

*Original research paper**Received: 5.04.2023  
Accepted: 24.04.2023*

## THE APPLICATION OF ONLINE GAMES WHEN TEACHING ENGLISH IN PRESCHOOL EDUCATION

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### Abstract

The study explored the usage of online games in teaching EFL in preschool education in the context of their effectiveness. The research reviews the literature that is important while concerning online games. To conduct this quantitative study, the kindergarten teachers of English (n = 133) were randomly chosen and were requested to fill in a specially prepared questionnaire. The main objective of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of using a variety of online games in teaching English to preschool education in the context of teaching vocabulary, by means of the following steps included in the investigation: checking the teachers' general opinion on using online games in enhancing vocabulary learning process; finding out the potential of the challenges of using online games that such teachers experience; measuring the teachers' competence in using online games; and, finally estimating the types of online games that prove to be more useful in enhancing vocabulary retention and their frequency of use. Overall, the research results designate that online games present a useful and effective method of teaching English vocabulary to preschoolers.

**Key words:** online games, preschool education, young learners (YL), vocabulary, information and communication technology (ICT)

## **Introduction**

When considering teaching English to young learners, it seems significant to provide them with a valuable and beneficial learning process. This matter is to be seriously considered when talking about preschoolers. In recent years there has been a noticeable increase in teaching English to preschool learners with the help of online games, mostly because of the constant growth of the available technology. Thus, teachers need to find interesting and entertaining activities with regard to involving preschoolers in successful learning processes and developing their language skills.

## **Literature review**

Over the past few years, the interest in using online games while teaching English to young learners has considerably increased. It is claimed that “language is immensely powerful, but it can also be loads of fun. In fact, a sense of fun can make the language more powerful [...] Language and play complement and enrich each other” [Rooyackers 2002, as cited in Klimova 2015: 1157]. Thus, when considering teaching such young learners (YL), we must take into account the fact that there is a variety of ways of teaching such children. One of the ways is the usage of online games. Teaching in this way is believed to provide a great number of beneficial opportunities for young learners to make use of the lesson, as games play an important role in passing the knowledge on the children.

Chen [2014] defined online games as games which engage players throughout the network via the Internet. The participants might be joined with the use of the following two wireless connections: Wi-Fi and Bluetooth. In turn, Adams and Rollings [2006] defined online games as video games which can be played both partly or mainly on the Internet or via any other accessible network. Online games are universal and might be played on various online platforms and mobile devices. Generally speaking, everything that relates to online games is also connected to video, computer and/or any other electronic devices. It is because all such games which can be played with the help of the tools, such as computers, laptops, tablets, interactive whiteboards, smart boards, telephones, projectors, etc. are generally in connection to online equipment. Still, online games are also software installed. All in all, online games are games which make players able to collaborate with virtuality in order to entertain and have fun. A variety of online games can be found on the Internet, from traditional ones like card games to more progressive ones like memory games, guessing games, word games, matching games, sorting games, drawing games or even board games.

## **Selected studies on online games in education**

The use of online games while teaching English to preschoolers has recently caught the attention of quite many researchers as they have become more and more popular in education nowadays. The significance of the aforementioned technology is a very demanding form of passing knowledge on students, especially very young ones. In the past few years, the use of technological availability, especially digital

games, has grown enormously. That is to say, the role of online games in learning processes is the subject of quite many comparative researchers [Adams, Rollings 2006; Aghlara, Tamijid 2011; Chen 2014]. When it comes to teaching English to preschool children, it is becoming increasingly well-known that classes are conducted with the usage of digital learning.

Szpotowicz and Szulc-Kurpaska [2013] enumerate five important reasons to seriously think about the incorporation of language games when designing a language lesson; these are /1/ the linguistic reason; /2/ the motivational reason; /3/ the social reason; /4/ the cognitive development reason; and /5/ the relax-stimulating reason. The first of the reasons specified above refers to the processing which includes a pleasurable way of subconsciously mastering new words and/or phrases. The next one focuses on the selection of ways aimed at stimulating the educational environment. The third one helps YL appreciate teamwork. The penultimate one sharpens the analytical thinking in children. And the last one secures a feeling of effortless learning at the moment the elements of fun largely prevail.

Aghlara and Tamjid [2011] implied that the outcomes of using digital games are profitable and valuable as a method of teaching. Such research gave teachers a great amount of evidence and knowledge connected with teaching vocabulary via technological devices. What is more, the findings implied that the efficiency of using technology straightforwardly correlates to the teachers' level of skill when using digital games or traditional methods of teaching. They concluded that digital games have beneficial results when it comes to the assessment of the learning process. Generally, the aforementioned games motivate YL to learn and support their cognitive development.

