no, no
- 21 P2 *I sure* 'a' 'a' ambrella [متأكد]
- 22 P1 teacher, teacher *is this correct* [هل هذا صح]
- 23 T *what do you think* 'a' or 'u' [ايش رايك]
- 24 P2 'a' teacher
- 25 T *it is 'u' but pronounced like 'a'* [هي يو و لكن تنطق مثل]
- 26 P2 sorry, sorry. *What is the next one?* [ايش الاخرى]
- 27 P1 cake

As in the TC, pupils in the GCs were struggling to write the word 'pencil'. Instead of seeking the teacher's help, P2 suggested that P1 write the word down then show it to the teacher to confirm or refute the spelling. The differences in pupils' approach to the task can be attributed to the skills and strategies GCs pupils acquired, not only in getting the correct answer but also in how to achieve it. For example, discussing possible answers and supporting each other using different alternatives could be a strategy they learned during language games activities. Consequently, they may feel more confident in taking risks and working independently of the teacher. By contrast, TC pupils were not given the opportunity to work collaboratively in the classroom, and as a result they tended to

become dependent on the teacher and did not have the courage to take risks. This is the benefit of good scaffolding through which pupils themselves learn how to become scaffolders and work independently, as claimed by Meadows and Cashdan (1988).

Examples of pupil-pupil support were also found in the GCs, as demonstrated in lines 15 and 16 in extract 27 above when P2 encountered difficulty in writing the word 'camel', so he started writing the first 3 letters c-a-m then stopped for a while. Although he did not ask for help, P1 recognised that his peer was struggling and therefore provided him with the rest of the spelling. It can be deduced that, without his peer's support, P2 might not have been able to write the word. Another example of pupil assistance to one another can be seen in lines 18 to 21 when the pupils argued about the spelling of the word 'umbrella' and tried to solve the problem together. Pupil 1 wrote the word umbrella started with 'u' but pupil 2 suggested that the word umbrella starts with 'a' not 'u'. Even though pupil 2 expressed certainty, pupil 1 was still in doubt and hence resorted to the teacher to confirm the spelling. These instances of pupil-pupil interaction and assisting one another are consistent with the findings obtained from classroom observation in the present study, which revealed several successful instances of peer-peer scaffolding (see 4.1.2.2). Peer-peer scaffolding in this example is in keeping with the tenets of socio-cultural theory based on the premise that knowledge is co-constructed through interaction between children and the people around them, such as parents, peers or with teachers in the classroom (Cameron 2001) (see 2.1). This can be contrasted with the TC teaching that is characterised by the dominance of teacher talk and individual work.

Moreover, the data also revealed that pupils in both classes tried to imitate their teacher in controlling the talk in the classroom, using similar structures and patterns. We can see

that the question-answer sequence which dominates teacher-pupil talk, was also present between peers, as demonstrated in extract 28 below.

Extract 28:

- |    |    |  |
|----|----|--|
| 1  | T  | and now group number, what is your number?                                   |
| 2  | PP | number two   |
| 3  | T  | <i>start</i> [ابداء]   |
| 4  | P1 | <i>let us find the differences first</i> [الفروق اولا حدد]                   |
| 5  | P2 | orange-eye- pear- car- cheese  |
| 6  | P1 | <i>write them, how to write orange, spell orange</i> [اكتبهم كيف تكتب تهجاء] |
| 7  | P2 | o-r-a-n-g-e. What is this? (..)  |
| 8  | P1 | this is feet   |
| 9  | P2 | no <i>I think it is leg not feet</i> [انا اعتقد انها رجل وليس قدم]           |
| 10 | P1 | ya ya it leg   |
| 11 | P2 | what is this? (..)   |
| 12 | P1 | this is cow c-o-w  |
| 13 | P2 | what is this? (...)  |
| 14 | P1 | ruler  |

One pupil asked ‘What is this?’ and then waited for the answer to come from his peer, as in lines 7, 11 and 13. This pattern characterised most of the interaction taking place during collaborative work. It was expected that even if the teacher created opportunities for interaction, pupils would not be able to generate genuine conversation using the target language due to their low level of English. However, the example in extract 28 above shows that pupils in GCs were able to produce complete sentences which had very often been used by their teachers in the classroom, such as: ‘What is this?’ and ‘This is a ...’, even though some grammatical mistakes occurred as in lines 8,10 and 12. The same structure was also used by pupils in TCs but less frequently and mainly in Arabic, as in extracts 29 below (lines 7, 17 and 19).

Extract 29:

- |   |    |   |
|---|----|---|
| 1 | T  | <i>how many differences are there?</i> [فرق هناك كم] <i>count them</i> [عدهم] |
| 2 | PP | 1, 2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10 dog, bus, house, fish, bag, pencil, apple               |
| 4 | P1 | ok ok <i>write house</i> [اكتب]   |
| 5 | P2 | <i>where shall I write it</i> [اين اكتبها]                                    |

6	P1	<i>here</i>
7	P2	what is this?
8	P1	bag
9	P2	apple, book
10	P1	apple, yes
11	P2	fish, apple, pencil
12	P1	<i>how to write</i> fish? [ كيف نكتب ]
13	P	f-i-c-h
14	T	c or s
15	P	s
16	T	fish, ok
17	P2	and this?
18	P1	this <i>apple</i> [ تفاحه ] a-p-p-l-e
19	P2	<i>what is this?</i> [ ما هده ]

In line 18 in extract 29 taken from the TC, we can see that P1 said ‘This is *apple* [ تفاحه ]’; she said ‘this is’ and then resorted to Arabic to say the word apple. It is clearly seen that the structure ‘this is’ seemed to have been stored in the pupils’ minds because of the frequent use of this structure by the teacher in the classroom, but she failed to retrieve the word, and therefore it was found easier to resort to the mother tongue. This type of use of L1 was found in almost all the utterances produced by pupils from the TCs, and was slightly less frequent in those from the GCs. This may have been used as a strategy by pupils to keep the conversation going, or it could be merely inherited from their teachers who used to use the L1 in the same way to make input easier and more understandable, as commented on earlier (see 4.1.1.1). A possible interpretation of the differences in using L2 is that TCs pupils had not learned to interact and verbalise using the target language in pair and group work. In contrast, pupils in GCs were more relaxed, because they were used to playing such games, and as a result they produced more utterances in the target language as clearly shown in the quantitative analysis (see 4.2.1). The other possible reason was that pupils in TCs may be focusing on finishing the task as quickly as possible; therefore, they used the simplest possible strategy in performing it (Murphy 2003).

What also distinguishes pupils in the GCs from those in the TCs is that pupils in the former used more words and phrases routinely used by their teacher, even though these had not been formally taught in the classroom. For example, pupils used phrases that they had picked up from their teacher like; 'okay', 'be quiet', 'speak in English', and 'sorry', as in extract 26, line 10 and extract 27, lines 3, 6, 9 and 26. This could be due to the more enjoyable activities used in the class through which pupils were eager to listen to and understand the instructions and the language produced by the teacher. This also shows that pupils in the GCs became more confident in using the target language.

#### **4.2.3. Summary**

As presented above, we can see that the findings of the quantitative analysis show that there were significant differences between pupils in the GCs and the TCs in most of the elements investigated. That is, pupils in the GCs were able to produce more utterances containing English, whereas in the TCs they depended very much on their L1 in carrying out the tasks even though they produced more utterances overall. The evidence of better performance is further enhanced by the qualitative analysis which showed that pupils from the GCs were able to scaffold each other successfully during pair work, were more confident in using the target language, and less dependent on their teacher.

The following section presents the findings of the semi-structured interviews with Teachers A and B regarding their perceptions about the use of language games in teaching the English language to Libyan young learners, which explores, and in part explains the changes in teacher behaviour.

### **4.3. Interviews with Teachers**

Since the teacher is a key player in the process of teaching/learning in the classroom, it is important to gain insights into their developing perceptions concerning the use of language games in teaching the English language to Libyan young learners. Thus, pre- and-post intervention semi-structured interviews were conducted with both teachers (see 3.6.3). The interviews were transcribed, and then categorised according to the themes which emerged during content analysis (see 3.13.2). The findings are presented under three main headings: i) teachers' perceptions before the intervention regarding language games, ii) teachers' perceptions regarding language games after the intervention, and iii) the practicality of integrating language games into current EFL material. Moreover, other sources of data such as field notes and video-recordings are also referred to throughout the analysis to enrich the findings.

#### ***4.3.1. Teachers' perception about language games before the intervention.***

According to Richards and Lockhart (2005), what teachers do in class is a reflection of what they know and believe. Therefore, before exploring their perceptions about language games, it is worth starting by finding out the teacher beliefs and assumptions underlying the method of teaching they had used prior to the intervention. Teacher A is a female teacher with three years' teaching experience who did her best to employ communicative activities such as problem solving and role play in teaching the English language to her pupils but, as she said, she found it difficult because *"such activities are quite challenging for beginners. Lack of essential facilities in schools and classroom organisation are other obstacles"*. In addition, *"communicative activities need a lot of preparation and are time consuming"*. Although she confirmed the pedagogical value of the communicative approach, she still preferred to use the grammar translation method

(GTM) and sometimes the audio-lingual method (ALM). Teacher B, on the other hand, is a female with 18 years of teaching experience who had quite strong beliefs in the benefits of using GTM: *“I have been teaching English for 18 years using GTM, and it is my favourite method of teaching. It is easy to implement, especially with big classes. A lesson presented using GTM does not need much preparation, and above all, I myself was taught by this method and therefore I have never thought of using any other”*. It can be argued that both teachers preferred to use GTM because it does not need much preparation and is easy to implement. Given my experience in teaching in Libya, this could be related to the lack of facilities in Libyan schools in general, the limited time specified for the subject which is 33 minutes on average as found during the observation sessions, the low English proficiency among English language teachers, and the lack of in-service training.

