LANGUAGE TEACHER EMOTIONS IN GAME-INFORMED TEACHING

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ABSTRACT

This thesis follows the (emotional) experiences of ten language teachers of English in Greece when integrating game-informed practices in their classrooms and explores their emotions in a longitudinal manner. The English language teaching context in Greece is a characteristic example of test-centric and results-oriented educational practices, while the field of game-mediated teaching is in its infancy. Teachers' emotions and their wellbeing are most of the times side-lined, while the focus is on students being entertained and staying motivated in language learning. This thesis recognises the importance of attending to teachers' emotions in order to develop sustainable practice but also engages them in professional development to meaningfully adopt game-informed practices. An Action-Research cycle was followed, training teachers on game-informed teaching, guiding them in designing game-informed lesson plans and employing interviews and classroom observation to explore their emotions during and after this practice while contextualising emotions with teachers' (and students') behaviour. Thematic Analysis of the qualitative data uncovered the nuanced nature of teachers' emotions, while it shattered binary-based theories and understanding of teachers' emotions. Teacher-student relationships were found to be triggers of teachers' happiness, enthusiasm, and pride, especially when witnessing the engagement and accomplishments of their students. At the same time, the involvement of teachers in creative practice seemed to have boosted said emotions, but also triggered slight anxiety and frustration when teachers were not convinced of their conduct in game-informed tasks. Following Positive Psychology theory, integrating game-informed practices in language classrooms seems to be a catalyst to fostering both teachers' and students' engagement, accomplishment, and strengthening the positive relationships and interactions of the two. Involving teachers in non-prescriptive research while offering them reflexive professional development is the way forward for promoting change in language classrooms. Game-

informed practices can foster teachers' wellbeing and we might need to start small before going radical.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AR   Action Research

EFL   English as a Foreign Language

ELT   English Language Teaching

ESOL   English to Speakers of Other Languages

L1   First/Native Language

L2   Second Language

OECD   Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PAR   Participatory Action Research

PERMA   Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning and Accomplishment

PPI   Positive Psychology Interventions

RQ   Research Question

SAMR   Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, Redefinition

SDT   Self-Determination Theory

TBLT   Task-Based Language Teaching

TESOL   Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

TPACK   Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge

ZPD   Zone of Proximal Development

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1. CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss briefly the background on which this thesis is based on, elaborate on my personal motivation for this study, and introduce its purpose. The last part of this chapter features the outline of this thesis.

1.1 Background & Rationale

The affective turn in Applied Linguistics research is here (Pavlenko, 2013). The focus on cognition, the brain, and language aptitudes has long concerned the language learning research community since cognitive processes go hand in hand with (second) language learning and teaching. However, this focus has sidelined the affective and social factors that can considerably impact the teaching of foreign languages. The affective turn is a rediscovery of the wheel of sorts, as Stephen Krashen has first brought attention to the impact of emotions in the language learning process through his Affective Filter hypothesis (Krashen, 1982). The higher the affective filter and unwanted emotions, such as embarrassment, hinders learners from receiving comprehensible input, thus slowing their progress in second language acquisition. Research has focused on how happy students are, how motivated and engaged they are, and investigated ways of creating better *learning* experiences (e.g., Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008; Mercer & Dörnyei, 2020; Oxford & Gkonou, 2020). The flowering of Positive Psychology has brought affective research to the forefront in the past two decades in Applied Linguistics (Dewaele et al., 2020). Most studies, however, have focused on student and teacher emotions in general education (e.g., Frenzel et al., 2018). Other studies juxtapose perceptions of the former regarding the emotions of the latter (e.g., Moskowitz & Dewaele, 2019). However, an important agent of the language classroom experience in particular is sidelined: the teacher (Mercer & Kostoulas, 2018).

For caring professions, such as teaching, focusing *solely* on the wellbeing of the cared could be detrimental (Horwitz, 1996). The carer, the teacher in this case, deserves equal attention. It is not a matter of a gap in research regarding teachers' psychology and affect in comparison to the students' affect that drives this project. It is a matter of the crucial repercussions that teachers' emotions can have not only to teachers' personal and professional wellbeing but also on students' learning experiences as well. Emotion contagion theory has proven the interrelation and shared impact of affect of both agents in the language classroom: the teacher and the students (Frenzel, 2014). Especially for foreign language learning the emotional affordances are even higher compared to other school subjects, given the high emphasis on communicative exchanges in a foreign language.

Furthermore, the importance of investigating teachers' emotions lies in that emotions are a functional component of language teachers' cognition and thus to their actual practice (Golombek & Doran, 2014). Teachers' emotions can impact and drive their (pedagogical) activity and practices in the language classroom. Trends in language teaching practice are usually investigated for their significance and effectiveness on learners in an effort to find the *best* language teaching approach. However, research has decided: one size doesn't fit all (Gregory & Chapman, 2012). Exploring language teaching approaches only in terms of their effectiveness on students' achievement is *not enough* as it keeps the focus on the *quantity* of learning rather than on the *quality* of teaching and learning. The latter is of utmost importance as it can sustain both learner and teacher engagement in the long term and cater for the wellbeing of both agents in the classroom.

Researchers have called for more interventionist approaches directly targeting socioemotional skills and strategies, which are often ignored in teacher education programmes (Gkonou, Dewaele, & King, 2020). There have been Positive Psychology interventions that aim to cultivate specific emotional constructs such as grit and resilience of

both teachers and learners (e.g., Marques, Lopez, & Pais-Ribeiro, 2011), which are much needed. However, I find that there are two caveats when researching such areas in a targeted and explicit fashion: a) when a specific intervention is explored it is likely that other complex classroom events are ignored, and b) inescapably, when "treating" and "targeting" a specific construct it is rather expected that there will be improvement in such an area. Searching explicitly rather than exploring implicitly teachers' emotions takes a more paying-attention-to-the-tree rather than the forest approach. For this reason, I have chosen to explore *with* teachers the integration of a rather[1] novel pedagogy i.e., game-informed teaching, not in an effort to measure the positive impact of said practice in juxtaposition to others, but to see how teachers' emotions emerge during this practice, and to argue for their sustainability in language education and potential positive influence on teachers' and learners' wellbeing. Games have the power to evoke strong emotional responses and foster social interactions (e.g., Granic, Lobel, & Engels, 2014) and can thus make a good platform for this study.

The emphasis on play, digital pedagogical tools, and socio-emotional learning has been put forward through practitioners, researchers, and educational organisations, once again tending to learners' affective component and motivation without always considering the teachers' place in all this. Therefore, this study will stand critically towards such innovations, co-construct knowledge and pedagogical practices *with* the research participants, and give teacher participants opportunities to advance professionally, reflect on their practice, and voice their emotions and takes on novel pedagogies. Overall, the study will explore game-informed language teaching practices in a rather traditional and certificate-driven language context, by putting into the spotlight teachers' emotional experiences and thus offer an understanding of how such innovations could be meaningfully and positively integrated for the stakeholders involved.

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[1] I use the word "rather" to comment on the novelty of game-informed teaching, as both "play" and "games" are not new concepts to language learning (e.g., Palmer & Rodgers, 1983). However, games have only recently been researched in a *serious* and *systematic* way.

1.2 Personal Motivation

My teaching experience has greatly affected the motivation for this study. As a novice teacher of English in Greece, I would follow the textbook in an almost reverent manner; through my interactions with colleagues and more experienced teachers I would bring in new ideas as far as classroom management is concerned, but from a pedagogical point of view, it was the textbook driving my teaching. It got boring; mainly because my students would know my next move, they would immediately dive into the next exercise without me even instructing them to do so. I had to do something, as my own confidence and enthusiasm as a teacher started taking its toll as well.

I started taking online courses to further my understanding of teaching second languages. I remember Dr Shanon's words in the introduction of a TESOL course that I enrolled in on Coursera: "Language is cake; the way you serve the cake is going to make it more or less attractive to consume it". I re-thought my practice in more playful terms and started introducing gamified activities. My anchor once again was the textbook; it featured short memory games based on the vocabulary of the unit, which I would play with my students on the interactive whiteboard during the last quarter of the lesson. But these were not enough and got too monotonous after a point as I noticed students packing their bags and ready to head to the door once the game was on. I was disappointed. They were young students and did not want to play?

I started introducing gamified activities in the middle of the class, instead, and I would use my own materials to create them; they would not only be memory games. I had students create their own games. I brought board games in the classroom. I built my game literacy playing tabletop games with friends and I would always think of how one game could be modified to be used in class to serve my own goals. The exuberant smiles and elation of students while being engaged in games that they or myself had created still makes me

emotional to this day. The emotions of being satisfied and feeling accomplished with my own practice, but also the passionate atmosphere that games had managed to create in the classroom boosted my own motivation as a teacher, left me feeling fulfilled by the end of my teaching day, and convinced me to continue this practice.

Through my Masters' in TESOL, I had investigated teachers' attitudes to the Digital School Project in Greece. It was a newly created platform that sheltered a plethora of digital materials, including gamified activities, but this was not widely adopted by teachers, as discovered through my findings. I could see why: the behaviourist outlook of the games and other online activities did not convince teachers in the public sector to adopt them either. They needed more because neither students nor teachers were happy about them. Through my own teaching and research experience, I became convinced of the role of teachers' emotions on the adoption of pedagogical practices, but also on the impact of games on the psychology of the whole class. This is what drove the motivation of this thesis: to look deeper into how games can impact teachers' emotions and how teachers' emotions can sustain game-informed pedagogical practices.

1.3 Purpose and Significance of the Study

This study provides a creative space and professional support for language teachers to explore integration of games and playfulness into their language lessons. It is thus both a continuous professional development for language teachers and a context for the researcher to explore teachers' emotions in relation to a different pedagogy, in situ and deeply. Investigating language teachers' emotions is crucial as they can directly impact language learner psychology but also the pedagogical practices of teachers. Given that game-informed language teaching is a rather novel pedagogy, exploring teachers' emotions is crucial in underpinning the potential benefits of this method and in exploring factors affecting the sustainability of such practices that have become the new buzzword (e.g., gamification,

game-based teaching) in (language) education. Can game-informed teaching be a positive teaching activity, emotionally and cognitively?

The double aim described above is indicative of the intention to bridge research and practice meaningfully. Integrating innovations into the language teaching field is essential that it is done from the bottom-up rather than top-down so teachers can have a say if it is relevant to their context to continue pursuing such activity, guaranteeing as such the adoption but also long-term sustainability of it all.

Furthermore, the study intends to view games not as an innovation per se that comes from the outside or as completely new to educational practice, but something that has always been an integral part of it. The game-mediated approach is a reminder to language teachers of how they can integrate play in their classes, which will further allow to the teacher to explore its limitations and benefits. Meaningful and sustainable change cannot take place unless the agents performing such change are involved and have an active role in it rather than being passive consumers of outside-driven change.

The context of the research is the Greek private English language teaching classrooms and this decision was based on two important reasons. First, the teaching of foreign languages in Greece is a context in which I have a good understanding based on both my language learning and teaching experiences. Having an emic perspective of the researched context is essential to the conduct of qualitative research which underpins this study. Further, for the Greek context, game-informed language teaching is not an overly practiced field in education and research has primarily focused on gamification practices (e.g., Kapsalis, Galani, & Tzafea, 2020; Korosidou, & Bratitsis, 2019). Game-informed language teaching is also frequently misunderstood, and it is the case that gamification practices are grouped under a game-based umbrella (e.g., Fuster-Guilló et al., 2019). Though certain researchers are clear in their criteria as to what game-based language teaching is about (e.g., deHaan, 2020), the

language teaching field abounds with misconceptions and vagueness on what constitutes gamification versus other approaches to game-mediated language teaching. Therefore, the aim through this study is to clarify the blurred waters, *while* engaging teachers in research, as teachers are the ones that can choose to introduce (or not) such a practice. Building teachers' knowledge around game-mediated teaching is of utmost importance.