Başöz and Can [2016] indicated that the results of using both methods of teaching, i.e. the traditional one (where flashcards and posters were used) and the experiential one (where different online games were applied) are beneficial and relevant. Moreover, the findings signified that the efficiency of the vocabulary learning process takes place undeniably no matter what kind of teaching methods are used. The two scholars concluded that both computer-based lessons and various forms of blended learning have rewarding results when it comes to the learning processes.

At the same time, AlShaiji [2017] claimed that the results of using video games in teaching YL are not only relevant but also beneficial. Learning vocabulary via video games is more effective than learning it with the help of traditional methods. What is more, the scholar claimed that using video games and free English websites such as British Council, makes preschoolers more confident and gives them favorable circumstances to develop all their language skills. That is to say, video games engage timid children to cooperate and – what is more important – to speak.

In their research Ongoro and Mwangoka [2019] indicated that the results of using the digital game learning prototype system TALSQ have favorable effects on teaching English to very young learners. Learning alphabet sounds via digital games is much more effective than learning them with the help of traditional methods. Furthermore, the scholars stated that – as far as they have been able to find out – the preschoolers

from Tanzania and other neighboring countries are pretty well familiarized with technology, even though they sometimes have problems with a poor Internet connection. It emphasizes the significance of teachers and their techniques for using technology and digital games during classes.

In turn, Kayımbaşıoğlu, Oktekin, and Hacı [2016] stated that the results of using new technology together with gamification in teaching are advantageous and constructive. Their principal claim was that learning with the use of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) is much more effective than learning with traditional methods. Furthermore, the scholars – based on the results of their research – stated that online games are available everywhere and can be used in every aspect of teaching. From this point of view, they concluded that technology makes a difference in getting knowledge as it helps in acquiring basic skills.

### **The research**

The aim of the study was to find out whether online games are useful in teaching English in preschool education and more specifically, in the context of vocabulary retention. According to that, the teachers' opinions were analyzed.

The present study tried to answer the following questions: /1/ What is the teachers' general opinion on using online games in enhancing vocabulary learning processes? /2/ What are the challenges of using online games in enhancing the vocabulary learning process? /3/ What are the teachers' self-esteem competencies in using online games? /4/ What kind of online games prove to be more useful in enhancing pupils' vocabulary retention and what is their frequency of use?

### **Methods**

With the aim of exploring the answers to the research questions together with uncovering the possible results, a quantitative study was done as the most appropriate method. Such a way of collecting the data was implemented to verify some essentials gathered with the help of a purposefully designed questionnaire. It provided us with an opportunity to get to know the problem from a broader point of view and, what is more, it gave us the possibility to scrutinize the gathered data without skipping significant facts. It was about acquiring certain information concerning the use of online games in the context of teaching English in preschool education. One additional issue that appeared important when planning the study was that we did it in the period of the COVID pandemic when the administrative regulations prohibited personal contact.

### **Instruments**

In an effort to gain the best effects, there was one data collection instrument used in the study, i.e. a questionnaire. Such a method was considered to be the most appropriate and beneficial way of gathering the data. This instrument helped us define the usefulness of using online games in teaching English in preschool education as well as provide answers to all the research questions presented above. The quantitative

description was used to determine the results.

### Questionnaire

The questionnaire was recognized as the most suitable form of collecting the data for the study. It provided crucial information which was invaluable in giving the answers to the research questions. What is more, a questionnaire was considered to be fast and easy enough to be answered by the respondents. Such a form of collecting the data was done in online form with the use of Google Forms. This computer program allowed us to examine the results promptly and prepare evidence with the answers. Therefore, all the results could be controlled at any time. Apart from that, this way of collecting information was also the best solution at the time of the pandemic, as it secured the safe collection of the necessary data without personal contact with the possible questionnaire respondents. Thus, the questionnaire was carefully shared among possible interviewees on the Internet, as we had to avoid any whatsoever direct contact. Moreover, the link to the questionnaire was distributed to numerous Polish groups devoted to various forms of English education. The whole survey included 10 questions. Each of them dealt with the research topics and related to the kindergarten teachers' /a/ general opinions and /b/ challenges on using online games in enhancing vocabulary learning processes, the teachers' self-esteem competence in using online games, and the usefulness of various online games in enhancing pupils' vocabulary retention and their frequency of use.