Concerning their perceptions about the use of language games in the classroom, Teacher A said that she had never used any type of language games in her class prior to the intervention, for several reasons. *“First of all I have not had any training in using language games, and secondly the lack of materials and facilities in schools could be the main problem in using them”*. According to her, language games could be one of the potential choices, since the new course book proposed by the Libyan Ministry of Education argues that languages should be taught in a communicative way as far as possible. However, she added that, *“since I have not tried language games in class, I am not sure of their pedagogical value”*. Teacher B had also never used language games in her English lessons. She implied that there was a belief prevalent among teachers as well as parents that games should be used outside the classroom, during leisure time.



#### **4.3.2. Teachers' perceptions about language games after the intervention.**

Teacher B, who had been teaching English for 18 years using GTM, found it very difficult to make such a sudden shift. *"At the beginning of the intervention it was hard to use language games with my pupils in class"*, she said. This was because she doubted their pedagogical value, but at the end of the intervention she had developed a different perception towards the use of language games. *"Although I still have some concerns about the use of language games, I would say that they could be a useful way of teaching young learners"*. She added that throughout her 18 years of teaching experience she had applied the same strategies and techniques by which she herself was taught. *"I should not consider my experience as having lasted 18 years. It should instead be considered to be only one year's experience, because I was merely repeating the same techniques over and over again"*.

Teacher A said that, *"although I have applied language games for a relatively short time, I have realised the benefits they have brought to class"*. She also added that, *"I realized that the teaching process is more than giving information. It is how to teach, how to design activities, and how to involve students all the time in these activities"*. The changes in the teacher's perception about the use of language games can be clearly seen through their discourse in GCs, as shown in the results from the classroom observation. For example, they reduced the amount of modelling and emphasised the use of other techniques such as flash cards and games to encourage pupils to reproduce the language input (see 4.1.2.1).

It was also found that implementing language games in the classroom influenced not only their classroom discourse but also their behaviour and their ways of dealing with pupils.

Teacher B, for example, believed that language games helped her to feel differently about teaching. *"I used not to give enough time to pupils who hesitated or took time to answer a question; instead I just transferred the question to another pupil or answered it myself while the previous pupil may have still been thinking about the answer; but now I can wait longer"*. A possible interpretation of the change on the teacher's practise is that the teacher had developed better patience during the introduction of games which impacted on the amount of time she was prepared to wait for a response. In dealing with misbehaving pupils, *"I used to send them out of the class or punish them physically, but now I would prefer to be more flexible with them"*. This change on the teacher's behaviour could be due to the playful nature of games context which allows them to behave differently. This is supported by data yielded from classroom observation which revealed that Teacher B adopted different methods in dealing with misbehaving pupils. One example is that, instead of punishing ill-disciplined pupils physically as she used to do in TCs, she excluded them from the game and when the game was finished the excluded pupils were invited to conduct the game alone while others observed them (see 4.1.2.3).

Teacher A said that Libyan teachers in general usually maintain a distance between themselves and their learners due to cultural boundaries, but that games played a crucial role in reducing this distance. *"Therefore, in language games classes I was able to play and sing with them to make the lesson more enjoyable than I would not have been able to do before"*. The findings of the classroom observation, moreover, confirmed that teacher-pupil relationships gradually became more intimate. In this regard Brewster et al. (2004, P.173) claimed that "games create an enjoyable fun atmosphere and reduce the distance between the teacher and pupils".

The impact of language games was not limited to the teachers' behaviour but affected that of pupils' as well. Both teachers thought that the pupils seemed to have a positive attitude towards language games. They felt happy and enthusiastic about taking part in activities based on language games. Pupils who finished first often made noises, laughed and danced around (see extract 21 above). They added that *"we noticed that shy pupils who used to keep silent in normal class were confident and active during pair and group work"*. Teacher A said that *"it has been observed that when pupils ask to do collaborative work, like writing a word using cards, or solving a puzzle, they feel more motivated and eager to do the activity"*. Pupils appeared to enjoy the games because activities based on games usually have clear goals, and once pupils had achieved a goal they felt excited. Teacher B also commented that she had, *"noticed that pupils were encouraged to ask more questions in order to achieve the goal of the game"*. This is in line with the findings obtained from classroom observation, which revealed that pupils in GCs did initiate more questions than their counterparts in TCs (see 4.1.2.2). She added that pupils used trial and error strategies and keep on trying until they complete the work. Everyone in the group was motivated to take part in the game, every one did his best to do it perfectly. If a pupil failed he/she started from the beginning, imitating each other and checking each other's work but never giving up. Extracts 20 and 21 give good examples of how pupils interacted and offered support to each other.

On the other hand, both Teachers A and B acknowledged that they encountered a number of difficulties in using language games. They stated that at the beginning of the programme there were some pupils, especially girls, who hesitated to work in groups or in pairs, because of cultural boundaries, as in the Libyan context, girls are expected to be quieter and boys louder and more active (Khalifa 2002). Teacher A mentioned that some

pupils dominated the group and did not give others a chance to take part in the game. *“even though I was encouraging them to work together and not to compete to finish the game”*. However, this behaviour gradually decreased. Pupils also tended to use their mother tongue to finish the game as quickly as possible, rather than using the target language. Teacher B claimed that, *“I had less control over the language produced by pupils, and therefore they may have developed bad language habits that might be difficult to eradicate in the future”*. This worry may reflect the influence of the teacher’s belief on her practice in class. That is, she believed that errors should be corrected immediately and pupils’ language production should be as accurate as possible. Teachers also added that activities based on language games require sufficient time to be completed; therefore *“40 minutes a day, four times a week would not be enough time to successfully achieve the objectives of the course”*. Finally, both teachers claimed that classroom layout and noise were serious difficulties for them in implementing language games.

#### ***4.3.3. Integrating language games into the current EFL material***

According to Teacher B, teachers, especially in state schools, are required to follow the course book closely. They are also required to finish an array of units in a specific time, which is usually set by the Ministry of Education and monitored by the Ministry’s supervisors. She claimed that, *“integrating language games into the current EFL material seemed to be a good idea, but careful thought such as revising the objectives of the current material, providing training and further research investigating the value of language games is required”*. Teacher A, on the other hand, thought that because the education system in Libya is centred on written examinations, gaining good communicative skills is not the primary goal of teachers, even though the focus of the new curriculum is based on the four language skills. Thus, a balance between the four

language skills is required. *“This could be done by the gradual integration of language games into the current EFL material”*.

In conclusion, the data shows that both teachers had no previous experience in using any type of language games before the intervention. It is also apparent that both teachers had positive attitudes towards the use of GTM, although Teacher A seemed to show more readiness to change in her mode of teaching. Teacher B, on the other hand, seemed to be strongly influenced by GTM as the way she herself was taught. This is consistent with the argument of Richards & Lockhart (2005, P.30), that “teachers’ beliefs about teaching are often a reflection of how they themselves were taught”. Both teachers doubted the pedagogical value of language games before the intervention, whereas after the intervention they indicated some support for their use, although Teacher B appeared to have more concerns and less interest. However, the change in teachers’ perceptions can be traced throughout their answers during the interviews and their practise in the classroom as illustrated by the video-recorded observation sessions.

#### 4.4. Summary

On the basis of the data described above, the following is summary of the main findings.

**Table 10:** Summary of the main findings

	<b>Traditional Class</b>	<b>Games Class</b>
<b>Nature of classroom interaction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Classroom discourse is dominated by modelling, question-and-answer sequences and passing information.</li> <li>- Negative feedback is common and little attention was given to positive feedback.</li> <li>- Frequent overt error correction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Classroom discourse is dominated by question-and-answer sequences, directive exchanges and modelling.</li> <li>- Less negative feedback and more praise and encouragement</li> <li>- Less error correction and more varieties of corrective forms</li> </ul>
<b>Pupil behaviour</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pupils are passive and rarely contribute spontaneously</li> <li>- Choral repetition and responses to teacher questions are the key features of pupils' talk</li> <li>- Whole class and individual teaching are common</li> <li>- Use of L1 is preferred</li> <li>- Pupils depend on their teachers in approaching a task</li> <li>- Pupils rarely support each other in whole class teaching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pupils are partly active and more spontaneous contribution were observed</li> <li>- Responses to teacher questions, react to teacher directions and choral repetition are the key features</li> <li>- Whole class, individual, pair and group work are common</li> <li>- Pupils attempted to use more L2</li> <li>- Pupils less dependent on their teachers</li> <li>- Pupils support each other during pair and group work to accomplish the task</li> </ul>
<b>Teacher behaviour</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teachers dominate most of the talk and control the exchange turns</li> <li>- Teacher's role is information provider</li> <li>- A few scaffolding techniques were used to help pupils answer questions</li> <li>- Teachers underestimate the pedagogical value of language games</li> <li>- Teachers are tough</li> <li>- Teachers adhered closely to the course book.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teachers still dominate most of the talk and control big part of the exchange turns</li> <li>- Teacher's role is information provider and facilitator</li> <li>- More scaffolding techniques were used</li> <li>- Teachers developed positive perception about the use of language games</li> <li>- Teachers are more flexible</li> <li>- Language games replace some activities which presently exist in the textbook</li> </ul>

The following chapter deals with answers of the proposed research questions and the conclusion of the present study. Additionally, pedagogical implications, limitations of the study, and some recommendations for further research will be highlighted.