This study is heavily influenced by the fact that emotion, cognition and activity are interconnected and influence each other; therefore, an Action Research methodology was developed to research both teachers' emotions and pedagogical practices. The empirical data were gathered through qualitative interviews and questionnaires with language teachers and classroom observations, but also student questionnaires. The aim was to explore language teachers' emotions *while* designing games for their classrooms, observe their lessons and emotions *in practice,* and also for teachers (and students) to reflect on their (emotional) experiences *after* the delivered game-informed lesson. The longitudinal design of the research followed teachers in designing and applying game-informed instruction throughout a school year. A one-off design would offer little information in the variety of factors influencing teachers' emotions. Moreover, following teachers in different stages of the school year allowed to draw conclusions on the sustainability of game-informed practices and to understand how one experience of game-informed design and implementation can influence the next.

The significance of the study lies in that it sheds light on how novel pedagogies, i.e., game-informed language teaching, are undertaken by teachers. Simultaneously, it digs deeper into teachers' emotions, a construct that is both very influential, but also hard to examine and rather under-researched from language teachers' point of view. The motivational and psychological pull of games has been established for students, but the impact of designing and integrating games in the classroom on teachers' affect has not been explored.

Investigating teachers' emotions is not only essential to their own wellbeing, students' emotions, but also a direct influence on their own practice. The highly nuanced and misinterpreted field of game-informed teaching, often scorned as a non-serious practice while it remains a buzzword in pedagogy, deserves further exploration and deep contextual and holistic understanding that this study aims to offer. Influenced by Positive Psychology, this study brings forward an exploratory and proactive take on research rather than a fixing-the-problem and reactive one which has long underpinned Applied Linguistics research (as in e.g., Young, 1991).

1.4 Thesis Outline

This chapter offered a broad understanding of the research background, motivation for the study, and set the goals of this research. Chapter 2 will discuss research on (language teachers) emotions to establish the exploratory and interpretive perspective to be undertaken. It will also focus on Positive Psychology to bring to the forefront the significance of its tenets in both applied linguistics research (proactive mindset) and teaching practice (the nuanced and complex nature of one's wellbeing). Game-mediated language teaching approaches are also to be critically discussed in this chapter in an effort to bring down usual misconceptions of said approaches by explaining how gamification does a disservice to language teaching and arguing for other types of game-mediated teaching, e.g., game-based and game-informed teaching.

Chapter 3 lays out the arguments for adopting a soft Action Research approach and a qualitative inquiry to exploring teachers' emotions. It also describes in detail the research questions and research context underpinning this study. The research design, instruments, data collection procedures and type of analysis followed in this study will be explained in Chapter 3 as well, along with the decisions of opting for a qualitative methodology and post-structuralist interpretations followed during the Thematic Analysis of the findings.

Chapter 4 presents information about participants of this study and the game-informed tasks that were created. Bringing together data and evidence from interviews, questionnaires and observations in a longitudinal manner, teacher emotions, cognition and activity in game-informed classes are presented through Thematic Analysis of said data.

Chapter 5 discusses the findings through keeping a post-structuralist interpretation under a Positive Psychology prism. Implications for research, practice and teacher education are to be discussed based on lessons acquired through this study.

Chapter 6 revisits the research questions, discusses limitations of this study, and proposes future work.

The next chapter provides the theoretical background for the three main pillars on which this study is anchored on, namely: (language teacher) emotions, Positive Psychology, and game-mediated language teaching.

2. CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter discusses critically the three different pillars that shape the theoretical background for this study, i.e., emotions, Positive Psychology, and games. This triad may seem rather disconnected; however, the presence of all three themes is necessary: language teacher emotions are the main topic of investigation, but emotions will be addressed and interpreted through a Positive Psychology lens and through a specific classroom experience, this of game-informed teaching.

The first section discusses approaches and definitions of emotions and justifies the choice for a post-structuralist interpretation of emotions, while the second section presents Positive Psychology and its tenets, which serve both as a theoretical and philosophical lens of this Thesis. It might seem controversial to have both a Positive Psychology theoretical framework and post-structuralism as a philosophy in a single qualitative enquiry. The following sections aim to resolve this paradox as they highlight the drive of Positive Psychology for pursuing research that is proactive rather than reactive. Post-structuralism further highlights that the "positive" in Positive Psychology will not be used to in this enquiry to further dichotomise and categorise emotions in a binary manner. In contrast, post-structuralism brings attention once more to an understanding of emotions, beyond binary categorisations, and to the exploratory nature of this investigation, whose aim is to situate emotions and explore their attributions, rather than unearth all that is negative and prescribe solutions.

Finally, the third section provides a familiarisation with the pedagogical approach through which language teachers' emotions will be explored, i.e.: game-informed teaching. This field is rather nuanced and multiple different approaches exist, which are briefly described and the ones to be used in this study are justified for. A case is made for pursuing

game-based language teaching approaches, driven from the need to move away from gamification and reward-based practices. As the focus of this study is to research language teachers' emotions in a game-mediated teaching for which no current literature exists, teacher attitudes will be addressed by the end of this chapter to cater for this gap and offer a robust background as to issues emerging in game-mediated teaching.

As the Figure 2.1 below indicates, Positive Psychology, and the PERMA model which will be more extensively discussed in this review of literature, are the main lens through which the research questions for this investigation are examined and the relevant findings understood. It is both that teacher emotions, the game-mediated pedagogy, and their interconnectedness will be interpreted through a Positive Psychology lens, not a happiology one, though.

Figure 2.1

Positive Psychology as a Lens for this Thesis
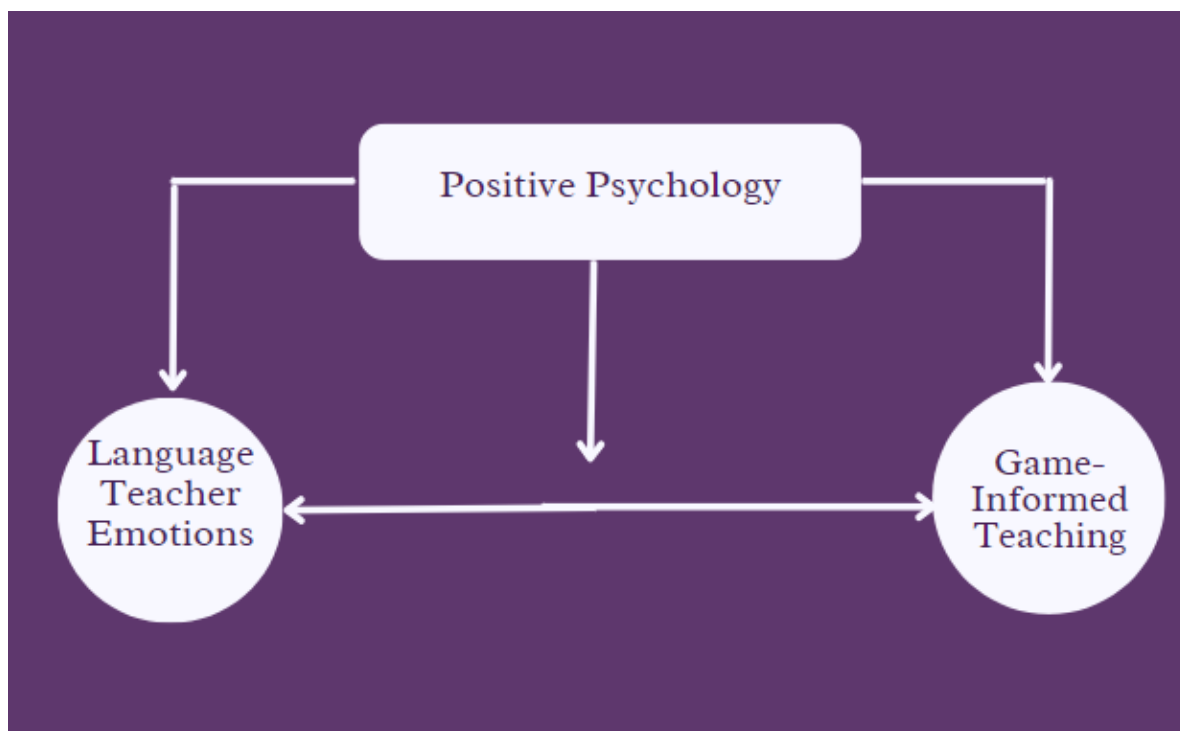
2.1 Theorising and Researching Emotions

In the following sections, definitions for emotions will be discussed by bringing the perspective of different disciplines and then situating them within the language teaching domain. Schools of thought on how emotions are researched will be presented and a rationale for how emotions are viewed for this study will be provided. Finally, findings from research on language teachers' emotions will be presented to give an overview of the field. How emotion, cognition, and activity are interconnected areas will be highlighted in the last subsection given that this study looks into how emotions are situated within teachers' practice.

2.1.1. Defining Emotions

Emotions are hard to define and research, given their elusive and nuanced nature. This section explores the different perspectives from various disciplines, highlighting the ones that will be relevant for this research project.

Damasio, a leading neuroscientist, defines emotions as:

> *bioregulatory reactions* that aim at promoting, directly or indirectly, the sort of psychological states that secure not just survival but survival regulated in the range that we, conscious and thinking creatures, identify with wellbeing…(these reactions) are constituted by a patterned collection of chemical and neural responses that the brain produces when it detects the presence of an emotionally competent stimulus (Damasio, 2004, p. 50)

Taking this definition into consideration, emotions are defined as reactions of the brain to external stimuli. The body and the mind are united in emotions; and humans are able to reflect and think about their emotions. Put simply, emotions are "brief, subjective feelings, which usually have an identifiable cause (e.g., I'm angry with…)" (Andrade & Ariely, 2009, p. 8). Moods should be distinguished from emotions as they usually "last longer… and are usually temporally remote from their cause" (Ekkekakis, 2012, p. 322) and are thus weaker feeling states.

Educational researchers have viewed emotions through a more social-constructivist light. Schutz et al. (2006) claim that emotional experiences or simply emotions are "socially constructed, personally enacted ways of being that emerge from conscious and/or unconscious judgements regarding perceived successes at attaining goals or maintaining standards or beliefs during transactions as part of social-historical contexts" (Schutz et al., 2006, p. 344). Undeniably, when aiming to define emotions in an educational context we cannot ignore the high interactivity of classrooms, previous experiences and cognition of the agents involved, but also the triggers and outcomes of certain (teaching) actions.

Damasio's (2004) definition of emotions emphasises emotions as mental states while Schutz et al.'s (2006) definition brings the social context into the experiencing of emotions as well as a judgement of accomplishing or failing goals. Both definitions recognise that emotions emerge after a conscious or unconscious appraisal to (external) stimuli. Appraisals refer to the personal judgements of whether a stimulus is emotionally competent and can cause benefit or harm, triggering thus the emotional response to the stimulus by the individual (Damasio, 2004). According to Damasio this process "depends on several major factors: evolutionary history, personal history, and the current context" (2004, p. 51). The Appraisal Theory (Lazarus, 1991) has been highly adopted by educational psychology researchers (e.g., Cross & Hong, 2009). It contends that pleasant emotions will be experienced by teachers when a stimulus is congruent with their teaching goals, whereas unpleasant ones will be cultivated if a stimulus is incongruent. What is more, the Appraisal Theory holds a binary categorisation of emotions that is constraining.

A more contextualised approach is found in Conceptual Act Theory (Condon, Mendenhall, & Barrett, 2014), which posits that:

> emotions are not unique mental states, but rather emerge from psychological processes that are not specifically dedicated to emotion. The psychological processes that construct emotion also construct phenomena of the mind that are usually

considered non-emotional, for example, memories, cognitions, and perceptions. (p. 62)

The difference between the Appraisal theory of emotions and Conceptual Act Theory is that the latter is not interested into the valence and arousal of emotions, but "how and why instances of the same emotion category might feel and look nothing alike" (Condon, Mendenhall, & Barrett, 2014, p. 63); the situational context is an important mechanism that influences how emotions are felt and expressed. Research has talked about the ambivalence of emotions, which is the state where two emotions are present at the same time (MacIntyre & Mercer, 2014). The notion of ambivalence is evidence to the fact that binary categorisations of emotions are problematic. The where, how, and why certain emotions arise are crucial to a deep understanding of emotions.