### Participants

The survey was conducted among preschool and early school teachers of English. The principal limitation mentioned at the beginning of the questionnaire was that it was addressed to such teachers only. Generally, 133 preschool teachers agreed to take part in the study. Such issues as teaching seniority, place of professional activity, type of school or even age of the participants were estimated to be of lesser importance, as the key interests concerned the attitudes of both preschool and early school teachers to the application and selection of online games they have considered useful when designing target language lessons. We also assumed that – because an obligatory shift from regular to online education was a strict requirement all teachers had to observe in the period of COVID pandemic – it would be of interest to find the forms of both the challenges and the solutions target language teachers cope with when they need to introduce online games to their lessons.

### Data analysis

In accordance with the first research question, which looked for the teachers' general opinions on using online games in enhancing the vocabulary learning process, most of the opinions presented by the teachers were positive. A great majority of teachers taking part in the research (65.4%) claimed that online games are more useful than traditional methods of teaching vocabulary to preschoolers. Surprisingly, what

also has to be taken into consideration, is that the same amount of teachers (65.4%) additionally stated that online games bring better results in teaching English vocabulary to preschoolers than traditional methods of teaching. In turn, 34.6% of the teachers claimed that online games are not that useful and do not bring better results in teaching vocabulary than traditional methods of teaching. Thus, it can be assumed that the opinion of the teachers that online games are useful and profitable in teaching vocabulary to YL clearly prevailed in our research (Table 1 and Table 2).

Table 1. Do you think online games are more useful than traditional methods of teaching vocabulary?

Positive/negative answers	N of respondents	%
YES	87	65,4%
NO	46	34,6%

Source: own elaboration

Table 2. Do you think online games bring better results in gaining knowledge than traditional methods of teaching?

Positive/negative answers	N of respondents	%
YES	87	65,4%
NO	46	34,6%

Source: own elaboration

What is more, another significant aspect connected with the first research question is the one concerning the reasons why teachers use online games during their classes. Nowadays online games are available everywhere and teachers may use them anytime they want; they can find them everywhere on the Internet, or they can easily install any kind of software devoted to online games on their computers. However, following the general idea of this question, the teachers also were able to indicate the reasons they use online games. According to the research results, the most often chosen option was: 'to make my lessons more interesting to pupils' (30.1%) whereas the least chosen one was: 'to present new material' (0.8%). It can be concluded that preschool children mostly learn new things and foreign languages through playing and having fun; this is probably the reason why teachers mainly choose online games to make their classes interesting for them. It is significant for them to provide the language with the help of adequate teaching techniques (Table 3); most of these can be found on the Internet.

What is more, it is also important to put emphasis on the fact that only one teacher out of 133 has declared to be using online games 'to present new material' to preschoolers. Sadly, it seems to be not a valuable way of providing children with a new piece of knowledge and new material. In comparison, in the research done by Kayımbaşoğlu, Oktekin, and Hacı [2016] it was found that the YL who were presented and taught new material with the help of online games scored 75% of good answers during

their test carried out sometime after the new materials were introduced with the help of online games. It can be assumed that the application of online games adds efficiency to the preschoolers' language learning processes; likewise, the number of teachers who are of the opinion that the implementation of online games while teaching English to YL is quite high as well.

Table 3. I use online games during my lessons

Reasons	N of respondents	%
to make my lessons more interesting to to pupils	40	30.10%
online games make teaching English easier	7	5.30%
to keep my pupils interested and focused	30	22.60%
to present new material	1	0.80%
to verify the knowledge of my pupils	10	7.40%
to make the quality of the lesson better	7	5,30%
to improve learning and teaching of many skills	12	9.00%
to develop pupils' interest in learning	26	19.50%

Source: own elaboration.

Nevertheless, the thing that is crucial here is the fact that the results of quite much research concerning online games used in preschool [viz. Khan 1991; Cameron 2001; Aghlara, Tamjid 2011; Başöz, Can 2016; AlShajji 2017; Ongoro, Mwangoka 2019; Kayimbaşoğlu, Oktekin, Hacı 2016], are similar, in this way sharing their opinions of performing a beneficial function in the YL English teaching processes. Furthermore, it can be highlighted that teachers from different countries taking part in these researches also perceive the usage of online games as profitable and significant.

