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# Games for vocabulary enrichment: teaching multilingual writers at the college level

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Games for Vocabulary Enrichment:  
Teaching Multilingual Writers at the College Level  
Presented to Eastern Washington University  
Cheney, Washington

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A Thesis Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
For the Degree  
Master of Arts: English  
With an Emphasis in  
Teaching English as a Second Language

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By  
Jennifer Hawkins  
Spring 2016

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## Master's Thesis

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## **Abstract**

This study explores the effectiveness of the game activity, Taboo, to teach ESL vocabulary in a college-level EAP course. It is mixed-methods research, including qualitative data in the form of student journals and quantitative data in the form of student assessments. It is also action research that reflects a novice teacher's experience of adapting a game activity to make it more effective for learning academic vocabulary. The study is centered on the voices of student writers who experienced the game in their classroom and wrote about the experience in journals. A comparative quantitative assessment measured students' learning outcomes on the final exam vocabulary section that included words from the Taboo game and words taught but not included in the game. Findings suggest that the vocabulary game, Taboo, could be a useful activity to include in a college-level course for multilingual writers because students performed well on the final exam and stated that they enjoyed the three game sessions offered in class to prepare for the final exam.

## Acknowledgements

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## Preface

### Language Learning/Cross-Cultural Experiences

A love for learning, and especially for learning languages, has been a part of me for as long as I can remember. My first multilingual experience was as a young child when I lived with my parents in South Korea. My father was an Air Force officer, and my mother and I accompanied him to Seoul, Korea where we lived for close to two years. My father was often gone working, and my mother and I had adventure after adventure in our new surroundings. We lived in an urban neighborhood where we were the only Americans, and I quickly learned to adapt to my surroundings, which included learning to speak Korean. It was on the neighborhood playground with all of the Korean kids that I started to pick up the Korean language, and it seemed I was good at it. Before long, I was translating for my mother in shops and chatting up the taxi drivers in Korean. This early experience with the Korean language and Korean friends forever shaped my brain and my psyche.

Years later in junior high I was exposed to Spanish. I enjoyed my Spanish lessons so much that I rushed home after school to do my homework and practice my Spanish. My teacher was strict, but I loved learning so much that I didn't let her take away the joy I experienced from learning the new language. Later, in high school, rather than continue with Spanish, I decided to take French. I made this decision because French is a family language for me, spoken by my Cajun ancestors. My high school French teacher was a petite, brunette woman with bright red lipstick and overabundance of enthusiasm. I learned to love the French language and culture and especially her creative lessons. She taught us the language with everything from songs to poetry and greeting cards. Every

year, she worked with students to put on a croissant sale, and at Christmas time there was always a “bûche bake,” where students baked the traditional “bûche de Noël” log-shaped cakes. Learning French was as much about learning the French culture as the language, and though I loved studying grammar and speaking the language, I really fell in love with the French culture. In college, I had the opportunity to experience the French culture firsthand for an academic year when I studied as an international student in Caen, France. I loved my French professors and the other international students I studied with who were from all around the world.

My affinity for French did not keep me from studying other foreign languages in college. At Pacific University, I also studied German and Japanese. These were both very different language learning experiences, and my favorite language to study was Japanese. My Japanese professor was a neat, proper Japanese man of middle age. Although he was formal, he often told jokes and was very self-deprecating. The activities we did in class were fun and engaging. I remember the way he taught us the Japanese characters still today (Ra is for rabbit – the character looks like a rabbit’s muzzle; Su is “soon to be a flower” – the character looks like a seedling about to sprout.) I thoroughly enjoyed learning Japanese, and he was the reason why.

### **Teaching Experience**

Before starting the M.A. program I did not have much teaching experience. I spent 15 years in the business world, working in corporate settings. Although very confident in myself as a learner, I was insecure about my teaching ability. In my corporate jobs, I did often conduct training sessions and give presentations, but these

activities are not what I would call teaching. I volunteered at the local library and local non-profit, teaching computer skills to seniors and low-income adults, and I volunteered as an ESL tutor for refugees where I am currently teaching at the Institute for Extended Learning. I thoroughly enjoyed both of these teaching experiences, and they helped me build my confidence in my abilities.

After beginning the program, I started volunteering regularly with refugees, as an ESL instructional assistant at the Community College. I have learned so much from watching the competent instructors I have worked with at the Community College and have really grown to love the refugee students. At the beginning level, the refugees are learning how to write the letters and how to read in English. They are also frequently learning how to be students, having never experienced a formal learning situation in their own countries. Near the end of this program, I began teaching for the Community College as a Level 1 instructor. Teaching the beginning level students has truly brought me joy and challenges as I use my “whole brain” for my work. Planning lessons and seeing students light up with excitement when they remember a vocabulary word or understand a sentence structure are the best feeling in the world. I truly know that I am doing what I am supposed to be doing, with the population I am supposed to serve, and it is liberating.

### **Teaching Philosophy**

I think learning a foreign language should be a joyful experience. I understand this sounds rather idealistic; however, my own experiences with language learning have shaped my opinion in this area. The capacity we have to communicate with language is an integral part of being human, and the experience of an expanding mind and widening

horizons that comes with learning a new language is an intensely personal experience. For this reason, I think it is the teacher's role to help students connect with the new language on a personal level, relating it to their own lived experiences. It is only through immersing oneself fully in the new language and all of its uniqueness that the language becomes a part of who you are and you truly develop fluency. My ideas about teaching have changed slightly since I started teaching ESL at the Community College. I used to think teaching was about developing exciting lesson plans and creating structure for students. These are obviously both very important elements to good teaching, but an even more important aspect is the personal connection that the teacher makes with all students, understanding their needs, and their level, and constantly adapting lessons to their ability.

The most important quality I bring to teaching ESL is my passion for learning and for languages, as well as my passion for helping students. Teaching is the perfect marriage of head and heart for me. I am so lucky to be in this line of work, and I look forward to many years fostering student joy in learning and improving my teaching as I go.

## **Chapter 1.**

### **Introduction**

One snowy Tuesday evening in 2013, after a long day at my office job, I walked into an ESL classroom at the Adult Education Center in Spokane, Washington where I volunteered with the refugee and immigrant students weekly. The topic was ocean vocabulary and the students and teacher were already starting on the lesson. I had arrived late and tired, and along with me, many students had also arrived to class late after working at jobs all day. The energy in the classroom was warm but obviously subdued. Soon after the new vocabulary had been presented, the teacher turned to the class and said, “OK everyone – let’s play some vocabulary games!” Anticipating resistance from the adult students, I quickly glanced around the classroom for the students’ reactions. To my surprise, instead of a collective groan, the students perked up, (in fact I did as well). Twenty minutes later the energy in the classroom had been kicked up a notch and the students and I were enjoying ourselves: laughing, learning, and forgetting about our long workdays.

#### **Statement of the Problem**

Playing games clearly contributed to a positive environment in this adult ESL classroom – and I noticed this dynamic every time games were played in the ESL classrooms I observed at the Adult Education Center. However, I wondered whether the students’ learning was actually affected by the game activity. Did playing these vocabulary games in class improve their vocabulary acquisition significantly?

Throughout the three years that followed, I continued to volunteer at the Adult Education center while I was taking courses in my Masters in TESL (Teaching English a

a Second Language) program, and I witnessed many more games in adult ESL classrooms. As an ESL teacher-in-training, I started to develop a fascination with games as an instructional technique, and it became the focus of my research for the present study.

### **Research Questions**

This research questions guiding this study are as follows:

- 1) What are the benefits and challenges of utilizing a vocabulary game activity for adult learners in an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) course?
- 2) According to the literature, are games an effective learning activity, and what are some ways to use games to teach ESL/EFL vocabulary?
- 2) What is the student performance difference between using games to teach vocabulary and other ways of learning vocabulary?
- 4) What do the learners say are the benefits and challenges of playing a game to learn vocabulary in an EAP college classroom?
- 5) How can a game activity be adapted for vocabulary acquisition in an EAP college classroom?

### **Purpose**

The inclusion of games in an ESL classroom was studied in detail by Yang (2007). In her master's thesis, Yang studied how games impact the motivation of students to learn, and she captured students' voices about the benefits and challenges of the games they played in her study. She found that a physically challenged student did not think it was fair to play a game where students had to run to the front of the classroom to win, so her team lost. Yang's recommendations for further study on the

topic of games in ESL classrooms suggested using the vocabulary game Taboo to improve students' vocabulary knowledge. Yang also recommended the use of quantitative methods to measure learners' knowledge acquisition after playing a game in class. This research builds on Yang's study by implementing both of these recommendations.

Building on Yang's (2007) research, this thesis looks at one specific vocabulary game activity, the game Taboo, which we experimented with in a college-level composition course for multilingual writers. It provides data in the students' own words on their experience with the game, as well as quantitative assessment data measuring the students' vocabulary acquisition. This research is about more than a vocabulary game; however, it is about a novice teacher learning to teach by experimentation, trial and error, and multiple revisions to a classroom activity to make it more effective. It is also about trying out a new instructional technique and not always getting it right, making it better as you go. Finally, this research is about the student experience. Students' voices will be heard throughout this thesis, guiding us about what and how we should teach. This is, then, action research in its simplest form, and the reader should receive some benefit from what we have learned in the process of teaching a game activity.

### **Action Research**

For the purposes of this thesis, action research is defined as “an approach to collecting and interpreting data that involves a clear repeated cycle of procedures: planning, acting, observing, reflecting, and re-planning” (Bailey, 2014, p. 602). The results of action research can be used to modify or improve a course curriculum or specific learning activity to meet student's needs.

## **Mixed Methods Research**

This is also a mixed methods research study, as it incorporates multiple data collection methods, including student journals, student vocabulary assessment results, and researcher's reflections and observations.

## **Researcher and Instructor Roles**

The researcher was a master's level student in the M.A. in English/TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language) program at Eastern Washington University. The study focused on one class of students in a Composition for Multilingual Writers at Eastern Washington University, whose instructor was Dr. LaVona Reeves. The researcher developed the game activity and worked together with the course instructor—also the thesis chair—on modifying the activity to fit the needs of the students and course structure.

## **Researcher Assumptions**

The researcher's assumptions prior to this study can be summarized as follows:

- 1) Classroom games are beneficial to learning.
- 2) Incorporating a vocabulary game into the English 112 course will allow learners to have fun while learning vocabulary.
- 3) Playing a vocabulary game in class will build a community of learners.
- 4) Students' vocabulary acquisition will be positively affected by playing a vocabulary game in class.
- 5) A vocabulary game is a simple and straightforward classroom activity, and, if prepared well, should not be difficult to implement in an English 112 classroom.

## **Thesis Overview**

This thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter 2 is a review of the literature which discusses 1) approaches to teaching ESL/EFL vocabulary, 2) the effectiveness of game activities in the classroom, and 3) the effectiveness of game activities to teach ESL/EFL vocabulary specifically. The review of literature also discusses common challenges to using game activities in the classroom. Chapter 3 is the research methodology, data collection, and analysis of the findings in this study. Chapter 4 is the discussion of the findings and researcher's reflections on the study. Chapter 5 includes conclusions, limitations of this study, and recommendations for future research.