Researchers have proposed different interpretations of emotions, often contradicting ones. Likewise, there have been alternative ways to categorising emotions, and there is no unanimous agreement even on which emotions constitute the basic or primary ones, or *if such a division is necessary*. For instance, Plutchik (1962) defined eight distinct primary emotions and arranged them in a wheel adding more complex emotions to each primary one based on their intensity. Ekman (1992b) had identified six basic emotions: anger, happiness, surprise, disgust, sadness, and fear. Another model for categorizing emotions was Russell's (1980) circumplex model of affect where emotions are arranged on a circle along by two dimensions: a) valence (pleasure or displeasure) and b) arousal (active or inactive emotions). Zembylas (2007a) argues that such categorisations are problematic given that they view emotions as binary opposites (positive and negative) and *only* as an intrapersonal characteristic, ignoring their social and cultural attainments.

What is certain is that emotions are a complex phenomenon and cannot be defined out of context. Several applied linguistics researchers underline the social dimension of emotion

(Imai, 2010; Pavlenko, 2013; Swain, 2013; Zembylas, 2007a). For example, Swain (2013) states that emotions are "interpersonal, not private (intrapsychic) events. Emotions are socially and culturally derived" (p. 196). There are definitions, outside the applied linguistics domain, which provide a more neutral, balanced view (see below) acknowledging both that emotions are personal ("subjectively felt", "we interpret what we feel") and depend on, not necessarily derive from the social context ("socialised human beings") or social norms ("that come before us").

> While they [emotions] are subjectively felt and interpreted, it is socialized human beings–that is, thinking human bodies–who are feeling them in specific social contexts. (Leavitt, 1996, p. 531)

> Emotions are what move us, and how we are moved involves interpretations of sensations and feelings not only in the sense that we interpret what we feel ,but also in that what we feel might be dependent on past interpretations that are not necessarily made by us, but that come before us. (Ahmed, 2004, p. 171)

Benesch (2016), influenced by Ahmed's definition above and feminist interpretations, argues that emotions are neither private nor cognitive. To my reading of Ahmed's quote above, "past interpretations" may be constructed either by others (society) or by the individual's personal history; hence, emotions are both private and non-private. Even though the social and cultural context is inseparable of the individual's conscious and unconscious perceptions, this fact does not render emotions as non-private. Additionally, the word "interpretation" that is used in both definitions is evidence to the cognitive component of emotions. Cognition is tied to emotions, as our perceptions of our emotions entail reasoning and thinking processes, but they are not the only processes or factors involved.

To my understanding definitions of emotions are inescapably "biased", formed and influenced by the field of inquiry of researchers; neuroscientists take a cognitive approach, while social sciences researchers follow sociocultural views of emotions. Further analysis of different emotion theories will be presented in Section 2.1.2. Since for this research emotions

will be examined in a language classroom, Ahmed's definition will be adopted. As it will be demonstrated in Section 2.1.4, past lived emotional experiences are core to shaping teachers' beliefs and activities, and therefore a definition that includes this aspect is much fitting.

It is important to underline that in this study the aim is not to find where emotions generate in the mind or the environment, or which factor plays the most important role to the experiencing of emotions. The aim is to understand how emotions shape and are shaped by teachers' practice. Following Pavlenko (2013), this study will explore what emotions *do*, rather than what emotions *are*. Why teachers emote in a certain way and how their emotions shape their teaching practice are key questions that will be addressed throughout this study.

2.1.2 Three Schools of Thought in Researching Emotions

The non-unanimous definitions of emotions as analysed in the previous section, along with the different categorisations of emotions has inescapably created different schools of thought in how emotions are understood and theorised. At this point I will address the never-ending debate of two different schools of thought in theorising emotions. The first school of thought is the evolutionary or biological one, which holds that emotions are individual, universal expressions to external stimuli. The second school of thought draws from socio-cultural perspectives, and views emotions as socially constructed. The evolutionary school of thought has its roots on the Darwinian perspective that "emotions are evolved phenomena with important survival functions that have been selected for because they have solved certain problems we have faced as a species" (Cornelius, 2000, p. 1). From this view, emotions are seen as automatic reactions to external stimuli that the human species use in order to survive. Followers of Darwinian theory hold that emotions are therefore universal and have proved the universality of facial expressions of basic human emotions (Ekman, 1992a).

Evolutionary perspectives (Nesse, 1990), which are also mentioned in the literature as biological theories of emotions (Plutchik & Kellerman, 2013), hold that emotions are distinct; every emotion is different and is expressed differently from other emotions, but all humans share the same repertoire of emotions; yet, researchers have not reached an agreement on what the basic emotions are and identify different numbers of basic or primary emotions.

At the other end of evolutionary theories of emotions lay socio-cultural or socio-constructivist perspectives that consider emotions as socially constructed and tied to the social life of the individual. These theories argue that emotions cannot be expressed or felt in the same way by all humans, or irrespectively of their histories or social identities. Averill (1980), a socio-constructivist emotion theorist, claims that "emotions are not just remnants of our phylogenetic past…Rather, they are social constructions, and they can be fully understood only on a social level of analysis" (Averill, 1980, p. 309). Socio-constructivism has impacted emotion research in education and researchers have examined closely the social and cultural context where learning takes place (e.g., Tsang & Kwong, 2017). According to Imai (2010) "emotions are socially and discursively constructed acts of communication that mediate learning" (p. 288). Language and emotion seem to share many elements: both solicit communication, can be expressed by speech and are context and socially specific.

There is a third school of thought, which incorporates perspectives from both evolutionary and socio-cultural theories: cognitivism (Cornelius, 2000). According to cognitive theorists, emotions are driven by peoples' appraisals to external circumstances; an appraisal is a judgement of whether an event is good or bad for us. After the individual has made their appraisal, they are ready to "act" with an emotion based on whether they valued the event as positive or detrimental; this process is the action tendency.

For cognitive theorists, emotions are situated in the mind, and are shaped by thought. However, the appraisals according to Arnold (1960) as cited in Cornelius (2000) are

automatic and non-deliberate, in a similar way to how evolutionists perceive emotions: emotions as automated responses to the environment. At the same time, cognitivists hold that each person has different appraisals for their emotions and that these judgements are developed by "particular characteristics of the person or organism, his or her learning history, temperament, personality, physiological state and particular characteristics of the situation in which the person or organism finds him or herself" (Cornelius, 2000). It becomes evident that cognitive theorists recognise the role of the context and the individual's identity in the shaping of their emotions. However, cognitive views bring attention almost exclusively to the role of the mind and thought during this process, with little emphasis to what emotions do in social environments, i.e., in language classrooms (Benesch, 2017).

When it comes to researching emotions in teaching, we cannot view teaching as a solely cognitive activity. Most modern perspectives recognise teaching not only as a cognitive but as a social and affective endeavour (Zembylas, 2007b). For this reason, theorists have tried to combine the above-mentioned theories and treat emotion as an intrapersonal characteristic, without denying its interpersonal nature either. Emotions have also been examined from a political perspective, a perspective of power, in educational settings. Zembylas (2007b) talks about the politics of emotions as:

> the analysis that challenges the cultural and historical emotion norms with respect to what emotions are, how they are expressed, who gets to express them and under what circumstances […] *there is always something political* in which teachers and students are caught up as they relate emotionally to one another across classroom spaces, because power relations are essentially unavoidable; there are always emotion norms influencing emotion discourses and emotional expressions. (Zembylas, 2007b, p. 294)

The politics of emotions do not indicate that the person who is in "power", e.g., teacher, gets to express their emotions whereas the less "powerful" constituent, e.g., student, gets to repress their emotions. The power dynamics are much more complicated, and the power relationships do not stop at the teacher-student relationship or between peers. Power is

also evoked by the social context, the institution, and all stakeholders, e.g., parents, director of studies, who may not directly participate in the classroom, but can have a say in how the teaching is delivered. The person-in-context view that is also grounded in political theories, is prominent in what researchers call ecological perspectives to emotions (Gkonou, 2017). Interactions between the individual and the environment are not unidirectional but dynamic and are better analysed as belonging to a broader whole and this is why when researching teachers' emotions, it is essential that they are situated contextually, socially, and when needed politically.

2.1.3 Researching Language Teachers' Emotions

> The world comes in shades of "good" and "bad" and precious little in it is neutral (Damasio, 2004, p. 50).

The division of emotions to negative and positive is a widely followed one in teachers' emotions research. This is possibly because it is easier for humans to perceive, research and interpret binary systems (Miller & Gkonou, 2018), as seen in Damasio's quote above that "the world comes in shades of "good" and "bad" (Damasio, 2004). Similarly, language teachers' emotions, which are the focus of the current section, are frequently categorised on a binary system. I stand by Damasio's second part of the quote "precious little in the world is neutral"; however, I do recognise the natural draw to dichotomising emotions into negative and positive. Below, I will be referring to positive and negative emotions, keeping in mind, however, that not all negative emotions are to be deemed as "bad" or all positive as "good".

Common positive emotions that teachers report to have experienced during teaching are joy or enjoyment and pride. Positive emotions as such are often attributed to student achievement and progress (Gkonou & Mercer, 2017) as teaching is undoubtedly a very rewarding profession. Emotions such as satisfaction are experienced when teachers notice

student engagement (Hagenauer, Hascher, & Volet, 2015), but also when they have reached their teaching goals and their efforts have proved worthy (Martínez Agudo & G. Azzaro, 2018). Love is another frequently mentioned emotion in language teaching environments as teachers put in their best efforts to sustain positive rapport with their students and simultaneously attend to students' cognitive, language and social skills (Dewaele, Gkonou & Mercer, 2018).

Teachers' emotions have been found to affect the attitudes and emotions of the whole class (Becker, Goetz, Morger, & Ranellucci, 2014). As it has already been indicated in research, the emotions of the teacher are interrelated, and reciprocal to the emotions of the students (Frenzel et al., 2018). As an example, teacher enthusiasm during instruction can be detected by students and can thus trigger student engagement and possibly their motivation (Becker et al., 2014). This example is beautifully illustrated in Frenzel et al. (2018), see Figure 2.2, which shows the reciprocity of the positive experiences of the teacher to the students and vice versa. Emotions can be contagious; therefore, by researching teacher emotions and reinforcing positive ones could have a direct positive effect on learners' emotions and motivation as well.

Figure 2.2

Reciprocity of Positive Experiences in the Classroom
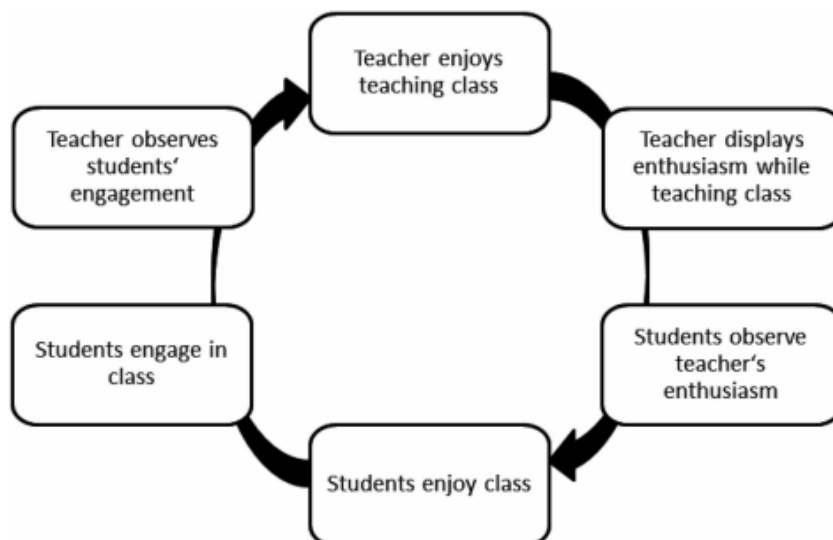
Note. From "Emotion transmission in the classroom revisited: A reciprocal effects model of teacher and student enjoyment" by A.C. Frenzel, B. Becker-Kurz, R. Pekrun, T. Goetz & O. Lüdtke. 2018.. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *110*(5), p. 630

Positive teacher emotions can not only influence student behaviour, but also have a significant impact on teachers' own motivation for staying in the profession. Recent reports on teacher wellbeing show low retention levels of teachers in their profession. OECD (2018) reports and academic research (Collie, Shapka & Perry, 2012) highlight that major factors for teacher stress and burnout are workload, working conditions and student (mis)behaviour. While changing working conditions for every teacher seems utopian as it is highly dependent on political and governmental contexts, applying changes in the micro level (i.e., the language classroom) is feasible and could have immediate effects on the classroom's climate.