## Chapter Five: General Discussion

As indicated in chapter one, this study set out to investigate the impact of language games on classroom interaction and learning opportunities in Libyan EFL primary classrooms. In this chapter the key findings emerging from the data analysis are discussed in relation to the research questions posed in the study and possible explanations for them are provided. It is organised into three main sections. Section one discusses the key features of classroom interaction in traditional classes (TCs), followed by a brief discussion of the major changes which occurred in the games classes (GCs). Section two is devoted to discussing the impact of language games on learning opportunities, and in the final section the teachers' perceptions about the use of language games will be discussed.

### 5.1. Features of classroom interaction in Libyan EFL classrooms

This section begins by presenting the key features of classroom interaction in the TCs in light of the first part of the main research question proposed in chapter 3, namely: **‘What is the nature of classroom interaction in Libyan EFL primary classrooms?’** The findings of this study revealed that the overall teaching process is dominated by the teacher, which is characterised by: \_\_

- Modelling (teacher-led-repetition)
- Teacher-directed question-and-answer exchanges
- Negative feedback
- Error correction
- Use of L1



### ***5.1.1. Modelling***

The findings from the classroom observation sessions revealed that in the TCs the overall teaching process in the classroom was highly dominated by the teacher. Modelling is the key feature of the teacher's dominance. This is in line with the findings of Pontefract and Hardman's (2005) study. They reported that modelling (or direct repetition, as defined by them) was one of the most prevalent strategies used by teachers in Kenyan primary schools in all the subjects they observed, and especially in English lessons. The main purpose of direct repetition in Kenyan primary schools is to support learners' pronunciation and to enhance learning so that they do not forget what they have learnt (Pontefract and Hardman 2005). In the Libyan context, modelling may have been inherited from the early days of teaching the holy book, the Quran, where teachers used to model each word several times while learners repeated it in chorus to guarantee that they had learnt the correct pronunciation. This clearly reflects the teachers' beliefs concerning the use of modelling in practising pronunciation, as illustrated in the stimulated recall interviews (see 4.1.1.1).

### ***5.1.2. Teacher-directed question-and-answer exchanges***

The question-and-answer sequence is another striking feature of classroom interaction in TCs. This pattern of interaction appears to be common in traditional classrooms not only in Libya but in other contexts as well. For example, Abd-Kadir and Hardman (2007) used video-recorded observations with 20 teachers to explore the discourses used in whole class teaching in 20 ESL primary schools (10 Kenyan and 10 Nigerian). They reported that the question-and-answer sequence, where open-ended questions were extremely rare, was dominant across all 20 schools observed. Although this study offered important information about the nature of discourse in whole class teaching, it does not provide

detailed accounts of the reasons why teachers behaved in this way. In contrast, the findings of this study are based on a detailed analysis of what happens in the classroom together with teachers' underlying intent, using computerised and video-recorded observation and stimulated recall interviews. The findings of the current study suggest that the teacher questions were mainly for display purposes, where the answer required was a single word or short phrase, many of which were concerned with practising pronunciation of the target language and checking pupils' comprehension (see 4.1.1.1). Referential questions, on the other hand, were infrequent. This regular use of display questions by teachers in Libyan EFL primary classrooms could be attributed to their lack of awareness of the different types of questions, as argued by Teacher A (see 4.1.1.1.). Referential questions also require a better command of English, and as these pupils were still beginners it was thought important to avoid embarrassment and frustration, as claimed by Teacher B. However, whatever the reason behind the use of display questions, it could be argued that their use gave little room for pupils to interact and use the target language, since the talk followed the routine pattern of a teacher's question and pupil's answer, as indicated in the findings of this study (see 4.1.1.1.).

### ***5.1.3. Negative feedback***

In the IRF sequence the teacher, especially in the Libyan context, is the one authorised to provide feedback which is very often in the form of evaluation or criticism, as witnessed in this study (see 4.1.1.3). The findings of this study demonstrate that if teachers in TCs provided feedback, it was mainly negative, including criticism and physical punishment. Although the major advantage of providing feedback, as claimed by Nassaji and Wells (2000), is to extend the conversation and create greater opportunities for the participation of pupils, and to "encourage peers to respond to each other's contributions" (Smith &

Higgins 2006, P.499), Libyan teachers did not seem to use feedback for the benefit of their pupils. Instead the way they provided feedback probably reflected their assertion of authority in the classroom, the very formal relationship between the teacher and pupils, and/or the teacher's personality (see 2.2.4.1). This could also be related to the teachers' belief that in order to gain pupils' respect, a distance between the teacher and learners must be maintained. However, these types of feedback appeared to affect student learning as well as the classroom atmosphere (Tusi, 1995). The present findings are in line with previous results in terms of criticism and physical punishment. For example, O-saki and Agu (2002) reported that children in primary schools in Tanzania are subject to physical punishment if they fail to answer a question, and sometimes the whole class might be punished for the misbehaviour of one pupil. They added that pupils were not only physically punished or verbally abused but were also asked to do non-academic tasks (such as cleaning the classroom, collecting waste paper and shopping for teachers). They attributed these behaviours to a lack of legislation that protects children so that they can be used as a cheap labour, or teachers' misguided interpretation of education philosophy.

#### ***5.1.4. Error correction***

It was found in chapter four that the explicit correction of pupils' learning errors appeared to be the teachers' primary concern in TCs, especially in terms of pronunciation. Teacher B argued that correcting pupils' learning errors should take place immediately, otherwise they may develop bad habits which would be difficult to eradicate later (see 4.1.1.3). In my view, Teacher B's perception may again be rooted in the method of teaching the holy book, the Quran, where mistakes in terms of pronunciation are completely prohibited. Even now, teachers of the Quran insist that children should pronounce every single word correctly otherwise it will be very difficult for them to correct their pronunciation when

they grown up. This may be coupled with the teachers' lack of training in contemporary methods of teaching, where the focus is on meaning rather than entirely on form such as in task based learning (Prabhu 1987). This phenomenon was also found in a study conducted by Orafi (2008), whose findings revealed that Libyan teachers spent considerable amounts of time correcting students' grammatical and pronunciation mistakes even though the curriculum considers making mistakes part of the process of learning. Orafi claimed that these patterns of classroom practise reflect deeply held beliefs about the process of language teaching. The influence of teachers' prior experience and the way they were taught was clearly seen in their classroom practise in this study too, and this relationship was corroborated by the teachers' responses during the interviews (see 4.3).

#### *5.1.5. Use of L1*

In most of the extracts cited in the previous chapters, all utterances that were originally spoken in Arabic were translated into English and written in italics to make it easier to distinguish them from utterances spoken in English. The findings show that teachers in TCs tended to use L1 in English lessons very heavily. They very often uttered a word or an instruction in English and then repeated it and gave the meaning in the pupils' L1. When teachers were asked about this considerable use of L1 in EFL classrooms, they replied that they used the L1 because of the low English proficiency of the pupils who were still early beginners, in order to ensure that pupils understood the instructions and to avoid confusion, as well as to cover as much material as possible. Similar evidence was offered by Orafi (2008), showing that the Arabic language was often used by both teachers and pupils in Libyan intermediate classrooms as the medium of interaction. This indicates that teachers and pupils resort to their L1 in class not simply because of the low

levels of English skills. Other factors may be important too, such as the low English proficiency of teachers, a lack of resources to facilitate the process of learning, as well as the need to manage behaviour. In another study the type of task involved was also found to have a considerable effect on L1 and L2 use (Broner and Tarone 2001). However, Cook (2001) argues that there is no evidence that using L1 in foreign or second language classes is inappropriate. He claimed that in a foreign or second language class the L1 can be used to explain difficult grammar, clarify new vocabulary, and manage the classroom. In my view, L1 may facilitate learning if it can be used as a scaffold, especially with EFL beginners, and then be gradually withdrawn at appropriate times.

To summarise, due to the predominance of whole class teaching, most of the activities in the classroom seemed to be performed mechanically and, therefore, very little cognitive engagement on the part of the pupils appeared in the classroom (Smith et al. 2005). The learner is seen as the passive receiver of knowledge; answering questions and carrying out the teacher's instructions (see 2.2.3.2). That is, their role is generally limited to reciting what they have been asked to learn by heart, reading aloud from course books or the blackboard, and making choral responses to questions raised by the teacher (4.1.1.3). These interaction patterns are likely to decrease the level of pupil contribution in the class (Walsh 2002) and to hinder their opportunities to use the target language for meaningful communication (Hasan 2006). This conclusion seems reasonable since pupils in TCs had fewer opportunities for interaction or working collaboratively. The possible explanations for the dominance of this type of teaching may include a lack of teaching resources and classroom layout, as elaborated by Teacher A, or the time allocated for English classes and the teacher's beliefs, as suggested by Teacher B during the semi-structured interviews (see 4.3.1). It could be added that lack of confidence in the subject matter they teach

could also lead to the dominance of teacher talk in classroom (Smith & Higgins 2006). That is, teachers very often choose the topic and control the classroom talk, having planned the procedures of the lesson in advance in order to avoid any embarrassment that might occur if they had less control over the talk. This may be related to the teacher's social and cultural background, so that they would feel ashamed and fear a loss of respect if they could not answer a question or write a word correctly.

Having discussed the main features of classroom interaction in the TCs, let us now highlight the major changes in the nature of classroom interaction because of the implementation of language games.