When considering the second research question concerning the 'challenges of using online games in enhancing the vocabulary learning process' – the option that scored the biggest amount of points was 'the deficiency or poor Internet connection' with the result (41.4%). It is obvious that nowadays teachers are forced to cope with different technological instruments at work, so they should be provided with the appropriate equipment and a good enough Internet connection. It can be clearly seen that almost a half of the respondents have still problems with inappropriate or even poor Internet connection. Furthermore, the option that scored the least amount of indications was 'it disrupts pupils' attention' with the result of 6.8%. Thus, it can be assumed that most of the YL teachers have not recognized ICT tools as being the reasons that disrupt their learners' attention during English lessons (Table 4).

Following the results of the poll, another important fact is that 24.8% of the respondents said that they cope with the problem of 'the deficiency or poor equipment of tools' (the second most often given answer). The fact that there is a connection between these two answers could not be left unnoticed; such a unified request to help YL teachers of English work with a stable Internet connection and/or better computers is quite big which also means that teachers understand they cannot fully provide YL

with appropriately designed online classes, and hence, with online-designed game-involving activities. It can be concluded that the all-over process that could move online education forward is still limited and that something could be done about it.

Table 4. What are the drawbacks of using online games?

<b>Drawbacks</b>	<b>N of respondents</b>	<b>%</b>
it disrupts pupils' attention	9	6.80%
it is time-consuming, traditional teaching is better	10	7.50%
it does not bring many results in pupils' language acquisition	16	12.00%
the deficiency or poor equipment of tools	33	24.80%
the deficiency or poor Internet connection	55	41.40%
I do not have adequate skills in using online games	10	7.50%

Source: own elaboration.

When it comes to the third research question, which was to measure the teachers' self-esteem competence in using online games (Table 5) – the majority of the respondents evaluated their self-esteem competencies in using online games as average with the result of 58.6%. At the same time 27.8% of the respondents assessed their competence as high, whereas 13.6% of the respondents evaluated their competencies as low. It can be clearly seen that more than a half of the respondents still evaluate their self-esteem competencies as average.

Following most general expectations, most present language teachers who use online games in education should have high technical and professional competencies while using them; otherwise, children might not be provided with appropriate language context. Such a situation appears to be of particular importance with respect to YL teachers, as the educational processes used by them, based upon the general introduction of various games, can turn out to be not well chosen, or they simply cannot be fully able to familiarize their pupils with adequate language framework. Furthermore, although most language teachers are expected to implement technology into the classroom, the research results indicate that quite many of them evaluate their technical competencies as average. The assertion that many polled teachers evaluate their self-esteem competencies as average might be connected with the fact that a great majority of them complained to have had problems with either the Internet connection or the quality of equipment they have to cope with. What is more, it can be assumed that a great number of teachers who deal with both poor Internet connection and low standard of equipment, do not have many opportunities to develop their skills in using online games and one of the important reasons can be located within these inconveniences. This is probably why teachers evaluate their self-esteem competencies as average. First of all, the existence of the probability of such a dependence can be highlighted by the fact that something should be done here. These kindergartens that keep offering additional lessons of English to their pupils should provide teachers



with good equipment to let them make themselves better able to develop their skills in using such tools.

Table 5. How do you evaluate your level of competence in using online games?

Level of self-esteem competence	Number of respondents	%
High	37	27.80%
Average	78	58.60%
Low	18	13.60%

Source: own elaboration

What is more, Aghlara and Tamjid [2011] research showed that the efficiency of using technology and various online games correlates straightforwardly with the teachers' level of technical skills. It is crucial to put an emphasis on the fact that nowadays more and more teachers use technology while working with children, what means their skillfulness and experience in using various ICT tools tend to be recognized as one of the more significant abilities each of them should possess.

The same option concerns YL teachers of English. Szpotowicz and Szulc-Kurpaska [2013: 207ff] enumerate quite a number of functions language games serve; thus YL teachers of English may use games to /1/ practice new and old vocabulary; /2/ revise previously learnt words; /3/ practice the use of a structure; /4/ pay attention to the foreign language (FL) classroom forum; /5/ master the pronunciation of new words; /6/ memorize some commonly used phrases; or /7/ revise selected language structures. In all these situations YL teachers of English may seek support in different ICT tools. Thus, the YL parents, agreeing to have paid additional amounts of money to cover the expenses of kindergarten FL education, can assume that the teachers hired by the kindergarten principals to perform the work mentioned above do possess a high level of technology-related ICT tools and gaming competence while teaching English to preschoolers.