In addition, teacher motivation refers both to the reasons for choosing to become a teacher, and staying on the profession (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). Factors that contribute to language teacher motivation may be intrinsic or extrinsic. For instance, intrinsic factors may

include teachers believing and having a passion and enthusiasm for their profession, the educational process itself, or the subject matter they are teaching (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). Similarly to emotions, teacher motivation can be contagious to students; when students see a passionate and enthusiastic teacher, they perceive and value the teacher's dedication and acknowledge its importance so they are more likely to follow suit in the language learning journey (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011).

External factors can impact teacher motivation at the micro- or macro-level of the teaching environment. Micro-level factors include the experiences in the language classroom, the school context, and relationships with colleagues and students. Teaching young students is a demanding endeavour and is inherently laden with emotions and responsibility, which may add to teachers' overwhelmingness and possibly result to burnout if the teacher is accumulating negative experiences (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). On the other hand, language teachers have been found to gain emotional pleasure especially through their interactions with students (Miller & Gkonou, 2018). Macro-level factors comprise of the wider socio-educational context and national policies, which can also cause stress to teachers, especially given the fact that they have little control on these issues.

Digging deeper into the affective component can provide both researchers and teachers with insight on ways to reinforce teacher motivation and avoid burnout. It is undeniable that the emotional workload for language teachers is substantial compared to other professions (Chang, 2009). Especially when it comes to second or foreign language classrooms, there can be additional emotional burdens that add to the high emotional affordances of the teaching profession (Dörnyei, 2007a). Communication in a language that is not the native language of the speakers may cause additional stress. Researchers have investigated concepts such as Willingness to Communicate (Dewaele & Dewaele, 2018) and Language Learning and Classroom Anxiety (Horwitz, 2001) from the language learner's

perspective. They have concluded that the teachers can help learners boost their Willingness to Communicate and lower their Language Learning Anxiety (Khajavy, MacIntyre, & Barabadi, 2018). Language teachers may as well experience additional stress in the classroom, as they are delivering instruction in a language that is foreign to their students (Cowie, 2011). Not feeling confident in using the target language themselves or not being part of the local culture can cause anxiety to the teacher (Liu, 2016).

Maintaining a healthy environment affect-wise is crucial for all participants in the foreign language classroom (Mercer & Kostoulas, 2018). When the teacher is motivated and exhibits positive emotions, this is perceived by students, who respond to the enthusiasm by staying engaged in the language lesson. This can be true vice versa; teachers feel rewarded for their efforts and can experience positive emotions, e.g., pride and happiness, when they see their students engaged and participating in the classroom.

At the other end of the spectrum, frequently recorded teachers' negative emotions in the classroom are frustration or anger, and anxiety. The first is usually experienced due to classroom management and student disciplinary issues (Chang, 2013; Hagenauer, Hascher, & Volet, 2015) or communication with out-of-classroom stakeholders, e.g., administration, school community (Nguyen, 2018). Teacher anxiety is closely related to teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy and professional identity, especially for the more inexperienced teachers. Interestingly enough, inexperienced teachers are at the same time the ones who feel intense positive emotions, such as enthusiasm and excitement (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003).

Nguyen (2018) reflects on language teachers' emotions through interactions with their colleagues, students, and management. Through research evidence from different studies, she argues that interactions with institutional heads are the ones that cause primarily negative emotions to teachers, e.g., anxiety and frustration. These emotions are usually attributed to conflicted ideals, and lack of support or positive rapport from the management.

Interactions with colleagues can be a source of both positive and negative experiences, similarly to students, but for different reasons. Colleagues are an important source of teachers' technical and emotional support (Gkonou & Mercer, 2017). For instance, pre-service teachers, who received advice from supporting teachers in classroom management issues and shared these experiences, managed to develop successful teaching strategies and boost their professional outlook (Gao & Benson, 2012). Nevertheless, warm collegial relationships are not always the case (Nguyen, 2018). Lack of collaboration and power relationships amongst colleagues (similarly to institutional management) can lead to teachers' isolation or disappointment.

Factors outside human-to-human relationships can also "imbalance" the power dynamics in the classroom. Such a factor can be technology, in any medium or form, which has already showed its power in shifting the roles of teachers and learners. Depending on how it is applied in the classroom, technology may empower learners more, leaving supervisory or passive roles to teachers. Shifting the roles can have a major impact in shifting power relations, and therefore emotional appraisals and expressions of individuals. Zhao and Frank (2003) investigated factors that affect the use of technology by teachers, using an ecological conceptual framework and they conclude:

> The ecological model took us beyond simply identifying and correlating factors and focused our attention on interactions, activities, processes, and practices…it becomes clear that innovations *cannot* be implemented without regard to the internal social structures of schools or other pressures that schools face. (Zhao & Frank, 2003, p. 833)

The quote above illustrates how relevant ecological models are when investigating innovations in teaching practice, and within social systems such as schools. It also emphasises the similarity of ecological models to political ones (if they are any different), given that both focus on "social structures" and the "pressures" that schools and teachers

face. Ecological and political conceptual frameworks will be discussed again in relation to employing game-mediated teaching approaches, in Sections 2.3.4 and 2.3.5.

King and Ng (2018) categorise language teacher emotions based on the source that causes them into intra-organismic, i.e., emotions stemming from the teacher herself (e.g. teachers' background), and inter-organismic, i.e. emotions external to the teacher, "imposed" by the micro environment of the classroom or the macro- and exo-system, i.e. the institutional or social context. It is crucial that we investigate the interactions between intra- and inter-organismic emotions, given that they shape teachers' practice and behaviour. Research has also highlighted that if teachers are adequately trained on socio-emotional competencies, it could benefit them in their struggle towards emotion management in a language classroom, where interpersonal skills are key to sound affective pedagogies (Gkonou & Mercer, 2017).

Research into teachers' emotions confirms that the teaching profession is a very rewarding one, and simultaneously rather stimulating, fostering intense emotions such as frustration and joy, as demonstrated by quotes below. Teachers' emotions are strongly influenced by and influence the classroom environment (Zembylas & Schutz, 2009).

> In many contexts FL and L2 teaching continues to be-an often unprofitable- "labor of love" (Pavlenko, 2013, p. 20)

> For teachers, the classroom can be an intense environment where emotions vary from the extreme joy of an exciting lesson to the heart-wrenching sorrow of knowing a student is being abused or bullied by his or her classmates. For anyone who has spent time in a classroom, it is clear: the classroom is an emotional place!" (Schutz, Cross, Hong & Osbon, 2007 p. 233)

As the two quotes indicate above, teaching is a caring profession and teachers *are expected to* manage their emotions and for instance mask negative emotions such as anger or frustration in order to facilitate positive classrooms (Miller & Gkonou, 2018). Teachers may feel the need to repress their emotions (e.g., anger or frustration) as they should be the lead and a positive role model in the classroom in order to restore order in the classroom. A

teacher might do the opposite as well: overwork their emotions to exhibit an extreme emotion, e.g., anger, for classroom management to prevail. Politics of emotions are closely tied to the notion of emotion regulation or emotion work. Emotion regulation or emotion management entails modifying emotions a priori or suppressing emotions late in their generation (Sutton, 2007). This can result in emotion labour which is defined as…

> the struggle between workplace feeling rules (Hochschild, 1983) and employers' prior training on beliefs about appropriate workplace conduct… Feeling rules are tacit expressions about how employees are supposed to react to particular workplace situations. (Benesch, 2017, p. 1)

In the language teaching profession, it is not enough to quantitatively research emotions and report teachers' distinct emotions. It is crucial to investigate the situational parameters that affect teachers' emotional experience to get a more holistic understanding of teachers' emotions, which is central to catering for teachers' wellbeing but also for the prosperity of the whole class, as students' and teachers' emotions impact each other contagiously. Research has indicated a wide spectrum of emotions reported by teachers while teaching and outside of the classroom (Gkonou, Dewaele, & King, 2020). The institutional and social context seems to play a major role in how these emotions are developed and understood by teachers.

The next Section will elaborate on how emotions impact teacher practice, and why it is crucial to investigate teachers' emotions when proposing novel teaching methodologies, which is the goal of this study.

2.1.4 Language Teacher Emotion, Cognition and Activity

> from a sociocultural theoretical perspective, it is not merely what teachers saw and did as learners that influences their thinking about teaching and learning, it is the emotional experiences [perezhivanie] associated with their schooling histories that play a central role in understanding teaching activity (Johnson, & Worden, 2014, p. 128).

What teachers feel, think, and do in their practice are interconnected processes (Golombek, & Doran, 2014). Emotion is not only a result of environmental stimuli but can also be the trigger for certain (instructional) actions and determine beliefs about teaching. Vygotsky as cited in (Golombek & Doran, 2014, p. 104) mentions in his work the term *perezhivanie*, which refers to a lived or emotional experience; "a unity of person and environment, achieved by the individual's subjective perception of that environment". Put simply, each person has unique emotional reactions and perceptions to a certain event and this emotional experience is shaped by previous experiences and can determine future ones. Past learning or teaching experiences can have a strong impact on current or future beliefs, activities or practice, as the quote by Jonhson and Worden indicates above. Vygotsky attempts to unite emotions and cognition under the concept of *sense*, which denotes a person's perceptions of a new experience, perezhivanie, based on the interpretations of a past lived experience. These perceptions can influence their future development. The strong influence of the social environment is not only central in Vygotskian theory, but also in socio-cultural theories of emotions, which were reviewed in Section 2.1.2.

The subjective perceptions of the environment that influence teachers' practice remind us of teacher cognition, a well-established field of research. According to Borg (2015), teacher cognition refers "to the unobservable cognitive dimension of teaching – what teachers know, believe, and think" (Borg, 2005, p. 81). This cognitive component determines teacher practice. For instance, teachers may choose not to adopt certain instructional practices if they believe that such an instruction will not be an efficient strategy for their learners. Teachers' own past learning or teaching experiences can inform their beliefs and attitudes to language teaching.

There are numerous studies juxtaposing teachers' beliefs, knowledge and practice (e.g., Breen, Hird, Milton, Oliver, & Thwaite, 2001; Peacock, 2001), examining the reasons

teachers deviate from their prepared lesson plans and how their language teaching views and methodologies impact their practice. Surprisingly enough (or not), as Basturkmen (2012) points out, teachers have shown little correspondence between beliefs and practices and that is influenced by their contexts. The emotional experiences of teachers in the language classroom can further reinforce their held beliefs and attitudes and form their professional identity. The emotions experienced in a class can significantly impact the teaching style and long held beliefs about language learning and teaching. Teacher cognition is a concept constantly reshaped and negotiated based on the emotional experiences, background, and context.

Golombek and Doran (2014), based on the above Vygotskian socio-cultural theory, unify language teacher emotion, cognition, and activity. They view "feeling as being on the same level and interaction with the thinking and doing of teaching" (Golombek & Doran, 2014, p. 103). Emotion, cognition and activity are concepts that are dynamic and interactional. Novice language teachers understand and perceive their practice very differently as they progress in their teaching journey. For instance, long-held language learning beliefs might prove inefficient when put into practice. Consequently, language teachers continuously develop their practice, and their beliefs change based on the emotional experiences they accumulate in the classroom. Teachers through their accumulated work experience and professional development can experience conceptual change, which refers to "an opening up of the conceptual space through increased metaconceptual awareness and epistemological sophistication, creating the possibility of entertaining different perspectives and different points of view" (Vosniadou, 2008, p. 279). Hence, it is not only cognition alone that affects teachers' activity; it is also the past teaching experiences and the emotions associated with those.

Kubanyiova (2012) argues that feelings of dissonance can paradoxically reinforce teachers' conceptual change. According to Golombek and Doran (2014), cognitive dissonance manifests when the ideal teacher self, how the teachers hope or want themselves to be, does not align with the real teacher self, which refers to what actually happens in practice. If the teacher realises the "discrepancy between who she is and who she wants to be" (Kubanyiova, 2012, p. 62), she will then be motivated and more likely to apply a proposed change in classroom practice and in the long-term.