#### ***5.1.6. Changes in the nature of classroom interaction***

Although teachers in GCs still did most of the talking in the classroom, considerable changes in the nature of interaction were observed. For example, instead of practising language models, teachers used elicitation and directive exchanges to introduce and practice the target language using flash cards and movement games (see 4.1.2.1). One influential factor here may be related to the implementation of language games where less time was available for modelling, as stated by Teacher B. An alternative explanation may be related to the teachers' awareness of the low pedagogical value of modelling after watching extracts from the video-recording during the stimulated recall interview in week 3, as commented by Teacher A. The findings also show some changes in the nature of teachers' feedback. For instance, positive feedback, including praise and encouragement, was found to be far higher in GCs (see figure 10). These types of feedback appeared to encourage pupils to participate by initiating more questions and contributing spontaneously (see 4.1.2.3). One of the aims of encouraging feedback is to send pupils the

message that the classroom is a safe place in which to take risks and contribute (Rex 2000). This implies that playing games in the classroom develops the ability to co-operate and creates a context where the tension in class is reduced (Phillips 2001). As a result, the teacher-pupil relationship becomes more relaxed.

Although pupils in GCs had more chances to speak and therefore to commit errors, corrective feedback was less frequent compared to TCs. Not only that, but various different corrective methods were applied by both teachers. On many occasions the teacher stopped the pupil at the point of error, giving him/her a second chance to attempt a correct response, simplifying the task by giving hints, handing the question back to the whole class, or using the pupils' L1 to prompt them to provide the correct answer (see extracts 24 and 25 in chapter 4). However, pupils in both classes were rarely left on their own to work out what went wrong. These corrective methods led pupils to be more engaged in the process of learning and therefore they showed a greater desire to interact (see extract 15).

The most distinctive feature that should be highlighted here is that both teachers became more tolerant in dealing with pupils' errors and misbehaviour in GCs (see extracts 22 and 23 as examples of such change). For example, teachers offered more time and space for answers and provided more effective scaffolding to pupils, such as 'simplifying the task' (Wood 1976; see extract 24). As a result, more interaction opportunities were established and pupils appeared to be more engaged in using the target language meaningfully.

Although choral repetition and replies to teachers questions still accounted for significant proportions of pupils' responses in GCs, considerable increases in the rates of

contributions by pupils were found. During whole class teaching, pupils in GCs tended to contribute enthusiastically and take more risks in initiating questions. During pair and group work pupils were scaffolding each other's EFL learning which may have resulted in better language learning (see extracts 20 and 21). This can be attributed to the fact that they had more interaction opportunities in the classroom when engaged in activities such as game play and completing word puzzles. Since there was more pupil initiation in GCs, this would seem to indicate that language games allow for more teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil interaction than in the type of teaching used in TCs where individualistic learning is a more striking feature. However, even though efforts by pupils to use L2 were found in GCs, most of their utterances were still in the L1. This could be due to the low English proficiency of pupils who were still early beginners, or it may be that the L1 was used as strategy to mediate L2 learning, as claimed by Swain and Lapkin (2000). From a socio-cultural perspective, "L1 can be used as a tool to understand and make sense of the requirement and content of the task, vocabulary use and for overall organisation" (Swain and Lapkin 2000, P.268).

These changes in teaching patterns provided opportunities for more rich and varied teacher-pupil interaction. In other words, the teachers exploited the relationships between children and the playful context in providing the necessary scaffolding, using the talk generated by pupils during language games as a mediation to facilitate the process of learning. These findings support the socio-cultural view that learning and teaching are collaborative, where teachers support pupils to expand their learning potential within their zone of proximal development (Vygotsky 1978). In the following section the impact of language games on pupil language learning is discussed.



## **5.2. Impact of language games on providing more learning opportunities**

The second research question in this study, **What learning opportunities does language games-based approach provide for pupils in Libyan EFL primary classrooms?** was predominantly answered by comparing the amounts and type of the language produced by pupils in TCs and GCs during a spot-the-differences game.

Evidence from the data presented in chapter 4.2 shows that the use of language games in the present study had an impact on providing more learning opportunities and therefore on the pupils' language use. The results of this study reveal that pupils playing games were more successful than those taught traditionally in producing more and longer utterances containing English, thereby appearing more confident in their use of English for meaningful interaction (see table 9). For example, during the paired talk, pupils used words and phrases that had been routinely used by their teacher, even though these had not been formally taught in the classroom, such as 'sorry', 'OK', 'speak in English', 'be quiet', 'again' (see extract 27, lines 3, 6, 9 and 26). One possible explanation for this is that games provided them with more learning opportunities and a real purpose for using the target language freely (Moon 2000). Another possible reason is that the context of play appears to be less threatening for pupils otherwise used to keeping silent and listening to their teacher, and thus they are encouraged to try out what they have learnt. In addition, the uttering of such words and phrases may be used as a learning strategy for new vocabulary and forms (Broner and Tarone 2001). The findings of this study support those of previous study conducted by Cekaite & Aronsson (2005) in a Spanish immersion classroom with young learners using language play. They found that the children were able not only to demonstrate their L2 skills in approaching the task but also their concern for the language they used. The differences between the findings of this study and those

reported by Cekaite & Aronsson (2005) may be related to the number of participants and their backgrounds. In this study, twenty four pairs from the same background participated, whereas in Cekaite & Aronsson's study there were nine from different ethnic backgrounds. Another difference concerns the method of data collection. In this study only audio-tape recordings were used with pupils during the spot-the-differences game, while in Cekaite & Aronsson's study video-recordings were employed.

The results of the study further revealed that pupils in GCs not only became more confident in using the target language, but also developed various skills concerning how to learn together. Although the subjects involved in this study were all beginning learners of English, there were several occasions where pupils in GCs assisted each other successfully during games. There were instances where pupils used different strategies in approaching a task, sharing each other's knowledge and experience, and providing scaffolding to one another even if they did not explicitly ask each other for help (see extract 27, lines 15 and 16). This does not mean that pupils in TCs did not attempt to support each other and use the target language, but since they had not been trained to conduct such tasks, they lacked the necessary confidence to use the target language and work cooperatively and independently. Thus, they found it easier to use their mother tongue and resort to their teacher whenever they faced a challenge. Therefore, it could be argued that the results of this study are clear evidence that, regardless of language proficiency, pupils can work together and gradually become independent learners if they are given more interaction opportunities and appropriate scaffolding. In other words, the findings support the socio-cultural view that support does not always need to or most profitably come from the teacher, since learners can use alternatives to achieve learning goals, such as: i) assistance from more capable peers or adults; ii) interaction with equal

peers; iii) interaction with less capable peers; and inner resources (their own knowledge or expertise) (Van Lier 1996, P.193). The study also supports Vygotsky's (1978) claim that pupils have a potential ability to do things on their own. This potential can be expanded gradually with the assistance of the teacher and peers through interaction. This could help children to become independent in working together and to develop their ability to learn. This study has presented evidence that, as the pupil's ability to conduct tasks based on language games increased, the teacher's scaffolding was gradually withdrawn and only supplemented and complemented the pupil's work when necessary. The teacher encouraged the pupils to take greater responsibility and work independently. As a result, they performed the same tasks in other occasions independently, where the teacher instead played the role of facilitator (see 4.1.2.1. p.136).

### **5.3. Teachers' perceptions about the use of language games**

The purpose of the third research question was to explore the **teachers' perceptions about the use of language games in teaching the English language to young Libyan learners**. Pre-and-post-intervention semi-structured interviews were conducted alongside stimulated recall sessions with both teachers and the main findings emerging from the analysis of this data are discussed next.

Both teachers confirmed their lack of experience in using any type of language games before the intervention. They also pointed out that they had not had any training sessions on using language games or interactive teaching in general (see 4.3.1). Due to their lack of experience, they had underestimated the pedagogical value of using language games in class. Teacher A in School One claimed that language games could be a possible option in Libya, since the new course book proposed by the Libyan Ministry of Education argues

that language should be taught in a communicative way as far as possible. Teacher B, on the other hand, perceived the use of language games differently. She argued that language games should only be used outside the classroom, during leisure time (see 4.3.1). The data further showed that both teachers seemed to prefer to use traditional methods of teaching, such as grammar translation and audio-lingual methods. However, they justified their use of these methods in terms of the lack of educational aids in the classroom, pupils' low English language abilities, limited time, and class size and layout, as well as the fact that they had not been exposed to a recent methods of teaching EFL, as suggested by Orafi (2008). In addition, they might have been influenced by the way they themselves were taught (Richards & Lockhart 2005), and therefore they did not want to take the risk of shifting from traditional to more interactive teaching.

As demonstrated by the results of the pre-intervention interviews, both teachers doubted the pedagogical value of language games; whereas after the intervention they appeared to have developed different perceptions, even though Teacher B still articulated various concerns. Although no empirical evidence (to the best of my knowledge) has been published which supports the claim that the use of language games in class affects teachers' perceptions, in this study there are several instances indicating a correlation between the use of language games and changes in the teachers' perceptions and behaviour. For example, both teachers argued that language games created a more relaxed and motivating learning environment (see 4.3.2). Another important indication was that both teachers, and Teacher B in particular, became more tolerant in dealing with pupils' learning errors and misbehaviour (see 4.1.2.3.). As a result the teachers' relationship with their pupils became more intimate. The teachers also said that they would welcome a

gradual integration of language games into the EFL textbook, taking into account the time and resources available (see 4.3.2.).

From the above discussion it is clear that language games have to some extent influenced the nature of classroom interaction, pupils' language use for meaningful interaction and language learning, and teachers' perceptions about the use of language games in teaching the English language to young Libyan learners. The possible reasons for these changes are discussed further in the following section.

#### **5.4. Possible reasons for the changes in the nature of classroom interaction, and pupils' and teachers' behaviour**

As can be understood from the discussion presented so far, there were important variations in the nature of classroom interaction across the lessons observed in the traditional (TCs) and games classes (GCs), in pupils' language use and the teachers' perceptions about the use of language games in class, and their behaviour in class. It is important to look more closely at what made all these changes possible in a relatively short period of time. There are two main possible reasons: i) the impact of language games; and ii) the impact of the stimulated recall interviews. The following section is devoted to discussing these factors.