When it comes to the fourth research question concerning the kind of online games that are recognized as being more useful in enhancing the pupils' vocabulary retention as well as the frequency of use of each type of online games specified in the questionnaire, the respondents declare that all types of games presented in the questionnaire are applied in more-or-less equal proportions. In this way, the following results have been noted: memory games (42.90%); matching games (37.60%); guessing games (35.30%); word games (41.30%); sorting games (35.30%); drawing games (38.30%); and board games (39.10%). However, as the most commonly used indicator was the adverbial 'often', no type of a game was declared to be used very often nor denied to be used at all. The main reasons the polled teachers of English do not use online games very often can be because of the fact that they do not have appropriate ICT equipment, or the Internet connection they use is of poor quality, or (what can be also a reason) they do not possess enough skills to implement such games. It should also be mentioned that the number of reasons language games can be used in the classroom

that were presented in the questionnaire (Table 5 above) did not exceed seven types of games and such a taxonomy was not the one the YL teachers of English need online games for (Table 6).

It is also significant to pay attention to the general frequency of the use of online games. According to the questionnaire, YL teachers state that they mainly (37.60%) use online games more than once a week. Only 16.50% of the respondents claim they use online games during every lesson. When looking at the results (Table 6) it can be assumed that teachers use online games at different frequencies. Many of them use online games more than once a week; it can also be observed that the smallest number of the respondents (16.50%) have declared to use language games during every lesson. This fact may result from earlier indications of YL teachers that concern the quality of the ICT tools they have to work with, the quality of the Internet connection and/or the level of technical capabilities of the polled teachers.

Table 6. How often do you use online games?

Frequency	N of respondents	%
During every lesson	22	16.50%
More than once a week	50	37.60%
Less than once a week	31	23.30%
For special events	30	22.60%

Source: own elaboration.

The second smallest indicator, teachers use such games for the special events (22.60% of the teachers). We should take this fact into account, as at present special events function as one of the most desired reasons YL tend to get involved in different forms of FL education. It is crucial for preschool teachers to follow the latest trends and meet the children's desires making them more attractive and memorable. Additionally, in accordance with the fact that YL teachers mainly use online games to make their lessons more attractive to pupils, it could be assumed that there is a connection between these two aspects (i.e. special occasions and YL desires).

What is more, it is also important to focus on the ICT tools which teachers use while teaching the language with the help of online games. According to the research, the tools declared to be used most often are computers (50.40%) and projectors (27.80%). Subsequently, the tools indicated as used when necessary are interactive whiteboards (28.60%) and Internet websites (26.30%). As for the tools YL teachers declare to be never used in their work are tablets (42.00%), mobile telephones (31.60%), and installed software (21.80%).

Although the two most popular ICT tools have been chosen to be computers and projectors, it can be assumed that YL teachers probably use both tools together. What is more, such tools have been indicated as being most often used because of the fact that both of them might be easily available in the kindergarten, as other teachers (not only teachers of English, but all preschool teachers) may use them on

an everyday basis while working with the children so as to simply insert most of the materials and/or other documentaries required by the headmaster there. Apart from that, as it can be found in the research by Başöz & Can [2016], computers remain to be one of the most frequently used tools in everyday educational activities observed to be performed in kindergartens. While studying the data found in the above-mentioned research, it is important to notice that Internet websites are often used even though a great number of teachers (41.40%) recognize that the main drawback in the appropriate use of online games during YL language lessons is either deficient or even poor Internet connection. Furthermore, our research also revealed the fact that tablets, mobile telephones, and/or installed software have not to be recognized as useful ICT tools to be used by YL teachers, in contrast to the two leading instruments (i.e. computers and projectors) specified by them. The main reason for not being noticed by YL teachers might be the fact that kindergartens are usually not equipped with such tools as tables or installed software, and mobile telephones have been generally recognized as obviously inappropriate to be owned by YL. Another reason was also observed by AlShaiji [2017] who remarked that although Internet websites were implemented very often in teaching preschoolers (it made them more confident and provided them with more favorable circumstances to develop their all language skills), the application of mobile phones, tablets and/or installed software is not popular because all these ICT tools would necessitate the use of personal tablets, mobile phones, etc. owned by YL teachers, who do not want to use their own telephones during their work. It appears then that it is believed that kindergartens should provide YL teachers with the possibility to use a variety of technological tools (tables and mobile telephones included) in their everyday educational activities. This is because teachers who have not been provided with adequate ICT tools may complain to have had difficulties while introducing online games and/or other online activities during their work. What is more, it must also be remembered that it was only 22.60% of the respondents who found the application of online games as good techniques to keep the learners focused on the lesson topics, and as many as 19.50% to keep the learners interested in learning (cf. Table 3). When these results are confronted with the information that Internet websites have been declared as this ICT tool 26.30% of YL teachers make use of when necessary only, it appears many language lessons are still provided without the application of online activities at all. Thus, it can be concluded that the process of having YL focused on educational and fun-providing online activities is delivered in a traditional and pretty standard way and the quantity/quality of ICT tools owned by kindergartens performs a key function there. The fact that computers and projectors have appeared to be the most popular ICT tools there strongly defines the way of the use of each of them in the further educational activities by YL teachers.