The ideal and ought-to self brings into discussion teacher identity, which like teacher cognition, is "multiple, dynamic and conflictual, it is closely related to social, cultural and political contexts" (White, 2007, p. 101). Teacher identity is crucial to the professional development of teachers and is heavily influenced from the emotions experienced in the classroom, past knowledge and experience and is differentiated depending on the context (Meyer, 2009; Schutz et al., 2007). In other words, teacher identity is a composition of multiple teacher selves that shape the professional outlook of the teacher. Teachers' personal histories and professional roles are interwoven in the concept of identity.

According to Barcelos (2017), language teacher identity is…

formed by beliefs (or tacit theories, lay observations), emotions, and experiences (personal, work related, cultural, professional). It is constantly being shaped and reshaped by our interactions with others (and our interpretations of these interactions and experiences…they are a tool we use to make sense of ourselves as teachers. (p. 147)

So far teacher identity as a concept does not seem very different from teacher cognition. However, teacher identity seems to be a construct more vulnerable to the context the teachers find themselves in. For instance, a teachers' ought-to self, which is how teachers interpret their duties, might be at conflict to their ideal-self, which is what teachers aspire to become (MacIntyre, MacKinnon & Clément, 2009). Teachers even if they continue to hold the same beliefs (i.e., cognition remains unchanged), they might identify differently, and thus

act contrary to their beliefs depending on the demands and expectations of the current school context they serve. Teachers, like proper chameleons, may hold many identities and depending on their personal or professional environment, they may reveal a different identity.

According to different models of conceptual change, emotions and past experiences play a key role in teachers' (identity) development. This does not assume that positive feelings towards a teaching method will lead to its accommodation by teachers, while negative ones will lead to its rejection. The initial attraction to a method or practice may be welcome initially by the teacher but this can lead to superficial belief change. The situation is much more complex and for change to be successful, certain conditions shall be met. Kubanyiova (2012) argues that a proposed change needs to resonate with the teachers' goals and contexts, in order for teachers to realise its value and engage in it (resonance). Simultaneously, teachers need to be challenged and experience dissonance (while being provided the appropriate training and support) for the change to sink in.

Top-down enforced change in pedagogical practice, educational reforms and unpredicted institutional guidelines that may be incongruent with teachers' beliefs or identities is likely to meet with teachers' resistance, especially when this is not accompanied by appropriate support or teacher autonomy (Hiver, 2018). For example, in the Japanese L2 teaching context, high emotional stress and frustration was experienced by elementary school teachers not only due to working conditions but also due to enforced policies that mandate teachers to use only English when delivering their English language classes, while at the same time not providing adequate support to teachers (Nagamine, 2018). Situating change needs to be done with educators being able to align their professional and personal identities and simultaneously provide professional development and support if the change is to be taken seriously by educators and not just be another stressor to their already emotionally laden lives.

This section has emphasised the interconnectedness of teacher cognition, activity and emotions, as well other constructs such as teacher identity. It also draws attention to the social character of emotions, their dynamic nature, and their influence on teachers' conceptual change and consequently practice. Through this exploration of the field of research on teacher psychology, it becomes evident how emotions are interrelated not only to teachers' practice and affect their cognition, but also that emotions during teaching impact their own professional identity.

The next section will describe how Positive Psychology has impacted the field of emotions in language learning and teaching and will draw attention to positive emotions and other elements such as challenge that contribute to one's success in both language teaching and wellbeing.

2.2 Positive Psychology Perspectives in Language Education

The following sections provide an overview of what Positive Psychology is concerned about. The PERMA model, as established in Positive Psychology is discussed in relevance to language teaching (and learning). Lastly, Positive Psychology interventions are discussed to see how this field of enquiry has so far been applied to language teaching education.

2.2.1 Definitions and Aims of Positive Psychology

"Positive Psychology is the empirical study of how people thrive and flourish" (MacIntyre & Mercer, 2014, p. 154). According to Seligman (2002b), Positive Psychology is about "positive subjective experience: wellbeing and satisfaction (past); flow, joy, the sensual pleasures, and happiness (present); and constructive cognitions about the future—optimism, hope, and faith" (p. 3). Positive Psychology is established on the notion of positive prevention. In other words, it is not concerned with treating negative effects of past experiences, or mental issues, as is the case with clinical and modern psychology. Modern

psychology is based on recording, examining signs and symptoms of mental illness and disorders and searching for their ailments.

Positive Psychology does not aim to substitute modern psychology but introduces a shift in studying people's psychology: it capitalises on character strengths and attributes that can help people grow and flourish. The goal is not to prescribe, but to describe what leads to wellbeing and happiness in life (Seligman, 2012). Focusing on negative emotions and their "cure" has been the main drive not only for psychology (Seligman, 2012) but also in language learner and teacher emotion research. Positive Psychology denotes a turn to this "negative" focus and digs deeper in positive emotions and what drives those in the language classroom. Prevention rather than cure is the main aim.

Positive Psychology has been criticised for a narrow focus on positive emotions and treating emotions simplistically and in a binary manner, i.e., negative versus positive emotions (Lazarus, 2003). However, Positive Psychology does not choose to ignore what is negative in life; instead, it brings an alternative perspective and examines the different functions of positive emotions compared to negative ones (Mercer, Oberdorfer & Saleem, 2016). Therefore, Positive Psychology is preoccupied with what emotions do, in a critical way, , and specifically with how emotions can contribute to wellbeing. Positive Psychology does not follow the strict model that positive emotions are "good", and negative ones are a threat, as is the case with structuralist approaches of emotions (Benesch, 2017).

Positive Psychology is founded on three aspects: **positive subjective experiences** (e.g., positive emotions), **positive individual traits** (character strengths and values) and **positive institutions** (e.g., schools) (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). The reciprocity of those pillars can foster positive experiences and lead to a successful, happy life. Positive Psychology explores how wellbeing can be achieved both at an individual and a social level and this is in accordance with ecological and political views of emotions which bring

attention both to the self and the environment, as explained in Section 2.1.2. This interconnectedness is also exhibited in Seligman's PERMA model, which is introduced below.

2.2.2 The Relevance of the PERMA Model in Language Teaching

The aim of this section is to offer a description of the PERMA model, as found in Positive Psychology, and discuss how its elements relate to English language teaching. The discussion that follows justifies the decision for using the PERMA model as a lens for the aims of this thesis, both for exploring how game-mediated learning can foster elements of PERMA but also how language teachers' emotions can be understood and their attributions explored via PERMA I would like to highlight at this point that the word positive in positive emotions, which is the first element of PERMA, is not to be taken at face value throughout this investigation. As Seligman argues, the purpose of the PERMA model is not to tell individuals "'have more positive emotions,' and 'have fewer negative emotions.' …. PERMA is a theory of the building blocks of well-being" (Seligman, 2018, p. 333). Hence, following a post-structuralist approach, emotions in this thesis, although seen through as a Positive Psychology lens, they are not to be treated through a happiology stance or evaluative manner; they are to be seen for how they are contextually and intrapersonally exhibited, reflected and proactively explored. The aim is not to "fix" teachers' emotions nor make them more positive or less negative; the aim is to understand them contextually and focus more on their attributions; that is why PERMA, as building blocks theory deems itself appropriate for the purposes of this investigation.

The PERMA model, which is an acronym for: **Positive Emotions**, **Engagement**, **Relationships**, **Meaning** and **Accomplishment**, was introduced by Seligman (2012) to describe the elements that contribute to wellbeing. According to Seligman (2012), wellbeing is a construct, not a "real thing" such as happiness, which is measured by self-reports of life

satisfaction. Wellbeing theory is "about all five pillars, the underpinnings of the five elements is the strengths" (Seligman, 2012, pp. 24-25). All five elements meet three criteria: a) they contribute but do not define wellbeing, b) people pursue each element for its own sake, free of coercion, c) they are all defined and measured independently (Seligman, 2012). Below, I provide a brief analysis of the five elements and discuss them as to how they relate to language teaching and teachers' wellbeing.

Positive emotions, a rather self-explanatory term, refer to happiness and life satisfaction; it is an element that is measured and defined subjectively. According to Fredrickson's (2004) broaden-and build theory, experiencing positive emotions can "broaden the scopes of attention and cognition, and by consequence, initiate upward spirals toward increasing emotional wellbeing" (Fredrickson & Joiner, 2002, p. 172). Furthermore, positive emotions can also help gain control over negative feelings, such as anxiety (Fredrickson & Joiner, 2002).

There is evidence in both research and practice that teachers' emotions can have a considerable impact on their classroom behaviour, and consequently teaching effectiveness (Sutton, 2005). Teachers experience positive emotions by noticing their students' progress, by working and establishing interpersonal relationships with them, and by being members of supportive environments (colleagues, teachers, parents) (Sutton, 2005). According to the broaden-and-build theory, experiencing positive emotions can also lead individuals to become curious and experiment with more creative practice (Fredrickson & Joiner, 2002), in teachers' case, with more creative and alternative teaching methods.

The PERMA model puts emphasis on positive emotions as they seem to "accumulate and compound" (Fredrickson & Joiner, 2002) and have "restorative effects" on negative ones (Gregersen, MacIntyre & Ross, 2019, p. 24). However, Positive Psychology does not ignore the existence of negative emotions. Negative emotions can also have positive impact on

teachers' professional experience. "Stereotypically negative affect is viewed as useless and harmful, while positive emotions tend to be seen as correlating not only with wellbeing, but also with success in performance. Yet, reality is more nuanced…" (Komorowska, 2016, p. 45). Ambivalence, the co-occurrence of negative with positive emotions, is also possible and common in language teaching and learning (MacIntyre & Mercer, 2014). For example, an inexperienced teacher may feel both enthusiasm and anxiety when undertaking their first teaching class. Teachers reflecting on their emotions (positive or negative) while teaching can help them develop professionally. For instance, Mercer et al. (2016) suggest that teachers keep a journal of their experiences of different activities in the classroom. Recording classroom tasks that did not go as planned can help teachers reflect on and improve their practice.

  Engagement is anchored on Flow Theory (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997) which holds that engagement emerges when our skills are challenged by activities; it is "the experience of complete absorption in the present moment" (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2009, p. 195). Figure 2.2 below depicts the model of the "Flow" state and the desirable balance between acquired skills and the demands of the imminent challenge. When people experience "Flow", they are not usually aware of it; only after they reflect on past activity they are able to experience emotions of joy and satisfaction for their effort and the results of the work they were engaged in.

Figure 2.3

The Flow State
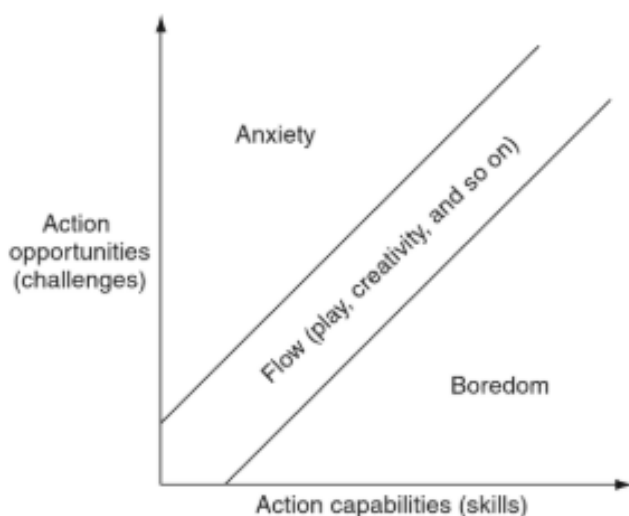
The state of "Flow" has often been associated with the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978), e.g., in (Vervakae, Ferraro, & Herrera-Bennett, 2018). ZPD refers to "the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peer" (Vygotsky, 1978 p. 86). In language teaching, this translates to a teacher guiding students to discover their potential and use the skills needed to tackle an activity. ZPD is anchored on socio-cultural theory as it emphasises the role of the expert mediator to the success of the novice. ZPD has been examined in relation not only to students' learning but also to teachers' professional development and how they could reinforce their skills by taking advantage of the social aspects of their profession, e.g. collaboration with peers, reflective teaching (e.g., through Action Research and diary writing) (Shabani, Khatib, & Ebadi, 2010).