##### ***5.4.1. The impact of language games.***

As discussed in chapter two, play is a fundamental part of children's lives. The context of play provides rich resources for children to use language for practical purposes in a world where their actions are decided by others (Cook 1997). Therefore, the impact of language games, which can be considered as a type of play, on pupils' behaviour in the classroom

cannot be ignored. In this study, language games created a pleasant atmosphere which made pupils feel more secure and less restricted in interacting with people around them. Subsequently, this atmosphere encouraged them to be more stimulated to contribute spontaneously, initiate questions and to depend on themselves and each other in approaching the learning goals using the target language meaningfully during pair and group work (see 4.2.). Moreover, language games provided good opportunities for pupils to work in pairs and groups, which must be considered a new experience for the pupils under investigation, and therefore they felt happier and expressed these feelings for example by clapping and dancing in the classroom (see extract 21).

On the other hand, “if play provides a rich context for learning, then surely it must provide a rich context for teaching” Bennett (1997, P.15). Therefore, the use of language games could be one of the reasons behind the changes in teacher practise in the classroom in this study. Firstly, the nature of play is known to promote enjoyment and a relaxing atmosphere; and therefore the teachers had to change their behaviour, either consciously or unconsciously. For example, when using a game with their pupils they could not be aggressive and tough while playing because that would go against the nature of play. Secondly, since the context of play influences the behaviour of the adults just as much as the children (Cook 2000), it could be argued that the teachers’ behaviour in this study was influenced by the use of language games, which they had never experienced in L1 or L2 classrooms before either in their childhood or adulthood. Thirdly, the change in the children’s behaviour in the classroom because of the language games could itself affect the teacher’s behaviour. For instance, when pupils feel excited and show that they enjoy the game, the teachers naturally share their happiness and become more sympathetic and tolerant in dealing with them. Finally, during the implementation of the language games

the teachers came to recognise the pedagogical value of play and collaborative work in the classroom. Teacher B commented that pupils were able to acquire new words and action verbs in shorter periods of time than pupils in TCs (see 4.1.2.1). Therefore, the teachers developed new perceptions that encouraged them to be more willing to use language games. However, in spite of the huge impact of language games on the teachers' behaviour, other factors may have been responsible for transforming the teachers' behaviour in the classroom. The stimulated recall interviews conducted during weeks three and six of the intervention with both teachers could be another important factor, as discussed below.

#### *5.4.2. The impact of the stimulated recall (SR) interviews*

As mentioned in chapter three, SR was utilised to obtain teachers' reflections on their behaviour during the intervention, so that we could better understand the intentions behind the actions of teachers which may not be obvious from the video-recordings and transcripts alone. In order to maximise accuracy (Polio et al. 2006), and help participants easily recall information about their behaviour in the classroom, two SR interviews were conducted in weeks 3 and 6 to be close to the event (see 3.6.2.). The findings from the computerised coding and video-recording of the observations show that there were gradual changes in the teachers' behaviour during weeks one and two because of the impact of language games as discussed earlier, but the rate of change became greater in week three and thereafter. For example, more praise and encouragement was provided by teachers during the last two weeks than in weeks one and two and there was less modelling and physical punishment (see 4.1.2.1.). This could be due to the impact of the SR on the teachers' behaviour. That is, the SR conducted in week three could have provided an opportunity for the teachers to watch their performance, and gain feedback

for self evaluation. It could have enabled them to observe the conscious and unconscious actions they performed while teaching, such as body movements, facial expressions, and the excessive use of certain words. This particular interview made them aware of some of their strengths or weaknesses which they might not have been able to recognize without the SR session. As a result, they may have subsequently adjusted their performance accordingly. For example, Teacher A said that “*when I watched extracts from the video-recording, I realised that pupils were repeating the model passively without paying much attention*” (see 4.1.2.1.). Teacher B was surprised when she watched extracts from the video recordings and commented that “*I was not consciously aware of repeating the word ‘you’ seventeen times*”. However, we cannot attribute too much significance to the impact of SR on the teachers’ behaviour, because this remained more or less the same in the TCs even after the SR interview. It could be argued that SR may have accelerated the change after week three, but it was very unlikely to be the main factor. Therefore, in order to control for these variables that may affect teachers’ behaviour, the SR interviews would have to be conducted only at the end of an intervention, especially when video-recoding is involved. As a methodological limitation of the study, this requires some caution to be exercised in interpreting the findings. Nevertheless, there were some changes in week one and two which cannot be attributed to SR.



## **Chapter Six: Conclusion**

This chapter summarises the main areas covered in this thesis as well as the findings achieved. Additionally, the contribution and limitation of the study, the pedagogical implications, and suggestions for further research are considered. The chapter ends by final remarks.

### **6.1. The purpose of the study and its achievements**

As stated in chapter one, the present study was an attempt to contribute to the existing body of knowledge about teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) in general, and specifically to identify the impact of using language games on classroom interaction and EFL learning at the primary level in a specific setting.

The general conclusion is that the use of language games had an impact in several respects: on the nature of interaction in the classroom (where, although teachers still dominated the talk and controlled classroom discourse, some significant differences were found between traditional and language games-based classes); on teachers' perceptions about the use of language games; on the way they interacted with pupils in class; and, crucially, on pupils' language use. Pupils who used language games were more successful than their counterparts in traditional classes in producing more and longer utterances containing English, and were more able to support each other during this process. These findings support the arguments presented in this study that the use of language games in class could have positive effects on both classroom interaction and pupils' language learning.

## **6.2. Contributions and pedagogical implications of the study**

This study has made various contributions to the field of pedagogy that need to be highlighted in this section.

- The findings of the study contribute to the literature concerning the use of language games in the EFL classroom, which is a relatively under-researched area, especially in Libya;
- The study provides a fundamental basis for understanding the nature of classroom interaction when language games are implemented in EFL primary classrooms that can be used as a basis for further research in Libya and elsewhere.
- The study also shows that the principles of teaching and learning based on socio-cultural theory (such as the concept of scaffolding) are seen to be useful and applicable in the Libyan context. As a result, the findings provide evidence that supports the premises of socio-cultural theory which claim that children learn best when they receive the appropriate scaffolding and have the opportunity to interact meaningfully with the people around them. There were instances where teachers provided pupils with scaffolding during a game play and gradually withdrew their support; a process through which pupils became more independent. The study has presented evidence that pupils were able to work collaboratively during the spot-the-differences game, by initiating, responding and giving feedback to each other. This again supports the socio-cultural claim that children can assist each other and learn together (Van Lier 1996).

- There is a general criticism of language teaching in Libya that students are deprived of having opportunities to engage in collaborative work and of interacting together in the target language in the classroom (UNSCO 2002). The use of language games here has provided evidence that Libyan young learners participated enthusiastically in the classroom when language games were employed, even in a whole class setting. It was found in this study that language games created an enjoyable learning environment where pupils interacted not only with their teachers but also with peers using more L2 compared with pupils in TCs. Although the above finding shows that pupils participated actively in language games classes, the dominance of boys remains problematic. This is, as mentioned above, because classroom practice is not isolated from the learners' cultural and social background. Boys believe that they have the right to lead girls. They still believe that society has endowed them with this right. We have to acknowledge that such cultural and social factors are part of Libyan society, and undoubtedly hinder the flow of interaction in the classroom and minimize girls' contributions. Therefore, teachers should acknowledge this phenomenon and work accordingly. These social and cultural issues can be adapted by: i) putting children in pairs and groups; ii) giving children an example of the co-operation skills used in UK schools (Khalifa 2002); or iii) more frequent use of language games which require co-operation skills.
- The findings of the study provide solid information about the teachers themselves reflecting upon their performance in the classroom. Therefore the outcomes are potentially very useful for teacher training programmes. They can be used to increase teachers' awareness of the pedagogical value of using language games in

teaching the English language. Extracts from video-recordings can be used in training sessions, encouraging teachers to reflect on what they watch.

- The findings of the study enhance our understanding about the potential impact of stimulated recall on teachers' behaviour in class. Thus, it could be used as a strategy for teacher training, especially since the teachers identified lack of training as a key issue.
- The present findings can also be used to increase teachers' awareness of the potential influence of their behaviour on the levels of interaction in the classroom, and how the context of play offers good experience to the teachers in formulating new beliefs and embarking upon a gradual shift from traditional to interactive methods of teaching.
- The findings of the study can be also used to provide new knowledge that could help in the development of more effective teaching material and methods in Libyan classrooms. This could be achieved through demonstrating the importance of language games to textbook designers and curriculum planners by giving presentations and attending conferences. This would be a starting point towards integrating various language games into EFL material, especially in teaching young learners but also possibly for learners of all ages.
- Another important contribution made by this study is the methodology employed. A multi-method research approach, including computerised and video-recorded observation supplemented by stimulated recall interviews, was used in this context

for the first time. This distinguishes the present study from most of those cited in this thesis: for example, Smith (2006); Abd-Kadir and Hardman (2007) used video recorded classroom observation, where as Orafi (2008) used ethnographic observations and interviews, but none of these used all the tools employed in this study. Thus, it could be argued that the use of triangulation in this research design strengthens the conclusions of the study. Through stimulated recall it was possible to explore the intentions behind the teachers' actions in the classroom which may have not been discovered from classroom observation even with the use of audio and video recording. Through pair analysis it was possible to evaluate pupils' language use, and through semi-structured interviews the teachers' perceptions were explored.