Considering the type of online game which appears to be more useful in enhancing vocabulary retention among pupils, it is crucial to look at the fact that all types of games have been declared to be 'quite effective'. In this way, the following usability ranking can be produced: memory games (47.30%), sorting games (44.40%), word

games (41.30%), guessing games (39.8%), matching games (38.4%), drawing games (34.6%) and board games (33.8%).

When comparing our results with these offered by AlShaiji [2017] it turns out that the two usability rankings are quite similar as in both researches memory games have been found to be very effective; what is more, his research also revealed that online games were recognized to be better than traditional methods of teaching vocabulary as Saudi children performed better results during the test after using only such types of games. Similar results to these obtained by AlShaiji [2017] can be noticed in earlier research by Aghlara and Tamjid [2011]; not only the two studies found that the above-mentioned types of games are very effective and useful when teaching English, but they also turned out to be more effective than traditional teaching methods while helping YL store the new vocabulary. The researchers agreed that the use of online-produced visual aids, various types of online games included, helped children focus on the lesson topics and get better results while remembering particular vocabulary items. Our research revealed similar results; we also found out that all types of games were perceived as effective by our respondents with only a little number of teachers (4.20%) recognizing them as ‘not effective’, or ‘not useful’. Thus, it can be underlined that most of the polled teachers revealed their tendency to use different online games to enhance vocabulary retention with different frequencies as far as it was possible to do so.

### Conclusions

The analysis of the data gathered in the study allowed us to confirm three out of four hypotheses established for the research. Accordingly, there exists a correlation between the teachers’ positive opinions on using online games in enhancing the vocabulary learning process in the context of their usefulness; we also established the fact that – according to the teachers’ opinions (see above) – online games bring better results in teaching vocabulary than traditional methods of teaching, what seems to have had an impact on the YL results. Moreover, in line with the research by Ongoro and Mwangoka [2019], the gathered data allowed us to confirm that teachers face different difficulties connected with the use of online games. What is more, the analysis of the teachers’ tendencies towards using various online games to enhance their pupils’ vocabulary retention, together with the emphasis on different forms of frequency of their use, revealed that teachers, indeed, use a variety of online games with different frequencies of use. However, the analysis of the teachers’ self-esteem competencies in using online games, revealed that more than a half of the respondents still evaluate their self-esteem competencies as average, which seems to have an impact on the quality of their teaching process.

Generally, although they are expected to possess high competencies while using various ICT tools so as provide their pupils with an adequate language framework, the majority of them are aware of their inadequacy here. In this way, they feel their lessons are not as complete as they might have been. They are also aware that most of their lessons are hampered by the quality of the tools they have been offered to

co-function with; they do not know whether their lessons would have looked better (as well as contained a more coherent and complete quality) had they been offered better and more variable ICT tools, but they strongly stick to this possibility. After all, they strongly need to stick to some idea which is quite difficult to be tested in the situation they have found themselves to be in.

The main conclusions that come out from the research presented above could be formed as follows: The target language teachers generally think that the application of online games may upgrade the tenor of their lessons, but the games selected by them must be coherently inserted in the lesson designs they are the authors of. These games have to be liked by the learners, they should employ the learners' memory rather than their cognitive skills and they should not collide with the general topics of the lessons. Teaching vocabulary to YL is considered to be one of key target language teaching obligations by the researched teachers. The games proposed to YL need to help their learners relearn the expressions and/or single words; in this way, most online games should be considered as testing (or quizzing) tools. Such games should be used as frequently as possible and the learners' preferences should matter here. Finally, what appears to be an important obstacle, many target language teachers are aware of, the application of online games could have been much more general, had the teachers' competencies to operate the ICT tools waiting for them on the market been better.

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