Flow theory goes beyond ZPD as it brings attention to the affective state of the individuals and not only their cognitive ones. "Flow" is about feeling devoted to the work without realising that time passes by. After the experience of "Flow", the person is usually filled with emotions of joy and satisfaction (Seligman, 2012). "Flow" has also been associated with the topic of school engagement, often categorised into: emotional, behavioural, cognitive engagement (e.g., in Fredricks, Blumenfield, & Paris, 2004). School engagement can apply to teachers as well. Behavioural engagement relates to participating in classroom tasks, or for teachers carrying out their lesson plans and delivering their content. Emotional engagement refers to positive relationships between the members of the school: teachers and students, but also the wider institution, and other stakeholders, e.g., parents. Cognitive engagement refers to the effort put by the individuals (students or teachers) to meet the expected standards: academic outcomes, reaching curricula objectives.

Relationships is the third element that contributes to wellbeing, as "very little that is positive is solitary" (Seligman, 2012, p. 20). According to Aristotle, humans are social animals, "one whose nature is to live with others", as cited in Yu (2001, p. 129). The others play a key role in our daily lives, and according to Seligman, positive relationships with others are "the best antidote to the downs of life" (Seligman, 2012, p. 20).

Establishing relationships is at the core of quality language teaching (Mercer & Gkonou, 2020), possibly more than the teaching of any other subject, as language teaching facilitates communication. Language teachers unavoidably build relationships with their students. Research has focused on establishing positive rapport not only between teachers and their students but also colleagues, the administration, and parents (Nguyen, 2018).

This element of the PERMA is reminiscent of the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) that holds that relatedness, autonomy and competence are the three basic psychological needs and emphasises the need of belongingness and high-quality relationships (Ryan & Deci,

2017). Specifically, Relationship Motivation Theory, within the SDT, holds that "for social interactions to promote personal and relational wellbeing, people must experience not only relatedness satisfaction but also autonomy support and autonomy satisfaction within the relationships" (Deci & Ryan, 2014, p. 69). For language teachers this can translate to having supportive institutions, which would allow for autonomy and freedom in teaching practice, which is rare given the explicit standardized-testing oriented curricula. Establishing positive institutions is key to the wellbeing of all its members. This element is a reminder of the three pillars of Positive Psychology: positive subjective experiences, positive individual traits, and positive institutions.

Meaning refers to pursuing activity that is "bigger than the self" (Seligman, 2012). Meaning is an element that is both subjective and objective. People reflect on their past activities and during the course of time and through reasoning, they re-evaluate; what was initially meaningful to them may change, or even become opposite.

Meaning can refer to language teachers' motivation; teachers for example may have joined the profession because it is a calling to them (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). According to Seligman, realising one's impact to the world can increase their job and life satisfaction. Mercer et al. (2016) encourage teachers to reflect on their contributions and think about how they impact the lives of their students, and consequently the difference they make on society. Such mindsets can help teachers develop intrinsic motivation for their work and boost their personal satisfaction.

Finally, **accomplishment** concerns pursuing success, goals, winning. People experience positive emotions when they are fully absorbed in what they feel is worthwhile to them. People may still feel fulfilled and accomplished even if they do not finally "win" but have put their best self into an activity that is meaningful and greater than them (Seligman, 2012).

Accomplishment for language teachers involves meeting their teaching and professional goals. Teacher motivation is key for pursuing their goals and for pursuing their ideal teacher self (Golombek & Doran, 2014). Following continuous professional development sessions or training seminars can help teachers re-examine their practices, broaden and improve their practice, and construct new future selves. "Accomplishment could be a driving force for teacher commitment … and job satisfaction" (Mercer et al., 2016, p. 233). Accomplishment can drive teachers try out alternatives in their practice and view their teaching from a different perspective, allowing them to develop professionally and flourish.

Positive Psychology and specifically the PERMA model have proven their relevance to teachers' professional and personal wellbeing. Researchers have acknowledged the need for continuous professional development opportunities not only to train teachers on new teaching methods, but also provide strategies to cope with the emotional demands of their profession (Mercer et al., 2016). Creating interventions based on the tenets of Positive Psychology is growing and can prove useful to boosting language teachers' wellbeing (Dewaele, Chen, Padilla, & Lake, 2019), as their emotional prosperity can impact students' prosperity and academic success in a contagious fashion (see Section 2.1.3).

For this study in particular, which does not introduce an intervention, but a new pedagogical approach to language teaching, the PERMA model is a good framework through which teachers' emotional experiences are to be explored in terms of integrating game-informed teaching in their classrooms. The purpose of the study is not to prescribe game-mediated language teaching as a pedagogical approach that would lead to teachers' wellbeing, but rather explore how integrating such an approach can foster the elements found in PERMA in a proactive and exploratory fashion. This is because, games themselves for their own sake, as will be highlighted in Section 2.3.1 can foster elements that are present in the PERMA model, e.g., Engagement, (Positive) Emotions, while they can inherently provide

individuals with Meaning and/or Accomplishment when engaged in gameplay or post-gameplay. Hence, engaging in play could potentially satisfy elements of the PERMA model; however, the intention is not to correlate these two but rather explore how engaging in creative or playful activity can impact teachers' emotions and vice versa.

Researchers have offered their own theoretical applications of the PERMA model in language teaching practice (e.g., Oxford & Cuéllar, 2014) and have even produced more elaborate versions of the model, for example, the EMPATHICS model (Oxford, 2016).

> The word EMPATHICS is tied to the concept of empathy, which is truly important in language teaching and learning…The complex, interrelated, interacting, and evolving dimensions include the following: E: emotion and empathy; M: meaning and motivation; P: perseverance, including resilience, hope and optimism; A: agency and autonomy; T: time; H: habits of mind; I: intelligences; C: character strengths; and S: self-factors, especially self-efficacy (Oxford, 2016, p. 26).

Oxford (2016) ponders on the PERMA model and expands it so that it includes learners' character strengths that could solicit wellbeing. The EMPATHICS model looks inwards and pinpoints those strengths that are internal to the individual (e.g., perseverance, agency, autonomy). Oxford (2016) merges certain elements of the PERMA model, e.g., meaning and engagement (in letter M: meaning and motivation), as she argues that learners will not engage in an activity that is not meaningful to them. Even if this is true, to my understanding meaning pertains to the content and goals of an activity and thus is external to self (greater than the self), whereas engagement comes from within the learner and their current state of "Flow".

As Seligman (2018) highlights, the PERMA, being a theory of building blocks of wellbeing, should have its elements defined and measured independently of other elements. Hence, merging the elements of Meaning and Motivation minimises their individual potential while also simplifying their impact on one's well-being. For example, Motivation can be triggered in a one-off fashion and relates more to engagement in activity, whereas meaning

would require a more sustainable dedication to the activity if the definition of Meaning in the PERMA is to be followed.

Additionally, Oxford (2016) differentiates *Perseverance* from *Character Strengths*, even though perseverance *is* a character strength. EMPATHICS seems to offer a summarized interpretation of the 24 strengths and virtues in Authentic Happiness theory (Seligman, 2002a), which are essential to an educational setting. In general, the elements mentioned in EMPATHICS are much needed in sustaining positive language learning experiences. Nevertheless, this model seems to look inwards and prescribes individual elements and characteristics, hence somewhat overlooking the role of social settings and the other interactors. Simultaneously even though some elements are too perscriptive, some others are too open-ended, e.g., *Time* and *Habits of Mind*, while others are discriminated from one another, e.g., *Character Strengths* and *Self-Factors*, where they could be subsets of each other or even relate to the same thing.

Instead, the PERMA model provides a more succinct and holistic approach to what could facilitate the flourishing of individuals. The PERMA model does not prescribe what good language learners or teachers must be like, but rather explores the elements that could foster their wellbeing and provides a framework where both the individual and the environment are interconnected and can impact each other. The PERMA model offers thus a contextual understanding of wellbeing while its elements refer to both the private and social sphere, which are much needed when investigating educational contexts. Along with its proactive character, as a building blocks theory, PERMA also satisfies the post-structuralist approach taken in this study. Positive emotions and well-being are not pursued in this investigation for their own sake, but they are rather explored proactively, contextually, and reflexively. Next, I look at how Positive Psychology and the PERMA model have been integrated into (language) teaching practice.

2.2.3 Positive Psychology Interventions and Positive Education

Positive Psychology Interventions (PPIs) are "treatment methods or intentional activities aimed at cultivating positive feelings, positive behaviours, or positive cognitions'' (Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009, p. 467). They are usually standalone programs with an aim to reinforce character strengths in individuals such as gratitude and hope (Marques, Lopez, & Pais-Ribeiro, 2011) but have also been built around school subjects such as physical education and religion.

The Penn Resilience Program (also known as PERMA Workshops) is a prominent programme founded on Positive Psychology, which aims to train individuals to build resilience, wellbeing and optimism. The Penn Resilience Program (PRP) has worked closely with schools and colleges. Evidence from several controlled studies suggest that PRP has helped students reduce or prevent (symptoms of) depression and anxiety (Seligman, Ernst, Gillham, Reivich, & Linkins, 2009). The effects have also been found to be long lasting. However, certain studies have pointed to inconsistencies in results, and researchers have argued that this is due to differences in who (and how) implements the PRP. Studies which were conducted by PRP staff or studies where the group leaders implementing the PRP were closely supervised by the PRP team, showed that PRP's effects were strongest than studies where the PRP team had little control over the context where the study was taking place (Gillham et al., 2007).

Despite its cooperation with schools, the PRP is external to the school reality. Waters (2017) claims that the full potential of Positive Psychology has not been exploited in educational settings and this is largely due to the standalone character of PPIs. Additionally, given that such interventions are not integrated into the curriculum, they implicitly verify that socio-emotional goals are separate from academic ones, if not of less importance (White, 2016). This has reinforced the belief that treating the mind is much more important than

treating the heart, which has caused resistance in the implementation of such programmes (Waters, 2017).

Nevertheless, research evidence suggests that teacher-delivered interventions were more impactful than those run by outsiders of the school (Waters, 2011). Guiding teachers into developing their own PPIs can be impactful, especially when the interventions are incorporated into the curriculum and not explicitly stated. What is needed is not interventions scattered across the school year, but micro-interventions that are ideally embedded in everyday practice (Waters, 2017).

The impact of Positive Psychology in educational settings is significant and this has led to the term Positive Education, which refers to reinforcing both academic skills and wellbeing. Positive Education can be embedded in the school curricula and has dual focused goals: wellbeing and academic success. This is in contrast to PPIs, which as seen earlier have a clear single focus on building character strengths that will help people flourish. PPIs might be inserted in the teaching of other subjects, but this is done in a standalone fashion, without explicit curriculum goals. Worldwide organisations (e.g., the United Nations, UNICEF with the Learning Metrics Task Force 2013) push for positive interventions in schools.

Researchers are also in favour of combining academic skills and wellbeing goals. Particularly for foreign language teaching, incorporating wellbeing goals seems very suitable. First of all, the teaching of foreign languages is inherently a communicative, social activity. Thus, building social and collaboration skills is very relevant, especially in multilingual or multicultural contexts, where participants need to build interpersonal strengths such as kindness, teamwork, fairness (MacIntyre, Gregersen & Mercer, 2019). Secondly, Positive Psychology emphasises the importance of positive emotions in wellbeing, which are also crucial for the long-term commitment in the teaching and learning of foreign languages (MacIntyre & Mercer, 2014). Positive emotions can strengthen individuals' motivation and

perseverance in the tasks they are undertaking. Last but not least, Positive Psychology brings to the forefront the role of both individuals and institutions; attention to the self, the environment and the dynamic relations between those are much needed in foreign language education, where meaningful communication is at the heart of the classroom's prosperity.

2.3 Games in Language Teaching

Language teaching differs from other school subjects given that language production is both the goal and the vehicle of the learning experience. It also differs in that it is laden with emotions, given the interpersonal and social nature of language communication (Gkonou & Mercer, 2017). As language teaching curricula and materials become more standardised, language teachers are burdened emotionally and are "more pressured to meet externally imposed performance benchmarks" (Richards & Jones, 2015, p. 3), which can lead to their burnout and job dissatisfaction (Mercer et al., 2016). Creativity becomes stifled in a subject like language, which is inherently creative. Language teachers ask for more creative practice and move beyond the test-centric realms of language teaching (Mercer et al., 2016).