### **6.3. Limitations of the study**

On the other hand, there are various limitations of the present research that needs to be considered:

- The number of schools used in this study was small, which may undermine the representativeness of the sample and the generalisability of the findings. However, identical course books and comparable methods of teaching are employed all over the country, and thus it could be argued that the findings can be generalised with caution;
- As with any other coding scheme, Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) model as used in this study has various limitations. Several means were employed to reduce the effect of these limitations. For example, acts taken from other observation schemes were

added to Sinclair and Coulthard's list of categories; and, conversely, some categories were withdrawn (see 3.13.1.2 for more details).

- The results may have been influenced by the use of the video-camera or the presence of the observer. To minimize the possible effect of the presence of the researcher and recording equipment, different procedures were considered (for example, conversations with pupils and teachers were held during break time in which questions raised by pupils were answered. An inoperative video camera was placed on a stand in front of each class for two days prior to the actual recording, and several sessions of classroom observations were conducted).

#### **6.4. Suggestions for further research**

Many issues discussed in this study require further investigation:

- The absence of pupils' voices, regarding their social and cultural concerns in particular, remains one of the issues that need to be investigated. Exploring their attitudes towards language games could provide insightful information into the analysis of classroom interaction in the Libyan context;
- Since the teacher-centred approach dominates in intermediate schools, as Orafi (2008) describes, it would also be beneficial to investigate the impact of language games on classroom interaction and language learning in an adult EFL setting;

- This study is mainly concerned with teaching the English language. Similar studies might be conducted to investigate the impact of games in the teaching and learning of other languages as well as other subjects such as literacy and mathematics.
- Further research about the impact of language games on teacher-learner relationships is also suggested;
- Finally, the findings of this study could provide the basis for a survey in which the perceptions of a wider range of teachers can be studied.

### **6.5. Final remarks**

This study presents the reality of using language games in Libyan EFL primary classrooms and further investigated its impact on the nature of classroom interaction and pupil language production. Such an investigation provides teachers, researchers in the field of education and language teaching as well as syllabus designers with a better understanding of the utility of using language games in classroom. The use of multi-research approach employed in this study provided clear image about the nature of classroom interaction in whole class and games class teaching, pupils' ability in using the target language and most importantly changes in the teachers' perceptions and behaviours in the classroom.

Many researchers conclude that use of language games in class creates a relaxed and stress-free learning environment through which language learning is facilitated (Phillips 2001; Cekaite and Aronsson 2005 and Yip & Kwan 2006). It has been evident in this study that language games not only facilitated language learning, but also affected the

nature of classroom interaction and teachers' perceptions and behaviours in the classroom. In this study the use of language games appeared to play a significant role in creating a social interaction context where scaffolding and collaborative work are encouraged. Scaffolds provided by teachers not only facilitated language learning, but also equipped pupils with learning strategies which likely to be beneficial for their future study as independent learners. Such findings are encouraging for the use of language games with EFL young learners, and therefore it is hoped that this research will prove useful to future work in this area.



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## Appendix 1

### Letter for gaining permission to access a school

To the head of A Jamahiriya School/ Newcastle

13.10.2006

I would appreciate it if you give me a permission to conduct a pilot study regarding the use of the computer in measuring the nature of the pupils' interaction with each other in the classroom and their interaction with the teacher and vice versa. The actual study will be conducted next month and will cover some of the Libyan schools. It is expected that this study will provide awareness of the advantages and disadvantages of using this method of data collection about this topic.

Many Thanks

Shaban Aldabbus

الاخ - مدير مدرسة الجماهيرية - نيوكاسل

13/10/2006

السلام عليكم

تأمل من حضرتكم منحي الاذن لأجراء دراسة تجريبية حول استخدام الحاسب الآلي في قياس طبيعة تفاعل الطلاب مع بعضهم البعض داخل الفصل وتفاعل المدرس مع الطلاب والعكس، حيث أنني بصدد اجراء دراسة تطبيقية في بعض المدارس في ليبيا خلال الشهر القادم ويتوقع من هذه الدراسة التجريبية أن تساعد في معرفة مزايا وعيوب استخدام هذه الوسيلة في جمع المعلومات حول هذا الموضوع .

مع فائق الشكر والتقدير

شعبان الدبوس  
مدرسة التربية وعلوم اللغة  
جامعه نيوكاسل

سليم  
13/10/2006



Appendix 2

Results of the preliminary test (School One)

Group Statistics

	Class	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
scores of pre-tests	traditional class school one	22	2.8182	1.43548	.30605
	games class school one	22	2.9091	1.30600	.27844

Independent Samples t-test

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
							Lower	Upper
.226	.637	-.220	42	.827	-.09091	.41375	-.92590	.74408
		-.220	41.630	.827	-.09091	.41375	-.92612	.74430

Results of preliminary test (School Two)

Group Statistics

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
scores of pre-tests	traditional class school two	28	2.4643	1.34666	.25449
	games class school two	28	2.6786	1.38921	.26254

Independent Samples t-test

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
							Lower	Upper
.072	.789	-.586	54	.560	-.21429	.36564	-.94735	.51878
		-.586	53.948	.560	-.21429	.36564	-.94737	.51879

### Appendix 3

Sinclair & Coulthard's (1975) coding scheme (modified by the author)

No	Label	Sym	Definition and Function
1	Marker	m	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, [1] or [1+1], as well as a silent stress. Its function is to mark boundaries in the discourse.
2	Starter	s	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	el	Realized by a question or a command. Its function is to request a linguistic response.
4	Check	ch	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	Directive	d	Realized by a command. Its function is to request a non-linguistic response.
6	Informative	i	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	T. reply	t.rep	Teacher answers questions asked by pupils.
8	Prompt	p	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	Model	mdl	"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	cl	Realized by a statement, question, command, or moodless 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	Bid	b	Realized by a closed class of verbal and non-verbal items- 'Sir', 'Miss', teacher's name, raised hand, heavy breathing, finger clicking. its function is to signal a desire to contribute to the discourse.

12	Spontaneous contribution	sp	Unelicited (uninvited) contributions or challenge from pupil. Not a question (Smith, 2004).
13	Nomination	n	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	rep	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	rea	Realized by a non-linguistic action. its function is to provide the appropriate non-linguistic response defined by the preceding directive.
16	Choral repetition	c.rep	Repetition: echo/imitation of a word modelled by another person (usually a teacher) in the case of language learning. (Allwright & Bailey 1991:142).
17	P.elicit	p.el	Pupil asks for clarification, repetition or permission to do something
18	Praise	pra	Realised by providing positive feedback using words like very good, excellent, thank you by the teacher for correct answers or good attempts.
19	Accept	acc	Realized by a closed class of items- 'yes', 'no', 'good', 'fine', and repetition of pupil's 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	e	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 (negative evaluation).
21	Criticise	cr	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	cor	Realized by correcting the pupil's wrong answer using different corrective techniques. For example, Teacher asks pupil to try again, teacher himself corrects the errors, teacher transfers the question to another pupil or to the whole class, and teacher ignores the error.

## Appendix 4

### Classroom observation data collection sheet

#### Section I: General information

Date of observation: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of school: \_\_\_\_\_

No of pupils in school: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

No of pupils in that class: \_\_\_\_\_

No of boys in that class: \_\_\_\_\_

No of girls in that class: \_\_\_\_\_

Minimum age in class: \_\_\_\_\_

Maximum age in class: \_\_\_\_\_

Average age in class: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject area: \_\_\_\_\_

Period of lesson: \_\_\_\_\_

Time of start of observation: \_\_\_\_\_

Time of end of observation: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's qualification: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's experience: \_\_\_\_\_

Classroom layout: \_\_\_\_\_

Facilities in class: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

(Adapted from Smith, 2004 and then modified according to the research questions, literature, and Libyan context)

Appendix 5

Examples of stimulated recall interviews.

No	Extract	Observer	Teacher Commentaries
1	T : all of you repeat after me (...) [ كلكم رددوا [ معي] doll PP: doll T: doll PP: doll T: d-o-l-l PP: d-o-l-l	<i>Why do you use modelling so often?</i> [لماذا تستخدمين التكرار]	<i>I use modelling for two purposes, 1) to enhance the learning of pronunciation and 2) to practice the target language.</i> تستخدم التكرار لغرض الاول لتعزيز تعلم نطق الكلمات و الثاني للتدرب علي استخدام اللغة
2	T: what is this? PP: this is a camel T: this is a camel, yes this a camel. and what is this? PP: this is a pen T: Amina, what is this? P: this a pen. T: this is a^ P: this is a pen	<i>Why do you use display questions rather than referential questions?</i> [ لماذا تستخدمين الاسئلة المقفلة لا الاسئلة المفتوحة]	<i>Display questions are easier than referential questions to be answered especially for pupils with very limited English language. The purpose behind using display questions is to keep my pupils attention and to involve them in the process of learning.</i> الاسئلة المقفلة اسهل من الاسئلة المفتوحة خاصة عندما تكون لغة التلاميذ محدوده و الغرض من استخدام الاسئلة المقفلة هو لجذب انتباه التلاميذ و اشراكهم في العملية التعليمية داخل الفصل
3	T: what is your name? P: My name Moneer T: <i>How to spell it?</i> [ كيف تنهجاه P: Spell my name teacher? [ نتهجا اسمي T: Yes, your name T: What is the first letter? [ ما هو الحرف الاول P: M T: What are the other letters, can you say them? [ ما هي الحروف [ال اخرى هل تستطيع ان تقولها P: m-o-n-e-r T: there is one letter missing [ فيه حرف واحد [ ] try again [ ناقص P: 1,2,3,4,5, oh yes e teacher T: Yes, e	<i>I observed that you very often address your questions to nominated pupils, Can you tell me why?</i> [ انا لاحظت انك توجهين اسئلتك لتلاميذ معينين لماذا]	<i>I usually address questions to pupils who do not participate in class to encourage them to be active and to pay more attention because they expect more questions</i> انا عادة اوجه الاسئلة للتلاميذ الذين لا يشاركون في الفصل لحثهم علي المشاركة و كذلك لجذب انتباههم