## **Chapter 2.**

### **Review of Literature**

This chapter is a review of the literature about methods for teaching ESL/EFL vocabulary, games as an instructional technique and the affective filter, and games for teaching ESL/EFL vocabulary specifically. It also includes a brief overview of the challenges with games as an instructional technique.

Successfully acquiring new vocabulary when learning a foreign language can be a challenging and sometimes isolating task. Foreign language students use different strategies for learning new words, yet often techniques favoring solitary rote memorization are the standard instructional procedure. Despite some merit to the learner accomplishing vocabulary learning tasks alone, using solitary learning strategies and tools such as flash cards, technology tools, and bilingual dictionaries, language teachers play a significant role in providing vocabulary instruction in the social setting of an ESL/EFL classroom.

Language teachers are not always aware of the most effective methods for teaching new vocabulary to students. Numerous approaches to teaching vocabulary are discussed in the literature, and this review of the literature will attempt to evaluate the most effective methods. This review of the literature also assumes that engaging and interactive pedagogical approaches such as games and role-play activities provide the most effective methods for teaching vocabulary in an L2 classroom.

## **Approaches to teaching ESL/EFL Vocabulary**

Without a strong foundation in vocabulary, communicating in any language, let alone a foreign language, can be quite challenging. Approaches to teaching vocabulary have reflected different language teaching methods including: the grammar-translation approach, the reform approach, the direct method, the reading approach, audiolingualism, and communicative language teaching (Zimmerman, 2014). Research on vocabulary acquisition suggests that learning new words requires: repetition (Wei & Attan, 2013); opportunities to focus on both meaning and form (Read, 2004); engaging tasks that facilitate use of the words (Nam, 2010); and interaction/negotiation of the words, such as in small groups (Zimmerman, 2014). As Wei and Attan suggest, “words are the basic building blocks of a language” (2013, p. 1).

Wei and Attan discuss the importance of “repeated exposure to the word” for adequate vocabulary acquisition. They cite language acquisition research as far back as the 1960’s to illustrate this phenomenon. For example, Crothers and Suppes (1967) found in their study that nearly all of the participants “recalled all 108 Russian-English word pairs after seven repetitions, and about 80 percent of 216 word pairs were learned by most participants after six repetitions” (Wei & Attan, 2013, p. 2). However, Lado, Baldwin, and Lobo (1967) found with a group of intermediate level college students of Spanish that when the students were presented with a list of 100 words, only one exposure sufficed for an average of 95 percent recognition and 65 percent recall, suggesting that more exposure to the words would lead to better retention of them in memory (Wei & Attan, 2013). Wei and Attan cite more current research (Beck & McKeown, 1983; Blachowicz & Obrochta, 2005; Duke, Bennett-Armistead, & Roberts,

2003) which propose effective instructional strategies that incorporate repetition, "...to ensure repetition of vocabulary for instruction related to text that is to be comprehended, teachers are to highlight vocabulary before reading, question students after reading, or discuss the reading in ways that call on them to use the designated words meaningfully, and then engage the students with post-reading activities with the words" (Wei & Attan, 2013, p. 2).

Learners required to use new words in specific tasks retain the words more effectively than they would by simply reading a text or consulting a dictionary. With their Involvement Load Hypothesis, Laufer and Hulstijn (as cited in Read, 2010 and Kim, 2011) propose three important factors in the learning tasks that lead to vocabulary acquisition: need, search, and evaluation (Kim, 2011). Need refers to the "motivational non-cognitive" aspect of learning a word. A student has a stronger need to participate in the task to learn the word if the motivation is self-imposed as opposed to teacher imposed. Search refers to when a student seeks the meaning of a word, either via a dictionary or from teachers and fellow students. Evaluation refers to decision making about the word that takes place during an activity and includes comparing the word with other words or contrasting the specific meanings of a word with its other meanings (Kim, 2011). Laufer and Hulstijn found in studies done with adult learners that tasks incorporating two or three of the factors led to better retention of the target vocabulary than those with only one factor. They evaluated adult learners in the Netherlands and Israel (Hulstijn & Laufer, 2001 cited in Read, (2010) and found that "learners who wrote compositions using a set of target words remembered them better than those who encountered the words in a reading comprehension task and, in the Israeli experiment, the

learners who wrote the missing words in gaps in the reading text retained more of the words than those who just read marginal glosses” (Read, 2010, p. 2). Thus, when learners are involved in a learning task that incorporates producing something with the new words, their vocabulary retention improves. In addition, according to the need aspect of Involvement Load Hypothesis, a learner’s motivational needs are met through activities that are engaging and self-imposed. Laufer and Hulstijn’s findings suggest that simply looking up the meaning of the word in a dictionary alone is not as effective for adequate vocabulary acquisition and that by participating in a task with the target words, such as a game activity, learning may be improved.

The types of instructional methods used by teachers influence the quality and breadth of the vocabulary learned by their students. In 2003, Tang and Nesi compared transcripts from secondary school English classrooms in Hong Kong and Guangzhou and examined how different teaching methods between the two cities influenced the lexical range of the learners. They found that “the teacher in Hong Kong adopted a more flexible approach, incorporating a range of activities, materials, and topics, which produced more lexical variation and lower-frequency words” (Read, 2010, p. 6). In contrast, the teacher in Guangzhou, treated vocabulary much more systematically, “within a strictly controlled lesson plan that left little opportunity for spontaneous interaction between the teacher and students” and found,

Although both teachers engaged in explicit teaching of preselected words, using a variety of techniques, the Hong Kong classroom offered more interactionally modified input and opportunities for incidental learning. In that sense, it could be seen as a lexically richer environment for vocabulary acquisition. (Read, p. 6)

Tang and Nesi's research suggests that the use of engaging activities such as games as an instructional method would help students increase their vocabulary breadth and would provide a richer learning environment than a more systematic teaching approach without much student interaction.

A study done by Indonesian researcher Gustki Astika (2015) which surveyed 81 English teachers from America, Asia, Africa, and Europe, found that individual teachers' approaches to teaching vocabulary varied according to teacher experience level and whether the students were native versus non-native English learners. Incidental vocabulary learning was a more common approach for teachers who were teaching English as a second or foreign language. Astika defines incidental vocabulary learning as different from explicit vocabulary instruction:

Explicit instruction, among others, involves discussion about new words learners need to know, breaking words into their component parts such as teaching word formation, deliberate introduction of new words, and building fluency of new words. Incidental learning refers to acquiring new words through listening, reading, speaking, or writing practice. (Astika, p. 85).

Astika also found that the English as a foreign language teachers preferred "guessing meaning from the context" as an instructional strategy for vocabulary. Astika argued, "Native versus non-native status of the learners could be a factor for this difference and it may be argued that non-native learners should be given more exposure to English through more readings from which they are expected to learn vocabulary incidentally" (Astika, 2015, p.85). Thus, according to Astika, incidental learning and "guessing

meaning from the context” offer two instructional strategies that work effectively for teaching ESL/EFL vocabulary.

Talebi and Marzban (2015) conducted a study on the teaching of “critical reading strategies” such as “text summarizing, annotating, lexical inferencing, and questioning” in order to improve students’ vocabulary knowledge. They asserted the following.

Learning words of a language is one of the essential components of learning that language. To do so, based on Wallace (2003), a critical reader mentally works on the word-form and makes connections between the context and his own personal knowledge to guess the meaning of the word. A critical reader is able to build a connection between the text and its vocabularies by concentrating on decoding meaning from the passage rather than just rote-reading the words. (p. 572)

Talebi and Marzban found with a sample of 48 advanced level (via TOEFL score results) EFL students in Iran that students performed higher on post-tests measuring vocabulary retention after receiving instruction in the reading strategies.

According to Nam (2010), students’ level of language ability is a factor that should be taken into consideration when designing vocabulary learning activities. Nam describes several specific activities that can be used in an ESL classroom to teach vocabulary: pictorial activities where targeted vocabulary is presented with their corresponding representative pictures and L1 translations, fill-in tasks where students fill in the missing words of a cloze passage, post-reading composition tasks, and retelling tasks where students are asked to re-tell a story they have read and are required to use the targeted words in their retelling. Nam stressed the importance of applying the various strategies according to students’ language proficiency levels, “whereas pictures and L1

equivalents and controlled fill-in tasks are more appropriate at the beginning and intermediate levels, less controlled tasks such as compositions and retellings may be more suitable for the advanced level (p. 132). The use of games as a learning activity may be considered a learning task suitable for more advanced levels of language proficiency; however, games incorporating pictorial methods and use of the L1, as in EFL classrooms, may be appropriate for beginner-level learners.

### **Technology**

With emerging technologies such as smart phones and tablet computers, much of the current research on vocabulary instruction focuses on the use of technology to improve students' vocabulary knowledge. Yang & Wu (2015) conducted a study exploring the effectiveness of a "mixed-modality vocabulary-learning strategy via e-learning for L2 English undergraduates in Taiwan" (Yang, & Wu, 2015, p.310). The researchers used an "integrated vocabulary-learning system named My English Vocabulary Assistant (MyEVA)" which provided an electronic student experience based on "mixed-modality vocabulary strategies" (Yang, & Wu, 2015, p. 310). The research compared the students' performance on vocabulary post-tests and found that the use of the of MyEVA system improved vocabulary retention better than the use of either an electronic or traditional paper dictionary.

A recent study in Taiwan, conducted with two freshman EFL classes: one, an experimental group instructed in vocabulary for 15 minutes daily with the iPad app "Learn British English WordPower" and the other, a control group, taught vocabulary for 15 minutes daily with an instructor-led audio-lingual lesson, showed that by the end of the course the iPad instructed students performed better on the post-tests of their

vocabulary knowledge (Wang, Teng, & Chen, 2015). A survey was also conducted of the students' attitudes toward their iPad lessons and revealed that "...the experimental group felt motivated, delighted and interested in using iPad App to learn English vocabulary" (Wang, Teng, & Chen, 2015, p. 103). The results of this study suggest that modern students have an affinity for technological-based learning activities.

A recent study conducted by Thai researchers Ornprapat & Wiwat (2015) assessed students' vocabulary learning via mobile phones, specifically SMS texting learning activities. Two groups of students participated in vocabulary lessons, an experimental group and a control group. The control group received sentences using new vocabulary from their teacher, submitted their own sentences, and wrote a paragraph using the new vocabulary on paper. The experimental group did the same vocabulary exercises but received the vocabulary and submitted their sentences and paragraphs using SMS texting. In addition, the teacher created a contest between the students in the experimental group which allowed the first three students who sent in their answer texts to receive extra credit points. Results of post-tests after a six-week term found statistically higher vocabulary retention scores in the experimental group over the control group. The researchers concluded that the difference in scores was due to a higher motivation in the students who participated in the texting exercises:

[The higher scores among the texting group were] probably because mobile phones can build learning environment where students can study anywhere and any time. They had flexibility in how long they would devote to the given assignments and when they did them. Moreover, doing exercises on mobile phones seemed to be motivating when compared with a paper-based exercises.

Since Thai students usually have mobile phones with them, mobile phones provide a ubiquitous learning that closely fits their habits. As such, it was more convenient for all students in the SMS-based group to do exercises whenever they want to, while students in paper-based group had to complete the tasks in class. The old way of teaching was probably the cause of boredom (Ornprapat & Wiwat, 2015, p. 169).