Games, which are ubiquitous in the youth's reality, are positive motivational, social and emotional experiences (Granic, Lobel, & Engels, 2014). Applying games in language teaching can provide ground for students' growth and teachers' creativity, professional empowerment and satisfaction. "The psychological "pull" of games is largely due to their capacity to engender feelings of autonomy, competence and relatedness...but also can be experienced as enhancing psychological wellness" (Ryan, Rigby, & Przybylski, 2006, p. 347).

Research and practice have evidence of the motivational and engaging power of games, but the evidence concerning learning outcomes is not equally definite (Mathe Verhagen, & Wiklund, 2019). Even though there are studies that have found that games bolster students' language learning performance (e.g., Cornillie, Thorne, & Desmet, 2012),

evidence of games on academic performance is sometimes mixed or inconsistent (Hainey et al., 2016). The improved results in students' academic performance after a controlled experiment with games are often attributed to the game effect, though this might not be the sole reason of the students' academic progress (Nousiainen et al., 2018).

The context where a game intervention is held and how the game is applied, play an important role to the success of the intervention (Hanghøj, 2013). Students can easily recognise a game that is not really a game. For example, learners termed the educational computer game "Global Conflicts" as "school game", due to the lack of interaction and wall of text that appeared in game (Hanghøj, 2013). "The idea of game rests in the perception of the user, not the description of the developer, the pedagogical model or the label used by the teacher" (Beatty, 2013, p. 61). Students are very perceptive and can differentiate when an activity is a game or a camouflaged gamified quiz. This is also true for teachers; if they do not realise the pedagogical value of a game, they will be very reluctant in introducing it in their classrooms.

Before delving further into teachers' attitudes and practices of games in the classroom, it is important to clarify certain definitions related to games, as sometimes the term itself might be ambiguous. Games may refer to video games or board games, educational games or online ones. The next section provides clarification of different game genres and approaches that are relevant to game-mediated language teaching.

2.3.1 Important Definitions in Game-Mediated Teaching

In this section, important definitions are given for different enactments of "game" and "play" in language education. Concepts such as gamification, game-based learning, serious or educational games are misrepresented or regarded as one and the same in the literature. The difficulty in defining these concepts appropriately derives from the challenge of defining and

distinguishing "game" and "play". This section will clarify these misconceptions and offer a framework for the design of game-mediated activities.

First, it is important to define what "game" and "play" is. Jesper Juul (2016) defines play as "broadly associated with free-form and voluntary activities, yet games are also defined by rule structures that in part limit what players can do" (p. 351). According to Salen and Zimmerman (2004, p. 11), "a game is a system in which players engage in an artificial conflict, defined by rules, that results in a quantifiable outcome." Kapp (2012) furthers this definition by adding that a game apart from the above "is often eliciting an emotional reaction" (p. 23). That games trigger emotional responses to players is an undeniable fact and games research is moving towards affective-driven design (Isbister, 2016). In essence, "play" differs from "game" in that the latter is more heavily bound by rules and a system that all involved players need to follow. The emotional aspect, though, can be present in both "game" and "play".

Below, I briefly discuss the terms: gamification, serious games, vernacular games, and three approaches to game-mediated teaching, i.e., game-based, game-informed, and game-enhanced language teaching. It is important to underline here that game-mediated teaching will be used in this study as an umbrella term to signify any language teaching approach that uses "game" or "play". Further, the term game-based/ game-informed/ game-enhanced (language) *teaching* will be used in this study instead of the more widely used game-based/game-informed/ game-enhanced *learning*, as the focus is on how teachers go about the design and delivery of game-mediated L2 teaching.

Gamification refers to the "use of game elements in non-game contexts" (Deterding, Dixon, Khaled, & Nacke, 2011). Game elements can include: rewards, scores, goals and competition. Gamification has been widely used in non-educational contexts, and is especially widespread in marketing, where customers are rewarded for purchases or enter

loyalty schemes to reinforce their buying behaviour. Well-known applied examples of gamification for language learning are mobile applications or online environments such as Memrise and Duolingo. These environments engage users in language learning through translation and simple exercises (e.g., matching activities, word order) and reward users with experience points for correct responses. Leader boards, "lives" and "coins" are game elements embedded in these gamified platforms, which aim to engage the user further.

Serious games, i.e., games that do not have entertainment, enjoyment or fun as their primary purpose (Michael & Chen, 2005), are often associated with gamification. However, they differ in their goals. It is "the entertainment component comes first" (Zyda, 2005, p. 26) in serious games. What distinguishes serious games from gamification is that the first is another game genre with "serious" educational and training goals, while the latter borrows game elements to make a non-game experience fun.

Vernacular or Commercial-off-the-shelf games (COTS) are games commercially available and is not made for any specific educational purposes (Reinhardt, 2019). Game-enhanced language teaching (Reinhardt, 2019) uses vernacular games, such as party games, and adapts them as pedagogical tools.

Game-based teaching transcends serious games and gamification. According to Reinhardt (2019) game-based teaching "refers to the use of educational games as resources for formal or informal (self-directed, intentional) L2 learning" (p. 149). What differentiates game-based teaching further from serious games is that in game-based teaching the educational games used are usually created by the instructor or are specifically designed for a particular context; they are not massively produced (Reinhardt, 2019). The instructor creates a game tailored to their own context and with explicit pedagogical and learning objectives attached to it. In game-based teaching the game is used not only as a tool but as the main unit of instruction.

Game-based and game-enhanced approaches to language teaching differ only in terms of whether the game is commercially available or created by the educator. However, both approaches have explicit language goals and activities wrapped around the game (Reinhardt, 2019). In other words, in game-based approaches learning is playfully viewed, while in game-enhanced approaches, games are "learnified".

Finally, game-informed or play-informed approaches lie somewhere between gamification and game-based teaching. Specifically, game informed approaches include "game and play principles applied in digital and non-digital contexts outside the confines of what one might typically consider a game" (Reinhardt & Sykes, 2014, p. 3). Hence, it could be argued that for game-informed teaching, there is less heavy structure, rules-wise, in comparison to game-based approaches. Simultaneously, game elements are incorporated in a less superficial way compared to gamification, which will be discussed later in Section 2.3.2. Game-informed teaching is the approach that transcends this study, and the purpose for opting for this approach is suitably described below:

> "the purpose of game-informed research is to investigate how the activities of digital gaming and play in learning can inform L2TL [second language teaching and learning] that may not be embedded in traditional game structures. In other words, by studying these activities, we might better understand and design L2 learning environments, including tasks and assessments, to be more game-informed, even if they are not recognized as games." (Reinhardt & Sykes, 2014, p. 3)

2.3.2 Moving Away from Gamification

Although gamification has been on the rise in various domains of life, it has received criticism especially when applied in education. A common critique is the superfluous use of game elements and game mechanics that do not add anything pedagogically (Nicholson, 2011). For instance, gamified language learning applications resemble gamified quizzes that drill learners on repetitive language tasks and test their low order thinking skills, e.g., remembering, understanding (Nicholson, 2011).

The problem is with the way that creators of today's edutainment products tend to think about learning and education. Too often, they view education as a bitter medicine that needs the sugar-coating of entertainment to become palatable. They provide entertainment as a reward if you are willing to suffer through a little education. (Resnick, 2004, p. 1)

Behaviourism is the main underlying principle of gamification. The learner or user is rewarded or receives penalties for correct or incorrect answers. Let us consider a sample exercise in Duolingo (see Figure 2.4 below). The users are given a sentence to translate from their L1 to the target language, hints of what each word means are also available to the users. Once the user types in a correct translation, they progress to the next sentence, if not they use "lives". Positive and negative reinforcement is key to gamification. In Duolingo and other gamified platforms, leader boards engage users in competition to prolong their stay on the platform and the learning process.

Figure 2.4

An Exercise from Duolingo.com
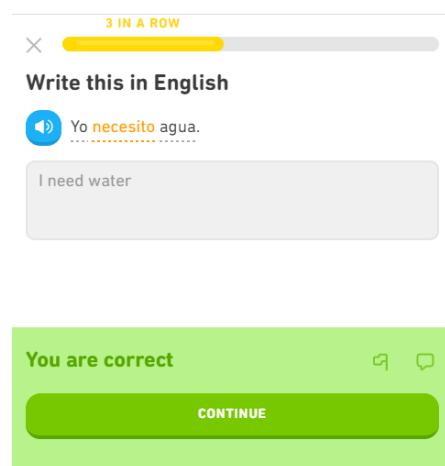
Note. Screenshot from author.

Publishers of foreign language textbooks and (language) educators have produced online games for the foreign language classrooms. The products look like gamified quizzes, "which test knowledge more than they teach it" (Beatty, 2013, p. 63), see Figure 2.5 below. This is the main reason why language learning needs to move away from simplistic

gamification, as it only promotes external rewards through audio-visual engagement (sound effects, bright colours) if delivered in digital form. Gamification fails to provide language teaching with transformative learning experiences that would encourage language production and meaningful communication. Gamified exercises can act as assessment tools (Beatty, 2013), but they fail to expose the learner to a unique and meaningful experience as a game would do with appropriately aligned pedagogical goals.

Figure 2.5

Quiz Game Show

Note. Screenshot by author from Burlington Books, Webkids 3

Technology seems to take steps backwards, pedagogically speaking, as it seems to promote test-centric, behaviourist models, rather than more social and creative ones. Researchers have called for meaningful gamification (Nicholson, 2015), where the embedded game elements would be non-rewards, but would stimulate the user through narrative and discovery of real-world experiences.

"Indeed, the characteristic of "gamified" applications might be that compared to games, they afford a more fragile, unstable 'flicker' of experiences and enactments between

playful, gameful, and other, more instrumental-functionalist modes" (Deterding et al., 2011, p. 11). Thus, in gamification the game elements are rather independent, sometimes unnecessary, and unrelated to the learning goals or world of the game; whereas in a game, all the elements are integrated and offer a functional purpose in the game. For instance, let us consider a common element in games: rewards. In Duolingo, players gain lingots, in-game currency, and points as they complete lessons. However, both the currency and the lives, do not offer information to the user about the language learned in this lesson, nor do they change in the long-term; they could easily be replaced by any other visual or name.

It is not that the gamified activities are "bad" for an EFL class, while games are "good". When referring to game-based teaching, it means that a game is central part of the lesson and it is used to teach knowledge and skills - with a definitive start, game play and ending (Kapp, 2012). Hence, in game-based teaching the focus is not on the individual components (e.g., points) of the game that may excite and grab the attention of the learner. It is the game itself that will help the learner engage in meaningful interaction and use language to fulfil a communicative goal as required by the game.

2.3.3 The Case for Game-Based Teaching

Games (vernacular or educational ones) can be a powerful teaching tool; however, their full potential has not been exhausted in (language) education. Some vernacular games can prove to be an excellent teaching tool and facilitate learners' creativity and language production. For example, "Once Upon a Time" card game can be used in the EFL class for students to construct stories cooperatively. It uses cards that feature story elements, e.g., a place or a character, to progress the story started from the previous player. If used correctly in the classroom, with pre-game tasks (clarifying vocabulary on the cards and explaining game rules) and post-game activities (writing down the stories narrated by others), it can prove to be an optimal tool for practicing narrative and writing skills.

Researchers have pinpointed the similarities of the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) approach and games (Sykes, 2014) and have integrated games in the language classroom by adopting a TBLT approach (York & deHaan, 2018). What is TBLT, though? The communicative aspect of the language is core to this teaching method as it emphasises negotiation of meaning and using language in order to meet predetermined communicative goals (i.e. tasks). Even though there are variations of TBLT, the most common cited design is the Task Cycle: Pre-Task, Task, and Post-Task (Willis & Willis, 2013). Learners are not explicitly taught linguistic forms until after the communicative task has been completed, in the Post-Task part. According to Willis and Willis (2013), the learners become aware of the objectives of the lesson in the Pre-Task. In Task, they tackle the problem addressed by the teacher. During the Post-Task, and in a reflective manner, they analyse the language they used for the needs of the task. If necessary, the teacher may offer explicit instruction on the language used, offer feedback, or expand on it.