4	<p>T: Entesar, c or d? door starts with d or c? [كلمه باب تڤاء بي]</p> <p>P: d teacher d , d</p> <p>T: camel, c or d</p> <p>PP: c</p> <p>T: what does camel mean? [ماذا تعني]</p>	<p>Why did you provide a clue to the pupil?</p> <p>[Kĩ θ xĩ Û z Û Û]</p>	<p>I think giving clues encourage pupils to participate and to make the answer easy. ÛθKĩ Û θ K z Kĩ ÛθKĩ Û Û Û xĩ Û Û θ Ûxĩ</p>
5	<p>T: We have some new words today [عندنا كلمات جديده اليوم]</p> <p>((Writes on blackboard)) The first word is [الكلمه الاولى] bus which means [تعني حافله] the Second [الثانيه] bike [دراجة] The third bag [حقويه] bus</p>	<p>Why did you use the pupils' native language in presenting new vocabulary? [z Û Û θxĩ Kĩ θKĩ]</p>	<p>Because its easier for my pupils to get the information and to save the time of the class.</p> <p>I use translation to make things easier for children, and to help them love the language, because if keep speaking in English all the time in class they will get bored. Û Kĩ Û Kĩ z Û Û θ K z Û Û Kĩ Fy Kĩ θKĩ Û Û F Û Ƴ γ θ K Û KÛ Ƴ Û z θKĩ Ûθ Kĩ</p>

6	<p>T: come here Samya,  <i>come here, look at</i> [ <i>تعالى هنا انظروا الى</i>          Samya please.          PP: 000          T: ishshs. ok Samay can          you do it [ <i>هل تستطيعين فعل ذلك</i>          P: my name is Samya, I          do this ((puts hands on          her head))          P: I'm Laila          T: no, you are ...?          P: oh no [ ] I'm Samya,          my name is Samya          and I do this ((puts          hands on her          shoulders))          T: what is your          name?          P: my name is Fadya.          T: Ok Fadya can you do          what I tell you very          quickly [ <i>هل تستطيعين فعل          الذي نقول لك عليه بسرعة</i>          P: yes          T: try this touch your          nose. <i>Touch means</i> [ <i>المس</i>          P: ((touches her nose))          T: your head          P: ((touches her head))</p>	<p>Why did you use more  <i>directive exchanges</i>          [التعلم بالفعل] in GCs?</p>	<p><i>Although modelling in          essential especially when the          target language is not used          outside the classroom, but I          realized from the video-          recording that pupils repeat          the model passively without          paying attention. Therefore, I          focused on ordering pupils to          learn things by doing rather          than just set and repeat          chorally</i> بالرغم من ان التكرار          ضروري عندما تكون اللغة المستهدفة          غير مستخدمة خارج الفصل و لكن          اكتشفت من خلال لقطات الفيديو السابقة          ان التلاميذ يردون بشكل سلبي و بدون          مبالاة لماذا السبب بدأت التركيز علي          تعليمهم بفعل الاشياء وليس فقط بتكرار          الجماعي</p>
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## **Appendix 6**

### **Interview guide questions**

#### **Section I: General background**

Date of interview:.....

Name of interviewee:.....

Qualification:.....

Teaching experience: .....

#### **Section II: Questions**

##### **Before the intervention**

1. What method of teaching do you prefer to use with your learners and why?
2. What do you think about the use of language games in teaching the English language?
3. Have you had any training experience of language games techniques before?
4. Have you ever used language games in your English lessons?
5. If yes, how often? And to what extent they were helpful?

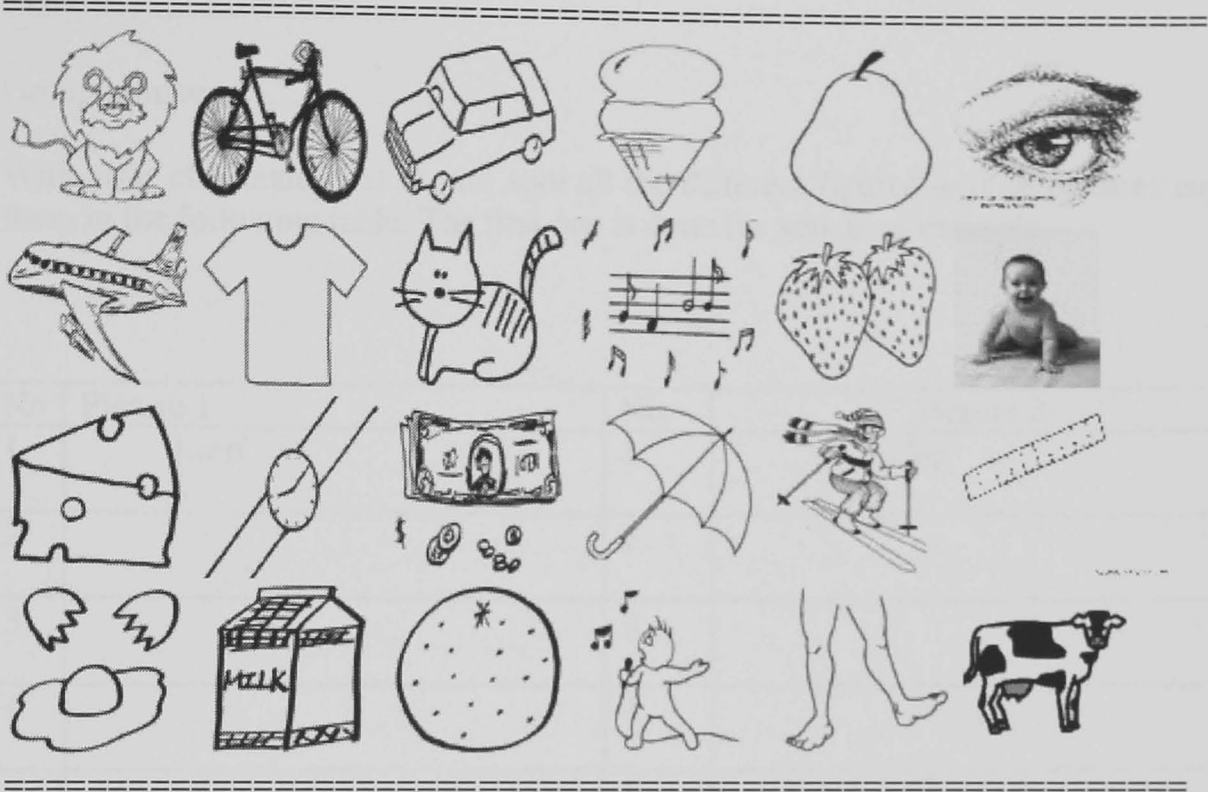
If no, why not?

##### **After the intervention**

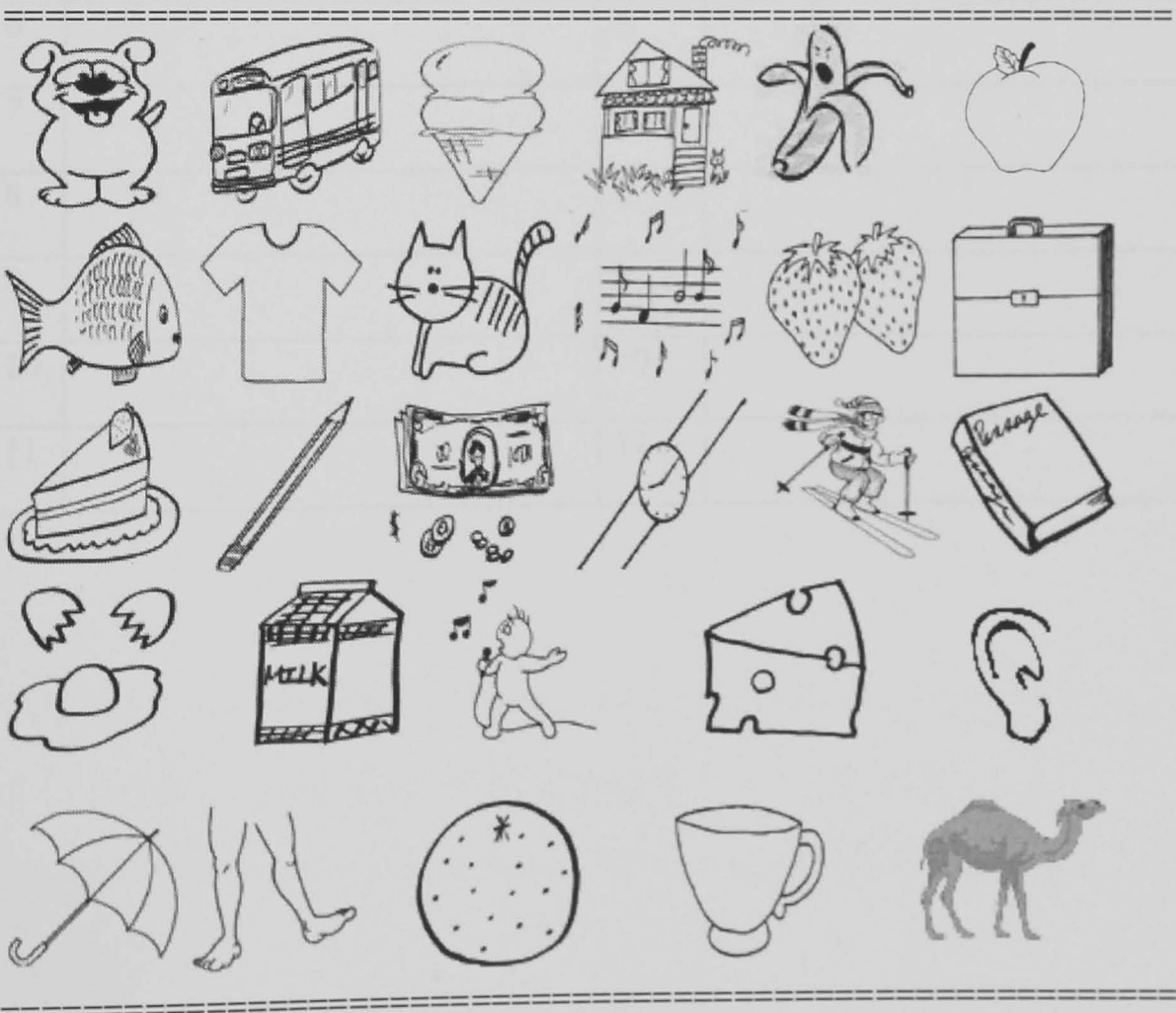
1. What do you think about the use of language games in teaching the English language?
2. What are the differences between the language games based lesson and the textbook-based lessons?
3. Is pupil behaviour different in language games lessons from that in normal English lessons?
4. Do you think that games should be integrated in the syllabus?
5. What are the difficulties that may hinder from the use of language games?