While the researchers perhaps fairly deduced the reasons why incorporating texting into the lesson was so effective, the results of the texting study, and the other technology studies discussed here show how technology is a powerful tool for teaching vocabulary. Modern students have positive regard for technology tools and if designed in an engaging way, computer-assisted and mobile phone-assisted lessons can be very effective for breaking the traditional classroom routine and adding enjoyment to lessons. One may argue, therefore, that classroom games perhaps do the same thing for classroom instruction. Playing games in class increases student enjoyment and adds something different to a traditional lesson. Furthermore, classroom games as an instructional technique have been employed as an instructional strategy for some time. The next section will discuss games as an instructional technique.

### **Games as an instructional technique**

The use of games as a classroom instructional technique is not new. In research with college business students, Azriel, Erthal, & Starr (2005) found via surveys of the students that the students overwhelmingly preferred playing a Jeopardy game in class to review for an exam over a lecture-driven review. However, comparing the average exam scores of students who reviewed for the exam with Jeopardy versus a control group of

students that had a typical lecture style and question/answer review revealed no real difference in exam scores. These results showed that the game method of review was equally as effective for learning as the traditional method; however, the surveys showed that students overwhelmingly preferred the game method (Azriel, Erthal, & Starr, 2005).

Games are similarly popular in ESL classrooms. In her EWU Master's thesis on student motivation and games, Yang (2007) conducted research with 4 different commercial games used in the classroom to teach core language skills (speaking, reading, vocabulary, and grammar). The games she tested were Mad Gab, Boggle, Guessture, and Pictionary. Yang facilitated the games in an English 112 classroom of college ESL students and then collected samples of students' journal writing about the benefits and challenges of playing the games in class. Through analysis of the students' journals, she found that students experienced the games as a fun and a motivating way to learn. Most of the students who participated in the study wrote in their journals that they had fun playing the games (Yang, 2007).

Beyond just being enjoyable and fun, playing games in the classroom to practice language skills can help students retain the content they are learning and achieve greater language fluency by assisting with the cognitive processes that convert knowledge from short-term to long-term memory. Macedonia (2005) proposed the concept of using games as tools for the targeted proceduralisation of declarative knowledge in language learning. Knowledge of language rules such as grammar constructions is considered declarative (fact) knowledge; however, a person who becomes fluent in a language no longer thinks about the rules because their declarative knowledge has become

proceduralized. Macedonia asserts that repetition and oral practice while playing targeted language games lead to proceduralisation (Macedonia, 2005).

In a study done with elementary aged ESL students in Iran, Afsaneh, Barati, & Youhanaee (2013) contrasted two approaches to teaching EFL vocabulary, the Audiolingual method, which focuses on grammar, choral responses, memorization and repetition and the Natural approach which has its foundations in Krashen's (1987) language acquisition theories. The final test scores of two groups exposed to each approach were analyzed to compare the improvement of the young learner's vocabulary and communicative skills. The results showed significant improvement with the Natural approach compared in that of Audiolingual method. Thus repetition of words alone via the Audiolingual method, as discussed earlier, may not be as effective as a more communicative approach to vocabulary instruction as in the Natural approach. The natural approach is based on one of the pioneers of second language acquisition theory, Krashen (1987). The main aspect of Krashen's theory posits that the primary function of language education is the teaching of communicative abilities. Many aspects of Krashen's language acquisition theory are emphasized through game playing in the classroom (Afsaneh, Barati, & Youhanaee). For example, "acquisition takes place naturally without the learner being consciously aware of it" (Afsaneh, Barati, & Youhanaee, p. 3). Comprehensible input and opportunities to produce meaningful output are also integral to Krashen's theory. However, the most relevant aspect of his theory to using games as an instructional method is the affective filter hypothesis.

**The Affective Filter** The affective filter "is mainly about the learner's inner state. To be receptive for the input leading to language acquisition it is important that the

learner is relaxed and comfortable” (Afsaneh, Barati, & Youhanaee, p. 3). Elizabeth Swanson (2007) wrote in her article *20 Ways to Influence Vocabulary Acquisition for English Language Learners* that when learning new vocabulary, learners need an environment “...as comfortable as possible” (p. 292) in order for adequate language acquisition to take place. Affective factors considered essential to learning are motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety (Ni, 2012). Research on motivation has found that there are five main elements that increase intrinsic motivation: challenge, curiosity, control, cooperation and competition, and recognition (Zhao, 2015). Classroom activities that contain some or all of these elements lead to better language acquisition, and many of these elements can be found in a classroom game activity. Yang’s (2007) thesis on games and motivation discussed how the games she played with students in class were fun for the students (as the majority of students wrote in their journals), and therefore decreased the students’ anxiety. All of this research suggests that when learners are having fun playing games, their motivation is high, their anxiety is low, and they are most receptive to the new language input.

Chinese researchers Gong, Jiang, and Wei (2015) studied the affective filter and its impact on student learning. They defined affect based on Bloom, and Masia’s (1964) definition as “a generic term to describe such phenomena as emotions, attitudes, beliefs, moods, and conation” (Gong, Jiang, and Wei, 2015, p. 790). They argued that “the learner’s affective factors will exert a basically positive or negative influence on what they learn” (p. 790). They further discussed Krashen’s (1985) Second Language Acquisition theory of the Affective Filter Hypothesis which stated that:

providing students a lot of language input doesn't mean that they can learn target language well, for the process of second language acquisition is also influenced by affective factors. Language input can change into language output only through affective filtration. When the students are relaxed and their affective filtration is low, they can acquire language and learn faster. So it is self-evident that affective factors play a positive or a negative role in the process of language input (p. 790).

Gong, Jiang, and Wei's (2015) study included 64 sophomores who were English majors at a university in southwestern China in the School of Foreign Languages. The participants were from two classes in the same grade, taught by the same teacher and had similar experience in terms of English language background. The same teaching materials, English textbooks, were used with both the experimental group and the control group. "To avoid any Pygmalion effect, the participants were not allowed to know about the study" ( p. 791). In the study, affective instruction was set as an independent variable, while dependent variables included motivation, anxiety, attitude, and confidence, and students' achievements on both pretests and posttests (p. 791). The experimental group was exposed to teaching methods, learning arrangements, and an instructor whose behavior supported "affective instruction" such as "task-based language teaching" where the students worked in small groups with scaffolding and guidance from the teacher, and the teacher frequently praised students with comments like "Well done!" and "Amazing job!" and "Excellent!" (p. 792). The researchers concluded that "...this relaxed and friendly context motivated students to learn and their self-confidence was established" (p. 792). The results showed that students in the "affective" classroom

performed better on post-tests measuring cloze, grammar and vocabulary, reading, and writing as compared to the control classroom. In addition, their scores on the independent variable tests of motivation, anxiety, attitude, and confidence showed increases over pre-test scores (p. 794-795).

### **Games increase students' participation in learning**

Using games to teach core language skills can facilitate active participation of all students in a lesson. Reese and Wells (2007) found that an interactive card game they developed for teaching conversation skills to international students who were planning to attend U.S. graduate schools solved a common problem found in ESL classrooms: the more extroverted students dominate conversations while quieter students participate less or not at all. The card game activity, which they titled "The Conversation Game," encouraged all students to actively participate in conversations while they were following the rules and structure of the game activity. The game was entertaining, and even the quieter students appeared engaged in the activity.

### **Using Games to Teach ESL/EFL Vocabulary**

In her chapter describing the foundations for teaching ESL/EFL vocabulary, Zimmerman states:

Engaging topics and tasks lead learners to thoughtful analysis and provide opportunities for them to reflect on words and their use. Research shows that learners are more likely to remember words when they pay attention to them and have to manipulate them. (Zimmerman, 2014, p. 292)

Vocabulary games and role plays are the perfect opportunity for learners to participate in an engaging task which helps them to acquire the new vocabulary in memory better than learning it alone from the dictionary would.

Javad A'lipour and Ketabi (2010) describe an original game they use to teach vocabulary to EFL students in their classes. The game consists of students on two teams guessing the words written on a card after receiving clues from a teammate. The student giving clues to his team tries to describe the word with synonyms, definitions or alternate linguistic devices until his team is able to guess the word. Javad A'lipour & Ketabi found many benefits to the game, including competitiveness between the teams, leading to student motivation to actively participate in the activity by all of the students describing or guessing the word. One negative that the researchers found with the game was that the students describing the word tended to use simplistic synonyms and did not often gravitate towards more complex structures. Their suggestion for teachers who plan to use the game in their classrooms was to offer incentives, such as extra points or prizes, for the students who tried using more complex structures in their definitions. Javad A'lipour and Ketabi (2010) maintain that the use of games to teach vocabulary accommodates for multiple learning styles in the learners while making the lessons more interesting. They lament that vocabulary teaching is dominated by “traditional memorization drills” and discuss a point made by Graves (2000) who argued that “ESL teachers who want to improve students’ vocabularies realize that they have to foster classrooms that accommodate multiple learning intelligences...” and that “games have always been recognized as important tools that can dramatically change the atmosphere of the class” (Javad A'lipour, & Ketabi, 2010, p. 1) As Javad A'lipour and Ketabi suggest, games

such as the one they describe provide important classroom tools and using them as a teaching approach facilitates vocabulary learning in an way that is engaging for the students.

Wells and Narkon (2011) describe three specific vocabulary games they have used to teach ESL vocabulary: Mystery Word, Word-O and Word Sorts. The Mystery Word game involves the entire classroom of students guessing a word in response to the teacher's clues. The teacher writes 10-20 vocabulary words on the board and then proceeds to give clues about the word while the students ask questions. Sample clues given by the teacher are: "The mystery word has 5 letters" or "the mystery word snows". The Word-O game is modeled after Bingo. Students are provided with Bingo-style cards with their target words written on them. The teacher calls out definitions and the students must cover the word on their card that matches the definition. The first student to win a "Word-O" must verify that s/he got all of the words correct first and then wins! Word Sorts is a game where students work in small groups or pairs to sort target words into categories. Students are encouraged to think about how the target words are similar to or different from each other. The students can create pairs or groups of words and must explain to the class their rationale for their choices. Wells and Narkon found that using these games in the classroom kept students attentive and motivated the students to learn vocabulary. However, further research is still needed to determine whether the games they describe led to vocabulary acquisition.

Sadeghi and Sharifi (2013) investigated the effect of four post-teaching activities on the vocabulary acquisition of 111 beginner adult EFL earners in Iran. The four activities were games, narrative writing, role-play, and speaking tasks. The post-tests

revealed that all of the activities were effective approaches to teaching vocabulary, with games and role plays being the most effective. Regarding classroom activities for learning vocabulary, they discuss a need for a teaching approach that requires all learners to make contributions. Specifically, they state that “language students need the willingness to be active learners over a long period of time; otherwise, there will be a low chance of retaining vocabulary, regardless of the quality of instruction” (Sadeghi & Sharifi, 2013, p. 2). They also advocate for students participating in different task based activities to further improve their vocabulary learning. As discussed earlier, the use of games to teach vocabulary is a task based teaching approach. Task based lessons also “especially focus on helping learners develop and use words in different contexts by making the lessons enjoyable” (Sadeghi & Sharifi, 2013, p. 2).

Sadeghi and Sharifi also cite research by Wierus and Wierus (1994) which stresses that games provide students with motivation to learn in a relaxed atmosphere: “a factor in students’ willingness to allocate their time and effort is their interest and motivation...By bringing fun to language classrooms, games help create a relaxed atmosphere, which plays a role in students’ remembering things faster and better” (Wierus & Wierus, cited in Sadeghi & Sharifi, p. 4). Furthermore, games boost motivation and “help them engage with vocabulary cognitively, which results in improvements in acquisition rates and deeper levels of processing” (Sadeghi & Sharifi, 2013, p. 4). In addition, Sorayaie Azar (2012) found advantages to learning vocabulary in different ways. First, “games facilitate the retention of new words by bringing in relaxation and fun to learners. Second, they usually involve friendly competition and keep learners interested” (Sadeghi & Sharifi, 2013, p. 4).

Fahim and Sabah (2012) conducted a study with 40 pre-university Iranian students who had been exposed to a lesson in which they participated in a role play game using targeted vocabulary words. The researchers found that the students who participated in the role play had better acquisition of vocabulary words on a post-test in contrast to a control group who received no treatment. They cite Sánchez, Morfín, and Campos (2007) who stated that all effective classroom games have three common aspects to them including: competition, rules, and enjoyment. Sánchez, Morfín, and Campos argued that “Competition interactive games build up the student’s motivation, as they are constantly engaged in the daily competition” (Fahim & Sabah, p. 1279). They also asserted that rules were critical to the outcome of a game, providing structure and boundaries for the activity. Finally, regarding enjoyment, Sánchez, Morfín, and Campos state that games increase students’ motivation to learn through enjoyment of the activity and that students become more interested in learning the language.

### **Are games the only or best way to learn?**

Despite all of the praise for classroom games found in the literature, are games really considered the most effective way for ESL/EFL students to learn vocabulary? Ostovar-Namaghi and Rajaei (2013) found in their research that high school students who received solitary vocabulary learning strategy training performed better on post-tests than those who received the traditional vocabulary instruction of written exercises in a textbook. The “strategies” taught to the experimental student group consisted of skills for learning vocabulary independently. One may infer from this study that learning vocabulary alone, with knowledge of the appropriate strategies, could be just as effective

as playing a game in class. Games are effective, but in this case so are strategy-based solitary methods of learning.

Teachers' resistance to facilitating game activities should also be considered when examining the effectiveness of classroom games to facilitate vocabulary development for ESL and EFL learners. In her article discussing teaching games as a methodology to student-teachers learning to be high school EFL teachers in Malaysia, Gaudart (1999) documented a concern that many of her student-teachers expressed about using games in the classroom. In short, the student-teachers were concerned about noise in their classrooms and did not want to be scrutinized by their principals. To address such concerns, cultural factors and classroom context should be taken into consideration when designing vocabulary curriculum.

### **Summary**

In summary, much of the literature suggests that using classroom games for vocabulary instruction is an effective method of teaching vocabulary in an ESL/EFL context. Findings suggest that students enjoy games as an instructional technique and that a fun, relaxed classroom atmosphere leads to more a more enjoyable learning experience. The research also shows that playing word games in class helps students retain new words better in memory and that engaging activities such as games and role plays lead to better vocabulary performance on post-tests than alternative activities. The current research provides ample studies addressing the topic of teaching ESL/EFL vocabulary in general and using games as a technique more specifically; however, more case-study research on the topic which seeks the effects of specific games on learning will allow ESL/EFL educators to determine the most effective and specific types of games to use for teaching vocabulary to their students.

## **Chapter 3.**

### **Research Methods, Data Collection, and Analysis**

This chapter includes background on the class and research subjects who participated in this study, a description of the game sessions we conducted, and a description of the student journal data we collected, with a brief analysis of student journal themes. A description of how we conducted a vocabulary assessment and the result of the quantitative data collection are also included.

### **Background**

#### **Composition for Multilingual Writers (English 112)**

English 112, or *Composition for Multilingual Writers*, is a college level writing course for multilingual writers at Eastern Washington University. English 112 is defined in the online catalogue:

A course designed for the international student and those students whose native language is not English. Content is adapted to the needs of students in such areas as idiom, usage, reading comprehension and composition, as well as library activities. Students must earn a minimum grade of 2.0 before being allowed to proceed to ENGL 101 (EWU English course descriptions).

English 112 is a five-day-a-week class. The curriculum of the class used for this study was based on Eleanor Roosevelt's biography, which the students read throughout the quarter. Additional supplemental readings and videos were used to reinforce thematic topics encountered in the biography. Supplemental topics included American History, issues surrounding disability, worker and human rights, and others. In English 112,

students write daily journal entries of at least 100 words, and every Friday they write an in-class essay of at least 500 words. New vocabulary lists were introduced weekly in context of the readings and videos, and students were required to keep track of any new words as they encountered them in the readings. Students were directly assessed on their knowledge of the new vocabulary in context by being required to use at least 10 new words in each of their Friday essays.

### **The research subjects**

Like many other EWU thesis projects (Yang , 2007; Okabe, 2008; Leung, 2013; Alrasheed, 2015) the students who participated in this study were enrolled in an English 112 class at Eastern Washington University. For this study specifically, the students were enrolled in the fall quarter 2015, Section 1 of English 112, which was taught by Dr. LaVona Reeves, who is the chair and responsible investigator of this thesis project. The class used in this study had 25 international students and five graduate student instructional interns. One student returned to Saudi Arabia early, and one student was ill on the week of the final; therefore, we collected data on 23 students. Of the 23 students who participated in the study, 21 were from Saudi Arabia (all but one of these students were male), and 2 were from Japan (one male and one female). Many of the students had studied English previously in their own countries or had completed initial English studies through Level 5 at the ELI (English Language Institute) on campus.

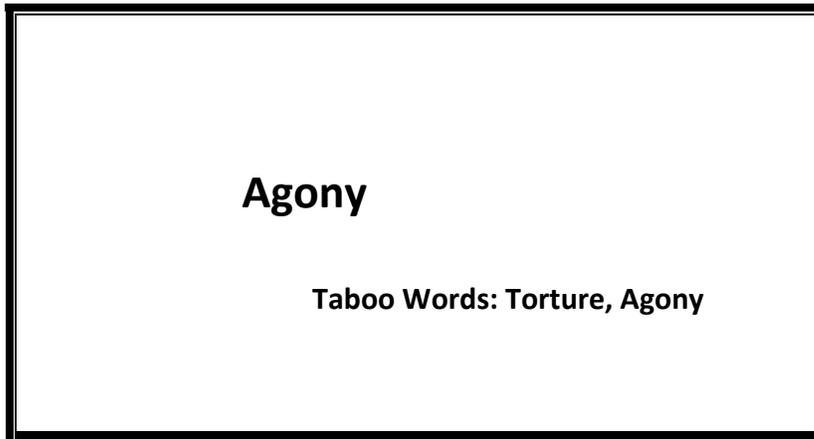
### **Setting up the game**

The game used for this study was based on a popular board game named Taboo. In Taboo, word cards with a target word and five “taboo” words are used. Each player

must get their team to guess the target word on the card without using the taboo words as clues. In order to adapt the game to an English 112 class, we had to first create word cards with the target vocabulary. Forty-five target vocabulary words were chosen by the researcher from class materials: presentations, handouts, and weekly word lists of up to 20 words that the students had been given throughout the quarter. For each target vocabulary word, a 3x5 word card with the target word and one to three taboo words were created. The target vocabulary word was always one of the taboo words. Table 1 includes the word list we used for the game. Figure 1 is an example of one of the game cards.

**Table 1: Taboo Game Word List**

1. Agitator	23. personable
2. Agony	24. persuade
3. Apprentice	25. polio
4. Autobiography	26. rehabilitated
5. Bewildered	27. rejoice
6. Campaign	28. reprove
7. Charity	29. seized
8. Cherished	30. shame
9. Civil Rights	31. slum
10. Congressmen	32. Social Justice
11. Cope	33. solemn
12. Desolate	34. sophisticated
13. Dread	35. sprawling
14. Gaiety	36. strenuous
15. Graceful	37. subsided
16. Great Depression	38. suffrage
17. Haggard	39. timid
18. Human Rights	40. transform
19. Immerse	41. trouble-shooter
20. Insurmountable	42. veteran
21. Obedient	43.vibrancy
22. Obstacles	44. victory
	45. widow



**Figure 1: Taboo game word card example**

Each 3x5 word card had one target vocabulary word and one to three “taboo” words on it. At the first and second sessions of playing the game, there was only one set of 45 word cards which were divided up among the players. By the final session, five identical sets of word cards were made in different colors so that we could have five groups playing the game, each using all of the available words at the same time.

### **Playing the game**

**First Session** The first session of playing the game was during week ten of the Composition for Multilingual Writers course. We had about 15 minutes toward the end of the class period to play the game. The researcher spent a few minutes presenting the rules (which were written on the board) and then the class was divided into two teams for play. Two students were standing at the front of the room and attempting to describe their words to their respective teams at the same time. The students did not immediately catch on to the flow of the game and there was some difficulty in guessing the target

word. In addition, the students who were guessing the word did not have a word list to refer to/choose from so it was very difficult for them to guess words. Confusion ensued when one student, attempting to get his team to guess the word “gaiety”, got his team to guess “gay marriage” and then raised his hands in victory. Although impressive that he got his team to guess this, it was obvious that the target word and taboo word (gay) in this context was not entirely understood. In addition, this confusion caused disruption in the other team’s play as the other team’s students were not having success at guessing their word, and all attention was focused on the celebrating student. In a post-session discussion between the researcher and the instructor, it was evident that we would need to make some changes to the game before the next session. Following is the list of game rules as they were presented to the students before the first session:

#### Taboo Game Rules

1. The class will be divided into two teams.
2. One person from each team reads a word card (not out loud but to yourself).
3. The word card contains a vocab word and one or more “taboo” words.
4. You must describe the word to your team and get them to guess the word. You may not say the taboo words on the card.
5. The first team to guess their word wins the round.
6. Continue playing the game with a different person from your team playing a word card each round.
7. The team who wins the most rounds wins the game.

**Second Session** The second session was done a few days later in the Composition for Multilingual Writers class during the final week of classes. We had half an hour toward the end of the class session for the game. The rules and procedures of the game had been revised and the changes were explained orally to all (note: a written version of the rules was not provided). The game rules were changed for this session in order to

make clear the instructions for playing the game and in order to increase the speed of the game. During the first session, students were not having success at quickly guessing words and were distracted by the opposing team. Therefore, based on discussions between the instructor and researcher after the first session, several changes were made. Students were grouped into teams based on the small groups they had been working with all quarter. Each small group had one or two interns to help facilitate the game and answer questions. The changes we made to the game showed significant improvement over the first attempt. With interns facilitating, students were able to receive help with word definitions, increasing their likelihood of success. In addition, playing the game with a smaller group of classmates that they were familiar with, students appeared to feel safer to speak up and guess the words. During this session, the game also moved much faster than our first attempt, allowing us to get through a significant number of words. Following is the list of rules and instructions that were presented orally to students during this second session of playing the game:

#### Taboo Game Rules and Instructions

1. The class will be divided into teams based on your small groups that you have been working with all quarter. Each small group will have one or more interns to help you with the game. Your team will sit in a circle to play the game.
2. You will receive a word card that contains a vocabulary word and one or more “taboo” words.
3. Read the card silently and take note of the taboo words. Note you are not allowed to speak the taboo words. Ask your intern for help if you do not know the meaning of the word.