Appendix 7

The spot-the-differences game  
Picture 1



Picture 2



Answer sheet

School:.....

Class:.....

Group number:.....

With your classmate next to you spot all the different figures in both pictures and write them in the following table. The first one is done for you as an example.

No	Picture 1	No	Picture 2
1	Lion	1	Cup
2		2	
3		3	
4		4	
5		5	
6		6	
7		7	
8		8	
9		9	
10		10	
11		11	

## Appendix 8

### List of games used in this study

#### Game One

Game type: movement game

Aim: Learning English alphabets

Materials: a small soft ball

Procedures:

1. The children stand in a circle. The first child holds the ball and starts the first round. A child may say one, two, or maximum three letters of the alphabet before passing the ball to the next child. For example, child 1 says *ABC*, child 2 says *D*, child 3 says *EFG* child 4 says *HI*.

2. The child who says the letter *Z* wins the round and gets a point. He or she then starts a new round. The game continues until a child has three points.

Instead of the alphabet, the children count saying numbers, colours, days of the week, etc.

#### Game two

Aim: Learning and revising vocabulary

Materials: One copy of vocabulary and one copy of pictures, cards, glue and scissors.

Procedures:

1. Divide pupils into groups of four (depends on the number of pupils in class)
2. Each group receives a copy of vocabulary and a copy of pictures
3. Some pupils prepare set of vocabulary cards while others prepare picture cards.
4. Each group places their sets of cards face down on the table in two piles.

5. pupils take it in turns to turn over two cards and say the word card and name of the picture card. If the picture corresponds to the word, they keep the cards; if not, they turn them face down and the next pupil has a turn.
6. the player with most cards at the end of the game is the winner.

### Game three

Game type: Simon says

Aim: Listening; action verbs; parts of the body

Procedures:

1. Clear space in the classroom. The children stand facing you in a large semicircle with enough space to move comfortably. You stand a few meters away from them, so that they can all see you.
2. call out a command such as Simon says: touch your nose.  
the child must do what you say.
3. Call out a second command, e.g clap your hands, this time leaving out Simon says.  
if children do the action they are out.
4. The last child left in the game becomes the new caller.
5. Children have to sit on a chair; you can sit next to the noisy children  
Simon says must be played at a fast pace.

### Game four

Game type: Movement game

Aim: Learning names and greetings

Materials: soft ball and noise maker (drum or whistle)

Procedures:

1. All pupils stand in a semi-circle between chairs. You are in the middle.
2. Go up to a child, shake hands, and say *Hello, my name is.....*
3. You and the child now introduce yourselves to other children. Then  
the rest of children introduce themselves to each other.
4. After they have introduced themselves, the children stand in two straight lines facing each other. One child throws a soft ball to another saying *Hello, I'm ....*, Child 2 says *Hello, .... How are you?* Child 1 replies *I'm fine, thank you.* Child 2 throws the ball to another child and repeats the same thing.

(Lewis & Bedson, 1999)

### Game five

Game type: Memory game

Aim: learning and revising spelling of words

Materials: small box full of English letters, and a number of pictures stuck on a paper of A4, as illustrated in the example below.

Procedures: pupils divided into groups of four, each group was given a box of letters and pictures. They are asked to work together and label the pictures using letters in the box. The first group finishes is considered to be the winner.

A	B	C	N	DE	FG	H	JK	I	GDSA	L	I
U	Y	T	R	G	A	YUVM	FEDC	N	WLZX		
MN	HLN	BCR	I	BVC	XZ	MFOP	ZQ	L	K		
E	DSA	BX	E	EW	DTS	QOP					



.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Game six

Game type: memory game

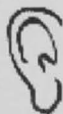
Aim: learning vocabulary

Materials: a puzzle and pictures, as illustrated in the example below.

Procedures: pupils asked to work in pairs, each pair is given a puzzle and pictures.

the teacher explains the instructions then ask them to help each other to solve the puzzle using the pictures provided.

Across



Down



			E	
			G	B
			G	O
xxx			xxx	O
xxx				K

### Game seven

Aim: learning and revising vocabulary

Materials: pictures with different f figures

Procedures: divide pupils into pairs or small groups. Distribute two pictures for each group. The pictures must be very similar but with some differences. The pupils are required to work together and spot the differences between the two pictures and write them down.

### Game eight

Game type: role play

Aim: learning colours and action verbs (e.g., stop, move)

Materials: signs of different colours

Procedures: pupils stand in a circle and one of the pupils stand in the middle of the circle holding the signs of the traffic light playing the role of traffic police. The teacher orders the pupil in the middle to raise the colours one by one and the rest of the pupils act accordingly.



## Appendix 9

### Transcription conventions

T: teacher

PP: pupils

P1: identified pupil

P: unidentified pupil

(.): a brief pause (more period marks, the longer the pause) (adapted from 'Discourse as Social Interaction (Van Dijk, 1997)

000: inaudible speech

*Italics*: utterance translated into English

[     ]: utterance in Arabic

((     )): non verbal action

? : Question

^ : cued question

, : punctuation mark

## Appendix 10

### Letter for gaining permission to access the schools

To the secretary of Sothern Shuhada'a Ainzara Education office  
05.11.2006

I would appreciate it if you give me a permission to conduct an experimental study in some of the basic education schools belonging to your area. This study is concerned with teaching English and it is part of my PhD program taking place at Newcastle University in the United Kingdom.

Many thanks

Researcher: Shaban Aldabbus

School of Education Communication and Language Sciences

Newcastle University

United Kingdom

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الأخ: أمين مكتب تعليم بني هاشم... زاره الجنوبي

التاريخ: 2006 / 11 / 5

**السلام عليكم...**

أرجو من حضرتكم منحي الإذن لإجراء دراسة تطبيقية ببعض مدارس التعليم الأساسي بنطساق  
مؤتمركم حول طرق تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كجزء من رسالة الدكتوراه التي أقوم حالياً بإعدادها  
بجامعة نيوكاسل بالمملكة المتحدة ...

والسلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

الباحث: شعبان ميلاد الدبوس  
رسة التربية و علوم اللغة  
جامعة نيوكاسل - المملكة المتحدة

الأخ: / د. محمد...  
نايل منكم تركيب الباحث  
شعبان الدبوس  
مع عذرة

د. محمد...  
رسة التربية و علوم اللغة  
جامعة نيوكاسل - المملكة المتحدة

**Appendix 11**

**Pupils language use during the spot- the- difference game**

Independent sample t test

	Traditional class & Games class	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Total number of utterances in L1 & L2	Traditional class	12	57.9167	7.94822	2.29445
	Games class	12	56.5833	9.36588	2.70370
Utterances in L1 only	Traditional class	12	36.2500	4.24532	1.22552
	Games class	12	30.0833	6.89477	1.99035
Utterances containing any English	Traditional class	12	21.6667	4.43813	1.28118
	Games class	12	26.5000	5.35130	1.54479
less than 3 words	Traditional class	12	16.9167	4.20948	1.21517
	Games class	12	17.5833	4.07784	1.17717
3 words and more	Traditional class	12	4.7500	2.00567	.57899
	Games class	12	8.0833	3.05877	.88299

# Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Total number of utterances in L1 & L2	.378	.545	.376	22	.711	1.33333	3.54605	-6.02073	8.68740
			.376	21.433	.711	1.33333	3.54605	-6.03203	8.69870
Utterances in L1 only	2.994	.098	2.638	22	.015	6.16667	2.33739	1.31922	11.01411
			2.638	18.293	.017	6.16667	2.33739	1.26162	11.07171
Utterances containing any English	.204	.656	-2.408	22	.025	-4.83333	2.00693	-8.99546	-.67121
			-2.408	21.272	.025	-4.83333	2.00693	-9.00373	-.66294
less than 3 words	.174	.681	-.394	22	.697	-.66667	1.69186	-4.17536	2.84203
			-.394	21.978	.697	-.66667	1.69186	-4.17556	2.84223
3 words and more	4.020	.057	-3.157	22	.005	-3.33333	1.05589	-5.52311	-1.14356
			-3.157	18.983	.005	-3.33333	1.05589	-5.54346	-1.12320