4. Describe the vocabulary word to your team. Your goal is to get the team to guess the vocabulary word on the card. You can describe the word by:
  - a. Providing a definition for the word.
  - b. Explaining how the word relates to Eleanor's life.
  - c. Providing either similar words or words opposite to the meaning. For example: "This word is like \_\_\_" or "The opposite meaning of this word is \_\_\_\_\_."
  - d. Using gestures or other methods to convey the meaning of the word.
  - e. Rhyming: "This word rhymes with \_\_\_\_\_."

**NOTE: The taboo words may give you a clue about the meaning of the vocabulary word on the card; however, you are not allowed to speak the taboo words.**

5. If your team correctly guesses the vocabulary word on your card within one minute, the team will receive one point. Place the card face up in the middle of the table to be counted later.
6. The team only has one minute to guess your vocabulary word correctly. If no one guesses the word, place the card face down in the middle of the table, then the next person on the team should play the next word card.
7. All teams playing the game should be trying to play as many word cards as fast as they can during the allotted time. Therefore, each team is racing against the clock. After the allotted time is up, the team who guessed the most words correctly (counted by the number of word cards facing up in the middle of the table) wins the game!

### **Third Session**

The third and final session of playing the game occurred during a review session held a few days before the students' final exam, during finals week. All of the students showed up for this review session and were aware ahead of time that one of the activities at the session would be playing the game. In addition, the students had been given vocabulary lists at the end of the second game session, which they had been told to study for the final. There were two vocabulary lists provided to students: one with words used in the game and another with other words not used in the game. In total, there were about 200 words on the lists for the students to study for the final. The rules and instructions for the game had not changed since the last session, and students were now familiar with the flow of the game; however, students were reminded of the rules orally. We divided the students into five teams, each led by an intern or teacher, and students played the game for about 45 minutes. One slight change to the rules at this session was that competition between teams was not emphasized. Rather, students were hoping to get through all of the word cards within their own team as quickly as they could. Any missed words would be set aside and reviewed again, with the assistance of an intern, until all of the words had been reviewed. This change was made because the purpose of the session was review for the final exam, comprehension, and a chance to study all of the words. After each group had made it through all of their word cards, we asked the students to sign a consent form and write a journal of about 100 words reflecting on their experience with the game. The changes we made to the game after each session are summarized in Table 2.

**Table 2: Changes made to Taboo game: Sessions One through Three**

<b>Session One</b>	<b>Session Two</b>	<b>Session Three</b>
Students were divided into two large teams.	Students were divided into several small teams, each led by an intern.	Students were divided into several small teams, each led by an intern.
Two students from each team competed at the same time, trying to get their team to guess the target word first.	Several teams played independently competing against the clock and other teams for the most number of correctly guessed target words.	Several teams played independently competing against the clock, with the goal of getting through all of the target words as a team.
Written rules were provided on the board. No instruction was provided on ways to describe words.	Rules were provided orally. Instructions were given on how to play the game effectively (ways to describe words).	Rules were provided orally. Instructions were given on how to play the game effectively (ways to describe words).
No assistance was given to students as they played the game.	An intern was provided for each team to facilitate and answer questions.	An intern was provided for each team to facilitate and answer questions.
Students did not have a word list to refer to when guessing words.	Students were given a word list to refer to but did not have time to study it before playing the game.	Students had been provided with a word list and had been given a chance to study it before playing the game.
Students played the game for 15 minutes	Students played the game for 30 minutes	Students played the game for 45 minutes

### **Student Journals**

At the end of the last game session, the students each wrote a 100-word journal in five minutes about their experience with the game. We did not give the students detailed or written guidelines for their journals, but we did briefly provide some ideas orally for what they could write about: describe the game, tell what you liked or disliked about the game, what do you think are the benefits or challenges of the game, and whether you

think the game is a good activity to include in the English 112 class. Students signed a consent form confirming that they agreed to have their journal content and opinion shared in this study. The researcher typed up the content of each journal without editing any spelling or grammar mistakes, and the full transcripts of the journals follow.

## **Student Journals – Full Transcripts**

### **Student 1**

That game was helpful for us. It called a taboo. We can't use the word or a synonym. To do well in this game you should study the word and know what does it mean. In the bottom of the cards, there are words that we can't use while we describe the word. We were four people playing the game. It was fun and helpful in the same time. I learned today about three words that I don't know. It could be more fun if it was between two large groups. Thank you for teach us this game.

### **Student 2**

This game helped us to improve our pronunciation, and increase our academic vocabulary. I think this game is the best way to teach foreign students the academic vocabulary because it is fun in the same time. Changing the routine in class makes students to pay attention. In addition, some people love the challenges lives. Taboo also, is used as a test for ourselves to create definitions, and to make sure if students understood the exact word. I think that Taboo is benefite for all students. The English teachers should use Taboo to improve their student's skills.

### **Student 3**

In class tonight we played the taboo game. It was about the vocabulary word that we studed over to qurtar. The roles were to pass cards to all groups, and each person has to describe the word without using any word from the card. Personally, I enjoyed playing it. It let momarizing the word easily. Also it is a good opportunity to ask questions and write down defenations. The game was easy to know the rould, and hard to describe words I don't know. I'll advise to let the student that there will be a game or activity so we can at least know some of the words. Overall it is a good help to prepare for the final. Thank you all for your time and doing this for us.

#### **Student 4**

##### Taboo

The game for the vocabulary words was very useful for us because we had practiced and played this game many times to help the students to remember words as much as they use in the game. However, this game is not just to help them to remember the vocabulary words, it makes us to make many examples for the word. Also, the game was difficult sometime because there were many words that have difficult pronunciation that make the game very fun which make the students which is us to complete the game effectively (100 words).

#### **Student 5**

Having a new activity in a class room is very important for all the students. Teaching a regular class everyday might have a negative impact on students because they may get bored and then distracted. For example, I usually get distracted and out of concentrating if the class has nothing to catch my full attention. Therefore, changing the daily routine and doing something else such as a game or small talk would keep all the students in the same boat. In addition, the benefits will be more easy to get and remember because of some actions that happened during the activity.

#### **Student 6**

The game was very helpful for all of us. What I liked about the game was while we're trying to guess the correct word, we realized that we came up with new word and we learned. Some of the words were challenging for us but when we worked or group mentioned them all. In addition, it's so fun to change the daily routine and to do something helpful. I wish we still have time to play those kind of games in the future. Anyway, I hope that the students who are going to take this course next quarter will have more games because it's fun and beneficial.

#### **Student 7**

##### Vocab Games Taboo

The game is fun it really make people talk and play. Everyone has to play by explaining the word or by answering the correct word. It help too hear different meaning of the word. When you explain the words in the card there is taboo words you can't use it to explain the words, which make the game more fun and hard. The benefits of this game all the people need to play. Second, you learn the meaning of the word that you explain to the people and stay in your mind because you explain it. The important thing that the people they are not active in class they will become active in the game.

### **Student 8**

#### Taboo Words

The game is very efficient for learning hard vocabulary. I enjoyed playing this game. Trying to guess my partners' words or explaining mine. The game is the kind of having fun and learn at the same time. I had hard time memorizing some of the words that probably are not usually used in everyday basis but they perfectly expressive and useful overall. I did like the need of trying to explain the words I have, which makes it not easy to forget soon. The need to pronounce the words and having to hear others makes it better to learn the right way to pronounce. (107 words)

### **Student 9**

I like this game, it give me the chance to guess the meaning, catch the clues and memorize the words faster, These kind of games really activate the brain and breaks the routine, and making the learning fun and easy. It is "taboo game" when we have the chance to guess the meaning of a new words by giving definitions or synonyms. We set in a group and each one have four cards with a new word and if we get it right we score. Our team did great and we enjoyed playing with each other. Some of the challenges we had is that we thought that we know the word's meaning but it has a completely different meaning but same sound and spelling.

### **Student 10**

This game would help my vocabulary and make my English skill improve very well. I've played this game three times. It was a little tough for me, but I enjoyed at this game. When I played this game, I have to know the word's meaning and describe correctly, so my brain always was working. If I got the cards which are easy I would describe it easily, but if I got difficult ones I can't say anything or say something wrong and I have made people confused. This team game help our studying. On the other hand, there would be some students who don't like this game.

### **Student 11**

We played "Taboo" in class of English 112 on December 7, 2015. I think a good point of this game is to know the word better and will be able to use or explain the word if we didn't know before we played the game. We describe the word, and no one can see the word, so if we don't know the word, it might be difficult to guess, but it would be helpful to know the word. In addition, we can get many definition by using this game because we can't use the taboo words. The game is challenging as well when we don't know the word and can't describe it.

### **Student 12**

This game is helpful on vocabularies. Students practice words by thinking guessing and if some one get the word he will feel good by doing that if people just remembering words by himself he may easily get boring. But the problem is when some describe a word for me, what appears in my mind is not the word we are learning, by the word is in my memery, which I already know.

### **Student 13**

The game has many benefits, such as memorize the words, think about synonymes, and think deeply. This game gives me the ability to think in multiple words in one time. I remember when we played the game last week. I can remember my words that I have took with the different definition. However, we went through this game two times, if we do this every week I think I am going to be able to use these words in my normal days. My team did well in this game, and this game give you the spirit of challenging and you want to play it again.

### **Student 14**

I feel that practicing is really important. The game we did in the class was helpful for me. Their was a rouls in that game, it called "Taboo" so the student can practice the vocabulary feel be more ready for the final test. In the game every student should have more than two cards and these cards has one of the vocabulary words. The student should describe the word without using the same word he is supposed to describe. Moreover, in my opinion the game would help the students because in the final their a big chance that he would remember the word because of the game.

### **Student 15**

Vocab Games Taboo

I think that games will help a lot of student they could understand the meaning of the word. Also, the students will understand very fast because the other person in his or her group will give his partner so he could explain it to the others. Also, it's help me a lot to improve my writing. After that, I will never forget that meaning because I was in ??? position with the other student. It's also it's help us to understanding.

### **Student 16**

Taboo is a beautiful game and panefesioal time and my fellow students. The game was easy and I liked it because it was easy and fast and meaningful. A lot of words I have learned from this game, and we had fun and some laughs. I hope the game will help me on my tests and the daily life. I'm a Saudi student and I'm not the best speller, so this

game definitely made me learn more and to perfect the way of saying the words and how to write them. I hope the best for those who don't know the game, because Taboo students will always win.

### **Student 17**

In this game is very good game to learn the words and to be a good speaker. I loved the game and how to do it and you can learn more and more from it. The worse thing is the taboo words I dislike it because make the game harder and slowly but more challenging to try to describe. In this case the best thing is to have some meaning of the word. I think if you do a little help to know the words is better than to have taboos in the game. That's only reason to make it slowly.

### **Student 18**

I think the taboo game is very beneficial game. It helps student to memorize the words very easily. Moreover, the game helped me to memorize the word without even a previous study of the words. Now, I think I got most of the words through the game and no need of intensive study for the exam, because I have learned big portion of the exam. I think through this game students could easily learn the words and not just learning it. They will memorize the words for the long term. In conclusion, the game is very helpful for those who learning English and other languages.

### **Student 19**

Today my classmates and I played a game called Taboo, and it was an awesome game. The game was by words cards and we have to know what the word that written on the card. We just love to describe the words. My tem were seven people, and we played it well. We almost finish the cards, but there was no time because the class was almost over. So, our docter, who is Dr. Reeves said to let us write journals. The game was helpful to make me and my classmates study for the final exam.

### **Student 20**

#### Vocabulary Game

Today we played a good game called vocabulary game and we had a lot of fun. This game helped us to try to guess the meaning and to try how to explain the words to our group even if the word was very hard to explain it. The leader was very helpful with us and she tried to give us enough time to think about the words. It was very fast because every person took a number of words and try to explain it to the group. We won the game and we were very fast. That game will help us in the future and it is a good thing to practice the words every week.

### **Student 21**

I liked this game. It helps me with most of the words. Because if there is a word that I do not understand my classmates will know it and this can help me to understand the meaning of most of the words which helped me a lot. Another thing my classmates define it is like my English level which is much easier for me and for all the student. The problem with it is the time it is good for me as a student but as teacher I think it takes long time to finish the game. We did good with it. I used to play it at my old English school. I learned vocabularies more than here because of this game.

### **Student 22**

This game which is taboo game to remind student about vocabulary especially very hard academically words. The game rules are every person get several of cards. This cards have words had been written on them. Every individual should not revealed he words, though he have to describe for the others student. Everyone guess the definition and who got the word win a point. The game I think very useful especially for international student. Because English 112 has numerous of new very high level vocabulary words, taboo make these words easy to memorize and use. Also, it is very funny game which makes everybody participate.

### **Student 23**

The game that we had was very useful for us. It could analyze us to learn these words. Also, the way or the rule for the game is very awesome because it has us to think in the meaning to get the right words. When I was a child, I usually studied the words or the answers and I left the answers, so when I read the questions in the quiz, I was able to answer them, but without knowing what I was writing about. Also, the game was helping us to learn more than a word because of taboo. For example, if I'm looking for (timid) I need to find the synonym of it (shy) so in this case I got learned two words (timid, shy). Actually, the game is very good.

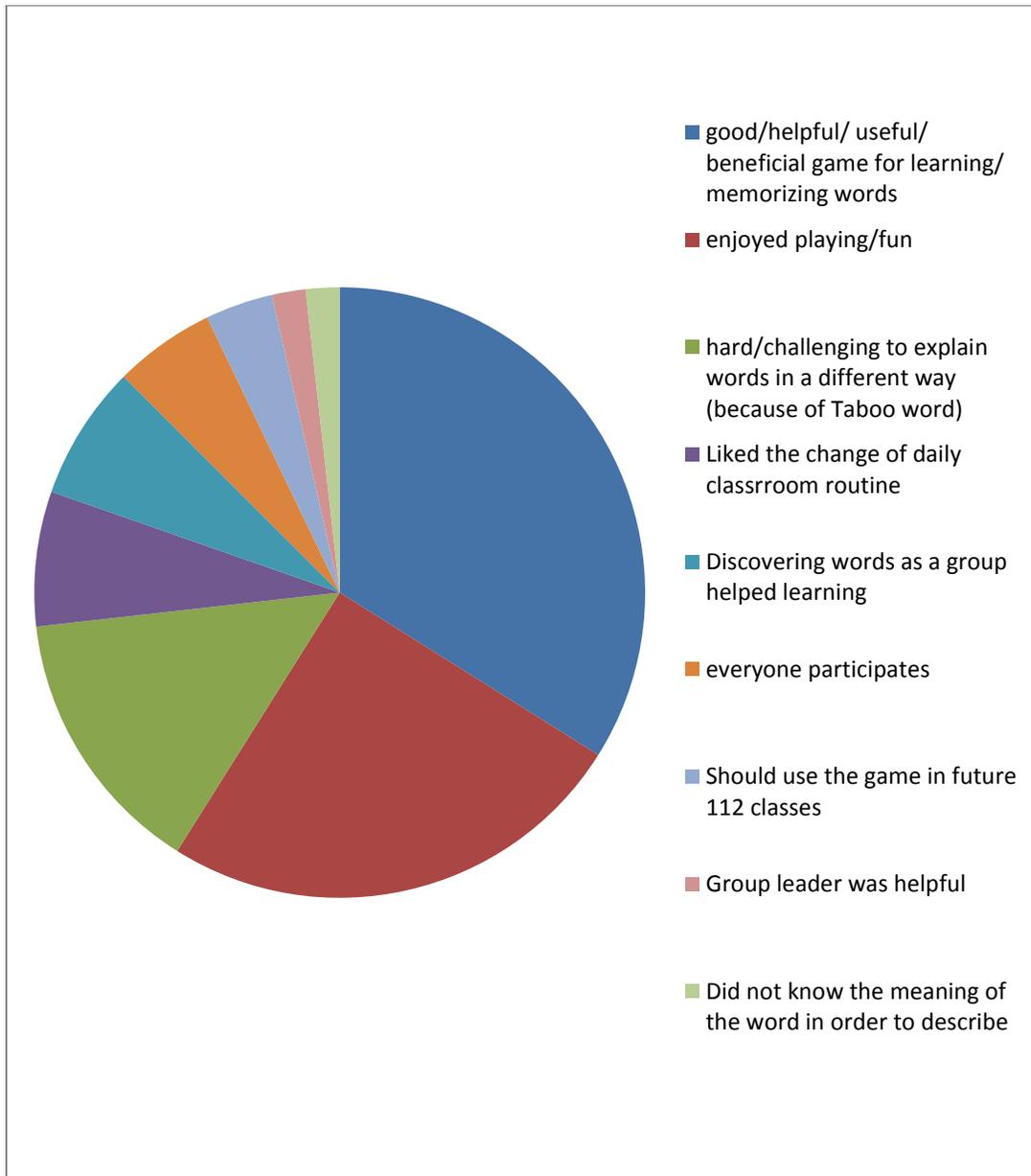
### **Student Journals – General theme analysis**

The researcher used the following process for a general theme analysis of the student journals. Each journal was read at least three times. When common themes emerged, the researcher recorded that theme, making tick marks each time the theme reappeared in subsequent journals. The journals were then read a fourth time to check the analysis. Based on the frequency of theme occurrence, nine main themes emerged,

describing both benefits and challenges of the game. The nine themes are represented in Figure 2.

The top three themes found in the journals were: 1. Students thought that the game was a good/helpful/useful/beneficial game for learning or memorizing words (19 of the 23 students wrote this); 2. Students enjoyed playing the game or thought it was fun (14 of the 23 students wrote this); 3. Students thought it was hard or challenging to explain words in a different way (8 of the 23 students wrote this). More details and analysis of the student journals are included in the discussion in Chapter 4.

## Student Journals: General Themes



**Figure 2: Student journals: General themes**

## Vocabulary Assessment

During the students' final exam, we assessed their knowledge of the vocabulary words that they had encountered throughout the quarter. They were assessed orally on

two sets of words: 1. The taboo game words and 2. Other vocabulary words that students had worked with during the quarter. A word list of about 200 total words (reflecting the 20-word weekly lists from the quarter) containing both the taboo words (that the researcher had previously selected from the lists) and other words (that the instructor and an assistant chose) had been provided to the students at the last class session, and students were told to study the lists for the final.

Thirty taboo words and thirty other words were chosen by the researcher, the instructor, and an assistant, in preparation for the assessment. Two sets of word cards were created from each list by the researcher. The word lists we used for the assessment are represented in Table 3 and Table 4.

**Table 3: Taboo Word List for Assessment**

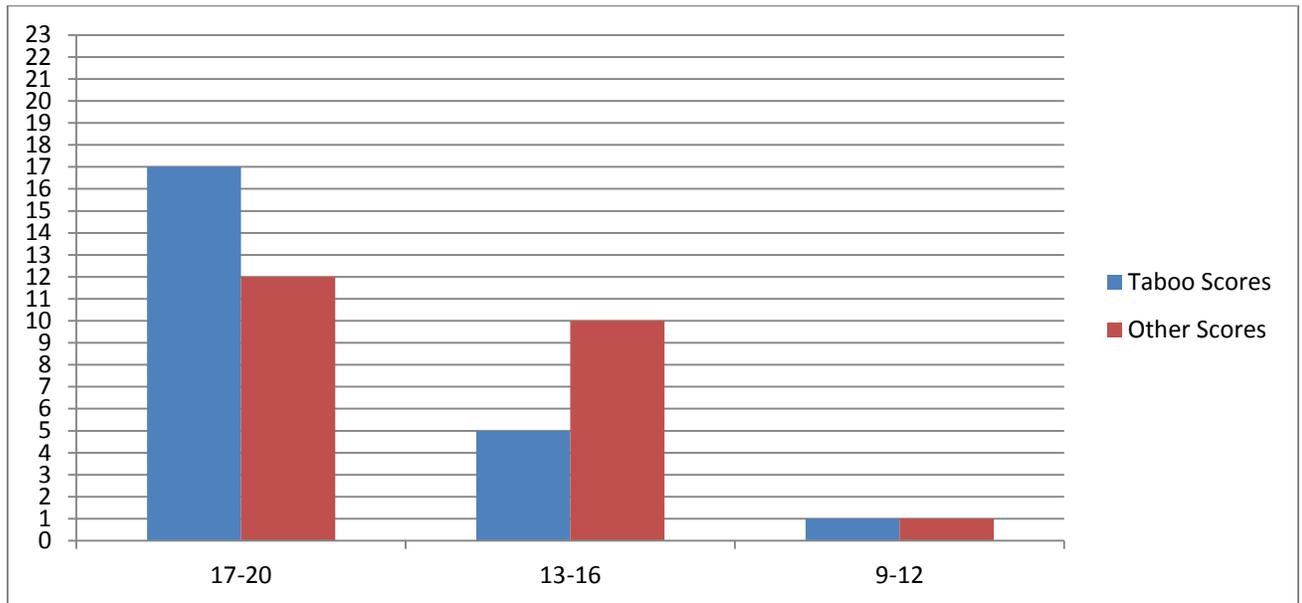
agony	apprentice	persuade	polio
autobiography	campaign	shame	slum
cherished	congressman	social justice	solemn
cope	desolate	sophisticated	suffrage
gaiety	graceful	timid	transform
great depression	haggard	window	veteran
human rights	insurmountable	vibrancy	victory
obedient	obstacles		

**Table 4: Other Word List for Assessment**

admiration	affection	orphan	overcame
agility	alcoholism	pistol	preside over
betray	brisk	press conference	scandalous
broadcast	champion	simplicity	self-assured
chauffeur	compensate	social activist	socialist
confessed	crouched	socialite	stunned
daily column	humiliation	substance abuse	vigorous
improper	matured		

The assessment procedure was as follows. First, word cards were put face down on the table in two piles of 30 words (one with taboo words and another with the other words). Students were asked to choose 15 word cards from each pile. For each word card, the students had to pronounce the word correctly (for 1 point) and define it or use it in a sentence correctly (for 1 point). A total of 2 points were possible for each word card, with a total of 60 points possible for the assessment. It was evident after the first two students were assessed that 15 words from each pile was taking too much time. Therefore, we changed the procedure slightly mid-assessment and asked the remaining students to choose only 10 word cards per pile. The new total points possible was 40 (a total of 20 points each for the taboo words and other words). Two people (the researcher and an assistant) collected this data in different areas outside of the classroom. Students were pulled out of the classroom and assessed one at a time. The results of the assessment are shown in Figure 3.

## Vocabulary Assessment Results: Taboo Score versus Other Scores



**Figure 3: Vocabulary assessment results**

As Figure 3 displays, the scores for the 23 students we tested show that the taboo word scores clustered higher around 17-20 total points (20 points is a perfect score), and the scores for the other words were more evenly distributed around both the higher scores of 17-20 points and the medium scores of 13-16 points. These results show that students performed higher with the taboo word list than the other word list.

### Summary of the data

The data we collected seems to both qualitatively and quantitatively suggest that playing the Taboo game in class was both a positive experience for students and an effective activity to support vocabulary acquisition. A discussion of the data in relation to the researcher's assumptions, and more of the researcher's reflections on the game-playing sessions will be covered in the next chapter, Chapter 4.

## **Chapter 4.**

### **Discussion and Reflections**

This chapter focuses on the results of the student journals and assessments in relation to the researcher's assumptions from the introduction, as well as researcher reflections. The student journal analysis in this chapter was done by scanning for key words in the journals and was based on the foundational thematic analysis discussed in Chapter 3.

#### **Assumption #1: Classroom games are beneficial to learning.**

Through analysis of the student journals, we found that the students mostly thought that the game we played was beneficial to learning. 19 out of the 23 students stated in their journals that the taboo game we played was a good/helpful/useful/beneficial game for learning/memorizing words. Students had the following to say about the usefulness of the game:

**Student 10:** "This game would help my vocabulary and make my English skill improve very well. I've played this game three times. It was a little tough for me, but I enjoyed at this game. When I played this game, I have to know the word's meaning and describe correctly, so my brain always was working... This team game help our studying."

**Student 1:** "That game was helpful for us.... I learned today about three words that I don't know."

**Student 2:** "This game helped us to improve our pronunciation, and increase our academic vocabulary.... I think that Taboo is benefite for all students."

**Student 3:** “It let momarizing the word easily. Also it is a good opportunity to ask questions and write down defenations...Overall it is a good help to prepare for the final.”

**Student 4:** “The game for the vocabulary words was very useful for us because we had practiced and played this game many times to help the students to remumber words as much as they use in the game.”

**Student 6:** “The game was very helpful for all of us. What I liked about the game was while we’re trying to guess the correct word, we realized that we came up with new word and we lerned.”

**Student 7:** “The benefits of this game all the people need to play. Second, you learn the meaning of the word that you explain to the people and stay in your mind because you explain it.”

**Student 8:** “The game is very efficient for learning hard vocabulary.... I did like the need of trying to explain the words I have, which makes it not easy to forget soon.”

**Student 9:** “I like this game, it give me the chance to guess the meaning, catch the clues and memorize the words faster.”

**Student 12:** “This game is helpful on vocabularies. Students practice words by thinking guessing and if some one get the word he will feel good by doing that if people just remembering words by himself he may easily get boring.”

**Student 13:** “The game has many benefits, such as memorize the words, think about synonimes, and think deeply. This game gives me the ability to think in multiple words in one time.”

**Student 14:** “The game we did in the class was helpful for me...in my opinion the game would help the students because in the final their a big chance that he would remember the word because of the game.”

**Student 15:** “I think that games will help a lot of student they could understand the meaning of the word... It’s also it’s help us to understanding.”

**Student 17:** “In this game is very good game to learn the words and to be a good speaker. I loved the game and how to do it and you can learn more and more from it.”

**Student 18:** “I think the taboo game is very beneficial game. It helps student to memorize the words very easily. Moreover, the game helped me to memorize the word without even a previous study of the words. Now, I think I got most of the words through the game and no need of intensive study for the exam, because I have learned big portion of the exam. I think through this game students could easily learn the words and not just learning it. They will memorize the words for the long term. In conclusion, the game is very helpful for those who learning English and other languages.”

**Student 19:** “The game was helpful to make me and my classmates study for the final exam.”

**Student 20:** “That game will help us in the future and it is a good thing to practice the words every week.”

The researcher and instructor were encouraged that this was the highest occurring theme in the student journals. The work that was put in to designing, implementing, and adjusting the game activity seemed to have paid off by increasing students’ motivation to

participate and learn vocabulary. The fact that the students found the game useful informed us that the game is possibly an appropriate activity to include in future English 112 classes.

**Assumption #2: Incorporating a vocabulary game into the 112 course will allow learners to have fun while learning vocabulary.**

The students told us in their journals that they mostly had fun playing the game. 14 out of the 23 students stated specifically in their journals that they enjoyed or had fun playing the taboo game. Some of the student comments were:

**Student 8:** “I enjoyed playing this game.”

**Student 16:** “A lot of words I have learned from this game, and we had fun and some laughs.”

**Student 9:** “These kind of games really activate the brain and breaks the routine, and making the learning fun and easy.”

**Student 8:** “The game is the kind of having fun and learn at the same time.”

**Student 3:** “Personally, I enjoyed playing it.”

**Student 7:** “The game is fun it really make people talk and play.”

These comments indicate that the students were having fun and enjoying themselves while engaged with the game. One of the main goals for including games in lessons is that students enjoy themselves and therefore reduce their anxiety and lower the affective filter. It was somewhat surprising to see that this theme in the student journals was only the second highest theme as opposed to the first highest (as the researcher was hoping to

find). Either way, it still appeared in the top three of all of the journal themes that emerged.

**Assumption #3: Playing a vocabulary game in class will build a community of learners.**

The first few sessions we played the game, students were competing against other teams. This dynamic was not creating the type of classroom community we hoped for. After discussions between the researcher and instructor, modifications were made so at the final session, students played in their small teams and had the support of an intern. The competition between teams was eliminated and the goal became about getting through all of the words as an intact smaller team. This created a community aspect within each team as students were helping and supporting each other. This is what some of the students had to say about their teams in their journals:

**Student 15:** "...the students will understand very fast because the other person in his or her group will give his partner so he could explain it to the others."

**Student 6:** "Some of the words were challenging for us but when we worked or group metioned them all."

**Student 9:** "Our team did great and we enjoyed playing with each other."

**Student 13:** "My team did well in this game, and this game give you the spirit of challenging and you want to play it again."

**Student 20:** "The leader was very helpful with us and she tried to give us enough time to think about the words."

**Student 21:** "...if there is a word that I do not understand my classmates will know it and this can help me to understand the meaning of most of the words which helped me a lot."

The students' comments show just how important the small team dynamics were to the success of the game activity. The researcher and instructor learned from this adjustment made to the game activity and would recommend this type of learning arrangement for any teacher who wishes to replicate the study and/or introduce taboo game in their own classroom.

**Assumption #4: Students' vocabulary acquisition will be positively affected by playing a vocabulary game in class.**

The quantitative data we collected on students' vocabulary knowledge after playing the game three times did find that students performed better on the words used in the taboo game than they did on other words. We found with the scores for the 23 students we tested that the taboo word scores clustered higher around 17-20 total points (20 points is a perfect score), and the scores for the other words were more evenly distributed around both the higher scores of 17-20 points and the medium scores of 13-16 points. The data does seem to confirm that the students performed slightly better with the taboo word list than they did with the other word list on the assessment.

**Assumption #5: A vocabulary game is a simple and straightforward classroom activity, and, if prepared well, should not be difficult to implement in an English 112 classroom.**

The process for preparing the taboo game was more difficult than expected. The researcher found that creating word cards with appropriate taboo words was quite

challenging. Choosing the proper taboo words for each card required using appropriate synonyms that would not be too common or easy, so the student reading the card during the game could more think of additional synonyms to use as clues. For this reason, many of the word cards had only one taboo word in addition to the target vocabulary word itself. Interestingly, we found in the process of playing the game that the taboo words on the card offered additional support for the students in knowing the definition of the target word. This was an added bonus to the usefulness of the game for learning.

In the process of teaching the Taboo game, I learned as a researcher and novice teacher that well-planned activities do not always go the way that they're meant to go. My original plan was to play the game with two large teams of students competing against each other at the same time, with different words assigned to each team. In practice, this method was not very effective. The two teams were distracting to each other and the focus seemed to be more on the competition between teams as opposed to learning. Also, at the first session, the game rules were fairly simplified and did not provide examples of how to play the game or provide clues, which would have helped the students understand how to play the game better. Discussions between the researcher and classroom instructor led to changes in the game for the subsequent sessions so that students were organized into small teams with the group of students they had been working closely with all quarter and provided an intern for support. The small teams performed much better, played faster, and worked together more cooperatively than the two large teams did. This was a valuable lesson for the researcher, and this learning arrangement is recommended for those who would like to reproduce the taboo game in their own classroom.

## **Chapter 5.**

### **Conclusions, Limitations, and Recommendations for Future Research**

The purpose of the present study was to examine the benefits and challenges of using a vocabulary game, Taboo, in the English 112 classroom, as well as collect data on student learning that may have occurred as a result of playing the game. This chapter addresses the original research questions, discusses the limitations of the study, and provides recommendations for future research.

### **Returning to the Research Questions**

A return to the original research questions guiding this study leads to some interesting conclusions.

- 1) What are the benefits and challenges of utilizing a vocabulary game activity for adult learners in an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) course?

One of the main benefits of utilizing a vocabulary game activity in an EAP course is that the game activity provides a change in the classroom routine. Two of the students noted this benefit in their journals (Student 5 & Student 6). This change in the routine benefits both the students and teacher. We found in the process of playing Taboo with the students that we saw a different side of the students emerging as they were playing the game. Students seemed more relaxed and appeared to enjoy learning with the game activity, as many students wrote in their journals.

One of the challenges of utilizing a game activity in class is that it does require more work on the part of the teacher. A significant amount of time was devoted to

preparing the Taboo game (creating the word cards and thinking up appropriate Taboo words for each target vocabulary word), and, as we found, the original rules and learning arrangement envisioned for the game were modified multiple times to make it a more effective learning activity for the students. For this reason, teachers planning to use a vocabulary game in class should plan on playing the game on multiple occasions for maximum benefit.

2) According to the literature, are games an effective learning activity and what are some ways to use games to teach ESL/EFL vocabulary?

The review of literature introduced different methods for teaching ESL/EFL vocabulary and discussed classroom games as one effective method. As the literature stated, classroom games are an effective teaching method because they reduce the affective filter of the students, which makes learning more relaxed and enjoyable and increases motivation for learning (Afsaneh, Barati, & Youhanaee, 2013) and (Yang, 2007). Also as we heard from Sadeghi & Sharifi (2013) games boost student motivation and “help them engage with vocabulary cognitively, which results in improvements in acquisition rates and deeper levels of processing” (p. 4).

3) What is the student performance difference between using games to teach vocabulary and other ways of learning vocabulary?

The quantitative data we collected in the vocabulary assessment found that students performed better with the words that they had manipulated in the Taboo game. This suggests that playing a vocabulary game may be more effective than other ways of

studying vocabulary; however more research with different types of games may be needed to reproduce a similar result.

4) What do the learners say are the benefits and challenges of playing a game to learn vocabulary in an EAP college classroom?

We found through the student's voices that there were many benefits to playing a vocabulary game in an English for Academic Purposes course. A large majority of the students (19 out of 23) wrote in their journals that the Taboo game was a useful game for learning vocabulary. In addition, many students wrote that they enjoyed or had fun playing the game in class (14 out of 23). Two students wrote in their journals that playing the game in class was a nice change of pace from the normal class routine (Student 5 & Student 6).

One challenge students encountered when playing the game, as cited in 8 out of 23 of the student journals, was that they did not know the meaning of the target word in order to provide clues to their team. Even if they did know the target word, some students had a challenge with generating appropriate synonyms or clues for the word. These challenges were mitigated slightly by the final session of playing the game, as students were provided the vocabulary lists to study prior to this session. In addition, the change in learning arrangement to include interns facilitating each small team also helped with this challenge as the students could ask their intern for help with target word definitions and ideas for clues.

5) How can a game activity be adapted for vocabulary acquisition in an EAP college classroom?

We found through action research that the Taboo game could be adapted to make it a more effective learning activity. The adaptations we made included creating smaller cooperative teams with intern support and reducing the competitive aspect of the game of two large groups competing against each other. This adaptation provided a more relaxed and supportive learning environment for the students and made the game more efficient. In smaller teams, students were able to make it through all of the word cards in a relatively short amount of time.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The researcher and the instructor could not find many limitations to how the study was conducted; however, in reflecting on the study, there were a few limitations that were uncovered:

- 1) **Lack of detailed researcher observations due to researcher participation in the game as a small team facilitator.** Because the researcher was facilitating one of the small teams while the game was being played, we were unable to collect detailed notes and observations during the activity. Although the researcher was able to experience the game as a team facilitator, an addition of researcher notes and observations would have been a beneficial contribution to the data; however, circumstances did not allow for this kind of data collection.
- 2) **Lack of data on the effect of the small group on the student experience with the game and connection of this experience to student assessment results.**

Although it would have been a useful data point to collect, the effect of the small

group on the student experience and any connections to their assessment results were not considered in this study. Asking the students to write about their team dynamic and matching their vocabulary assessment results to their team experience, would have been one way to collect and analyze this data, however, this sort of data collection and analysis was beyond the scope of the present study.

- 3) **The process of selecting the target words for the vocabulary assessment was done by different people, and the vocabulary assessment itself was conducted by two different people.** The target words for the taboo game were selected by the researcher quite randomly, without any real context to how the words had been taught throughout the quarter, though the researcher had been an intern in English 112 summer quarter and was familiar with text and curriculum. The other words for the assessment, however, were chosen by the course instructor, who may have been influenced by her knowledge of how specific words had been taught. This variable was not controlled for. In addition, the vocabulary assessment itself was conducted by two different people: the researcher and an assistant. Differences in how the students were assessed (leniency or strictness with word definitions) may have caused inconsistent results in the data.

### **Recommendations for future research**

Future research on additional specific classroom games and their effect on student learning skills in the areas of reading, writing, listening, speaking, or grammar would be interesting research. Additional ideas for future research include:

**1) Use of technology games in the classroom and their effects on student**

**motivation and learning.** As technology becomes increasingly prevalent in classrooms, more research involving different types of games utilizing computer-based tools, both interactive solitary computer games and computer games that can be played as a whole-classroom activity would be valuable.

**2) Action research focusing on the effect of different learning arrangements on**

**student learning.** In this study, we experimented with different learning arrangements for playing a classroom game. Future research projects could perhaps delve deeper into the impact that different learning arrangements have on student learning outcomes by collecting assessment data on language acquisition after students have experienced each learning arrangement, as well as qualitative data on the students' opinions of specific learning arrangements.

## **Conclusions**

This study built on the research of Yang (2007) by testing a specific vocabulary game in a college-level EAP classroom and measured student vocabulary learning outcomes after playing the game three times. The overall results of the research suggest that including a vocabulary game activity in the English 112 class would be beneficial both to the student experience and student vocabulary acquisition. In addition, the researcher and instructor found that adjusting the learning arrangement of the students, as well as other adjustments to the game activity such as including interns as facilitators, significantly improved the flow and effectiveness of the game as a learning activity. The results of this suggest benefits and indicate that college-level EAP teachers would do well to consider incorporating games into their classrooms for vocabulary enrichment.

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## Appendix A: IRB Consent Form

Games for Vocabulary Enrichment: Teaching Multilingual Writers at the College Level

### Consent Form

You are being asked to participate in a research project conducted by:

<b>Principal Investigator</b>	<b>Responsible Project Investigator</b>
Jennifer R Hawkins  M.A. English/TESL Candidate	Dr. LaVona Reeves, MA-TESL Program Director, English Department  Patterson 211 "I" Tel: (509) 359-7060  E-mail: lreeves@mail.ewu.edu

**Purpose and Benefits:** Like EWU master's candidate Yang's (2007) thesis, this research explores the inclusion of games in English 112 to teach vocabulary. Specifically, I will teach vocabulary through "Taboo" exploring the instructional technique within the regular curriculum of the English 112 classroom at Eastern Washington University. All students will play the game during the course of their regular vocabulary lesson. After participating in the game, students' learning will be assessed two ways to measure their vocabulary acquisition: (1) via their usage of the target vocabulary words in classroom essays and (2) via an "on the spot" word recognition oral assessment done individually with each student, as is often done on the final exam. Part of the purpose is to fulfill the requirements of my master's degree in TESL. This project is action research, so the findings will be used to renew the curriculum in English 112. This means that your needs and interests will be considered the next time English 112 is taught by Dr. Reeves.

**Procedures:** I am asking you to allow me to include your essays, journals, and response to class activities such as a vocabulary game in my master's thesis. I will assign you a number, and your name will not appear in the thesis. If you are unable to write on this subject, you may choose a related subject or a different subject altogether and write on that.

**Risk, Stress or Discomfort:** The risks of participating in this study are not expected to exceed those encountered in daily life. You will receive clear instruction regarding the in-class games and writing. These activities will be part of the class that all students will participate in, but your own writing will appear in the thesis only with your permission. Though completion of the assignments is required as they are part of the usual classroom

activities, you will not be required to submit your work to me if you choose not to participate in this thesis project. It is totally voluntary. Your decision to not participate in this study will in no way affect your grade in English 112 or your standing at Eastern Washington University.

**Other Information:** Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may stop participating at any time without penalty. The data collected will be kept confidential. Only Dr. Reeves & I will know your name. Your name will not be used in the thesis, but your written work will be referenced by a designated number or a new name no one can connect to you. Some of your writing will appear in the thesis, but without your name. You will also have the option to refuse to allow specific writings not to be included in the thesis. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a participant, you may contact Ruth Galm, EWU'S Human Protections Administrator, at (509) 359-7971 or [rgalm@mail.ewu.edu](mailto:rgalm@mail.ewu.edu). Please return the form whether you are participating or not.

Jennifer  
Hawkins

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Primary Investigator's name                      Primary Investigator's signature                      Date

**Yes, I will participate.**

The study described above has been explained to me, and I voluntarily consent to participate in this study. I have had an opportunity to ask questions. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form. I understand I will receive a copy of this consent form.

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Student's name printed in English                      Student's signature                      Date

# Curriculum Vitae

**JENNIFER R. HAWKINS**

jennihawki1078@gmail.com

## **PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY**

Dedicated and focused professional who is adaptable, creative, and sensitive to cultural differences. A reliable, dependable and motivated teacher who takes pride in meeting and exceeding student's expectations while enhancing organizational reputation utilizing my education and experience to the fullest potential.

## **QUALIFICATION HIGHLIGHTS**

### **Communication**

- Developed excellent communication and professional skills through 15 years of professional administrative and project management experience in business.
- Facilitated and modeled presentation assignments for English 112 students at Eastern Washington University; coached individuals and small groups on vocabulary, writing, and pronunciation skills.
- Presented originally designed ESL course materials and lessons to colleagues as required for the Master's program at Eastern Washington University.

### **Assessment/ Curriculum design**

- Assessed needs; Designed 1:1 instruction for seniors in Portland library learning how to use computer, Internet, and email.
- Assessed needs; Designed computer skills courses for adult students from poor and vulnerable populations through Neighborhood Pride team in Portland, Oregon.
- Assessed strengths and weaknesses of college level ESL students at Eastern Washington University and designed and implemented individual instruction accordingly
- Developed 10-week ESL curriculum for a college level multilingual writers course.
- Assisted with the design of People to People teacher leader resources and tools including teacher leader training materials, student orientation curriculum materials, and leader guides.

## Direct Instruction

- Teach ESL courses for refugee and immigrant adult students at Spokane Community College
- Interacted with refugee/immigrant students and assisted ESL instructors at the Institute for Extended Learning in levels 6, 4, and 2
- Instructed seniors learning how to use computer, Internet, and email. Assisted main instructor, and facilitated class when main instructor was absent
- Instructed adult students in basic computer skills and Microsoft Access at Neighborhood Pride Team, a Portland, Oregon non-profit organization.
- Instructed library patrons in public computer labs. Assisted with technical problems, and answered patron questions about Internet and Microsoft Office software.

## Professional Development

- Developed knowledge in ESL curriculum design, teaching methods, and second language acquisition theory through Master's coursework at Eastern Washington University.
- Maintain current knowledge with ESL and EFL teaching trends via membership in Linked In professional teaching groups and networking with former EWU classmates.

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

**Spokane Community College** (Spokane, WA) *Nov 2015 to present*

ESL Instructor

**Eastern Washington University** (Cheney, WA) *March 2016 to June 2016*

Women's Literature and Social Change Instructional Intern

**Eastern Washington University** (Cheney, WA) *June 2015 to Aug 2015*

English for Multilingual Writers Instructional Intern

**Institute for Extended Learning** (Monroe St., Spokane, WA) *Jan 2013 to Aug 2014*

ESL Volunteer/Instructional Assistant

**Multnomah County Library** (Portland, OR) *Dec 2004 to Aug 2007*

Cyber Seniors/Volunteer Computer Instructional Assistant

**Multnomah County Library** (Portland, OR) *Jan 2004 to Nov 2004*

Volunteer Computer Lab Monitor

**Neighborhood Pride Team** (Portland, OR) *Jan 2003 to Mar 2004*

Volunteer Computer Skills Instructor

## **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

**Spokane Community College** (Spokane, WA) *Nov 2015 to present*

ESL Instructor

**People to People Ambassador Programs** (Spokane, WA) *Oct 2009 to Aug 2015*

Leader Development Specialist, *Leader Development Team*

**AVISTA Corporation (Olsten Staffing Services)** (Spokane, WA) *June 2009 to Oct 2009*

Member Service Representative, *AVISTA Credit Union*

**NIKE, Inc.** (Beaverton, OR) *Sept 1997 to March 2007*

Training Coordinator, *Nike US Region Learning & Development*

Database Administrator, *Nike Corporate Responsibility Compliance*

Executive Assistant, *Nike Corporate Responsibility Compliance*

Human Resources Assistant, *Nike In-House Manufacturing*

Receptionist, *Nike In-House Manufacturing*

## **EDUCATION**

**Eastern Washington University** (Cheney, Washington)

M.A. English (Teaching English as a Second Language), June 2016

**Pacific University** (Forest Grove, Oregon)

B.A. Humanities, emphasis: Modern Languages (French), May 1996