Similarly to games, TBLT provides specified goals (i.e. tasks) and rewards (i.e. feedback during the Post-Task phase), upon completion of the goals. Both games and TBLT offer ground for authentic use of the target language (Sykes, 2014). Nevertheless, TBLT has been criticised for lack of focus on form and very few opportunities for traditional and explicit instruction. Learners are asked to complete language tasks for which they may not have been exposed to the language needed; the teacher provides the necessary language in situ. TBLT has been judged for leaving supervisory and facilitative roles to the teachers (e.g., Swan, 2005). The shifting roles of teachers and learners determine the atmosphere in the classroom. However, there should not be a matter of whether the learner or the teacher must have more active roles during teaching. What is crucial for the language class is maintaining a balance, allowing both the teacher and learners to be active and interact with each other,

building positive and high-quality relationships using language and by engaging in meaningful tasks (see PERMA Model, see Section 2.3.2).

This section has made a case for game-based rather than out-of-context gamification of language teaching. However, not all is black and white: there are applications of gamification that might be more meaningful than an educational game. "The contextualisation of gaming in regard to learning is probably more important than specific features of the game in its own right" (Arnseth, 2006, p. 23). Integrating games, not just gamification, and carefully aligning them with the curriculum can foster meaningful interactions, skills building (e.g., speaking) and emotional experiences that go beyond taming the good and suppressing the bad feelings. Games, if appropriately introduced, can evoke powerful emotional experiences that challenge the learners, drive them out of their comfort zones, and activate both their cognitive and socio-emotional skills, which are much needed in language education. Most importantly, games can facilitate experiences that would emphasise active teachers' roles and engage them in creative practice.

2.3.4 Learning and Emotion Theories in Game-Mediated Teaching

This section will analyse game-mediated approaches through the lenses of learning and emotion theories. As it was argued in Section 2.5.2, gamification provides players-learners with "fragile", decontextualised, playful learning experiences. Gamification shelters a structural-behaviourist view of language teaching (Reinhardt, 2019). As in popular gamified language learning applications, a structural view of gamification provides learners with "repeated exposure to the structures of language" (Reinhardt, 2019, p. 105) and processing the foreign language through translation and transfer from their native language.

Gamification promotes an inadequate cognitive view of emotions. As seen in Section 2.1.2, a cognitive-structuralist viewpoint of emotions posits that positive emotions (e.g. joy) are needed in language education as they reinforce learning (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2022),

while negative ones (e.g. anxiety) obstruct successful learning (Benesch, 2017; Gkonou, Dewaele, & Daubney, 2017). This dichotomous approach, which is reinforced in gamification through "rewards" and "penalties", does not consider the "ambivalence" of positive and negative emotions (MacIntyre & Mercer, 2014); and the stimulating force negative emotions may have in one's learning (e.g., certain levels of anxiety called facilitative anxiety are needed to initiate the "Flow" experience, see Section 2.2.2). Additionally, gamification promotes an individualistic view of emotion and learning; player-students compete against each other, and most of the interaction is between the students and the game or the console that facilitates it rather than peer-to-peer interactions.

On the other hand, the integration of games through social-informed perspective can help participants of the community develop emotional and socio-interaction literacies through social gameplay. Social play fosters these literacies as students learn to express themselves and empathise with their peers emotionally. Learners use language to communicate their ideas and feelings by working and cooperating with other players. Game-informed environments "acknowledge and integrate gameplay as a means of learning in contexts where it makes sense to do so" (Reinhardt & Sykes, 2014, p. 4). These social interactions are much needed in language education and reinforce the intrapersonal character of the language communication.

Games ask players "to make their own discoveries and then apply what they learn to new contexts" (Jenkins et al., 2006, p. 38-39). Embedding vernacular games in the language classroom with little or no mediation by the teacher, and plenty of autonomous work is an example of a game-enhanced teaching approach. However, as Reinhardt (2019) argues, vernacular games may scaffold the play experience, but this is not always true for the complexity of the language in the game. Introducing pre- and post-play activities may assist in offering a more comprehensible experience of playful learning.

According to social-informed approaches, learning is seen "as activity that is first socially mediated by a peer or expert and then internalised by the individual" (Reinhardt, 2019, p. 109). To my understanding though, this relationship is not categorical or one-way but much more dynamic. A more suited approach is the ecological one, which brings attention to "others" and to the context of learning (Gkonou, 2017). Ecological approaches do not ignore social-informed views; rather they consider that learning "emerges dynamically through contextual relations and acting on learning potentials, or affordances, in gaming ecologies" (Reinhardt, 2019, p. 137). Therefore, research in game-mediated teaching calls for ecological perspectives, considering both the individual and their environment, and emphasising the situational nature of language learning and teaching (Reinhardt, 2019).

The same trend seems to appear in theorising emotions; theory has moved towards more critical and political approaches, not just socially oriented ones (Benesch, 2017). As Zembylas puts it, emotions are viewed as "interactional and performative, wherein *emotions are viewed as neither exclusively private phenomena nor exclusively sociocultural phenomena (emphasis added)*" (White, 2018, p. 21) but are seen as "crucial to the processes in which the psychological and social are produced" (Zembylas 2007a, p. 63 as cited in White, 2018). Emotions and learning are dynamic processes, vulnerable to change, and therefore the context in which they are situated cannot be ignored: "emotions are contextual, relational, and the effects of contact among people, ideas, and objects" (Benesch, 2016, p. 1). Table 2.1 below offers a comprehensive list of how theories of learning and emotions could be related to different approaches of play in language teaching, as explained above.

Table 2.1:

Learning and Emotion Theories in Game-Mediated L2 Teaching

Type of Play	Learning Theory	View of Emotions
Gamification	Cognitive, Behaviourist	Cognitive, Dichotomous, Individual
Game-based, Game-Informed, Game-enhanced language teaching	Social-informed, Ecological perspectives	Interactional, Performative, Socio-political

Drawing from political theories of emotions, I shall not resist to make reference to Ahmed's book of "Cultural Politics of Emotions", where Ahmed, amongst others, investigates "how different 'figures' get stuck together and how sticking is dependent on past histories and associations" (Ahmed, 2014, p. 13). Ahmed claims that "certain objects are attributed as the cause of happiness, which means they already circulate as social goods before we "happen" upon them" (Ahmed, 2014, p. 220). Depending on the social and political context, certain events, situations, objects or people are positive and can cause positive outcomes de facto. Games could be considered as "happy objects" as they "induce" positive emotional reactions of engagement and satisfaction to players.

Drawing from Ahmed's notions of "objects" and their "stickiness", Benesch (2013) has explored two objects and how sticky they are in the language classroom, namely dictionaries and cell phones. Benesch (2013) investigated what draws learners and teachers to these objects, and what affective associations push them away. Based on Ahmed's definition, games could be investigated in a similar way as "happy objects". What about the teachers though? Will the same "happy object" have equal positive outcomes to teachers? Can games bring happiness in the language classroom and promote wellbeing amongst its participants? The potential of games for language learning has not been fully unravelled in the classroom yet and it would be interesting to investigate whether games can pose as "happy objects" to teachers and students.

2.3.5 Teacher Attitudes to Game-Mediated Teaching: Adoption & Resistance

Emotions in English language teaching have been only recently examined from teachers' perspective, that is the past decade. The same applies for games in language teaching; they have excessively been researched from students' perspective, while little literature can be found on teachers' views, preferences, attitudes, let alone teachers' emotions in game-mediated language teaching contexts (Hwang & Wu, 2012). What is also missing from the literature are investigations in foreign language classrooms that integrate game-mediated teaching. Most research has focused on K-12 education and a wide variety of subjects, but rarely including (foreign) language teaching. This is unfortunate as games can provide truly transformative experiences in language learning, given the social character of gameplay, which so much aligns with the communicative character of language (see previous section). Additionally, literature that investigates game-mediated language teaching has focused primarily on digital games, while overlooking non-digital games.

Given that literature is scarce on tabletop games for L2 teaching, this section will refer primarily to teachers' views using digital games in the (language) classroom. It will investigate teachers' perspectives not only during gameplay, as most research has done so far (Kangas, Koskinen, & Krokfors, 2017) but situate their views in their wider teaching practice. Benefits and shortcomings of integrating games will be discussed from educators' viewpoint, which will also emphasise the case for tabletop games in the language classroom.

Allsop, Yildirim and Screpanti (2013) investigated teachers' views on the integration of digital games in their classroom from three different countries (Italy, Turkey and the UK). Despite the different contexts, there are common factors that impact the use of games the classroom. Teachers seem to value games in that they make learning fun and engage students. Nevertheless, student motivation alone is not enough of a reason to influence teachers to

employ game-based teaching (Sardone & Devlin Schrerer, 2010). What is more, teachers do not always find that the available digital games are correlated with the curriculum objectives, or they feel that games and especially technology promote shallow engagement rather than deep learning skills. The authors conclude that this might be due to lack of teachers' subject knowledge (i.e., on game-mediated teaching), lack of training, and the negative technological affordances of facilitating games in classrooms.

Moreover, in the study of Allsop et al. (2013), teachers expressed their concerns on classroom management when employing games in the classroom. Students get overexcited or start moving uncontrollably around the classroom (especially if games are displayed on the interactive whiteboard) and teachers have little control of the learning process. In Hanghøj (2013) teachers were interviewed after they had used in their classrooms an ICT-supported debate game called "Power Game". One teacher mentioned that "she clearly preferred more traditional forms of instruction to games and that she initially felt like a "*puppet*" being controlled by the game" (Hanghøj, 2013, p. 94). These two example studies point to the political change of roles that technology and games infer in the classroom settings. It would be worth investigating how games can impact power relations in the classroom, from a behavioural and emotional perspective.

Bourgonjon et al. (2013) investigated secondary school teachers' attitudes to integrating commercial video games in the classroom. The study found that very few teachers use video games in the classroom but contrary to other studies, the gaming history or technological savviness of participants did not seem to have an impact on their willingness to use games. Interestingly, teachers indicated that they believe that games can benefit students' learning, but that they do not necessarily enhance their teaching practice. This contradictory result may indicate that teachers need training on how games could be introduced successfully in the classroom and "implies that blindly promoting games as a new

technological panacea or a popular teaching method will probably not be as effective as taking a critical position toward game-based learning" (Bourgonjon et al., 2013, p. 32).

Koh et al. (2012) also investigated teachers' attitudes to games in primary and secondary schools and found that teachers believe that games can provide students with motivational learning experiences. However, certain factors seemed to affect their adoption levels. What pushed teachers to using games was teachers' personal interest and gaming mindset. Interestingly, though, external factors were debilitating in following game-based approaches and included school policies and infrastructure, but also the institutions and parents' beliefs to games. It becomes evident that even though teachers may be willing in adopting games, contextual factors can hinder them from doing so, a fact which also points to the impact of culture and national policies.

Mathe et al. (2019) found three different "clusters" of teachers in secondary schools in Sweden regarding digital game-based teaching. The researchers divided teachers in three groups: Sceptics, Curious Adopters, and Advanced Adopters, based on the results of their willingness to apply digital games in their classes. This cluster analysis confirms evidence from other studies (e.g., Koh et al., 2012) that unless teachers have a personal interest in exploring games as a teaching tool or unless they believe in their learning potential, they are less likely to adopt digital game-based teaching methods.

As the above studies have shown, school curricula can affect the teaching methods and tools teachers choose to use in their classrooms. Aligning the curricula objectives with the content and goals of games seems to be a key problem. As discussed earlier in Section 2.1.4, unless teachers find that the new teaching methods or tools resonate with the curricula objectives, they would be less likely to adopt and adapt to the proposed changes (Kubanyiova, 2012). This could be overcome if teachers designed their own games for their classrooms. Additional teacher training or exposure to games might be necessary, not because

teachers cannot adapt and adopt tools in their classrooms successfully, but because exposing them to gaming practices can provide them with a whole new world of teaching opportunities that they can take advantage of (Foster & Shah, 2020).

The Figure 2.6 below, taken from Shah and Foster's (2014) depicts an ecological perspective to using digital games in K-12 education (adapted by Zhao & Frank, 2003). The diagram is also relative to language education and game-mediated teaching as it highlights three factors relevant to the adoption of innovative teaching methods: the innovator (i.e., language teacher), the innovation[2] (i.e., games or game-based teaching) and the context (i.e., both institutional and social environment where the innovation is taking place, including school curricula and national policies). It signifies the importance of following ecological perspectives when introducing innovations to social environments, such as language classrooms.

Figure 2.6

An Ecological Theoretical framework for Analysing Game-Based Teaching Adoption
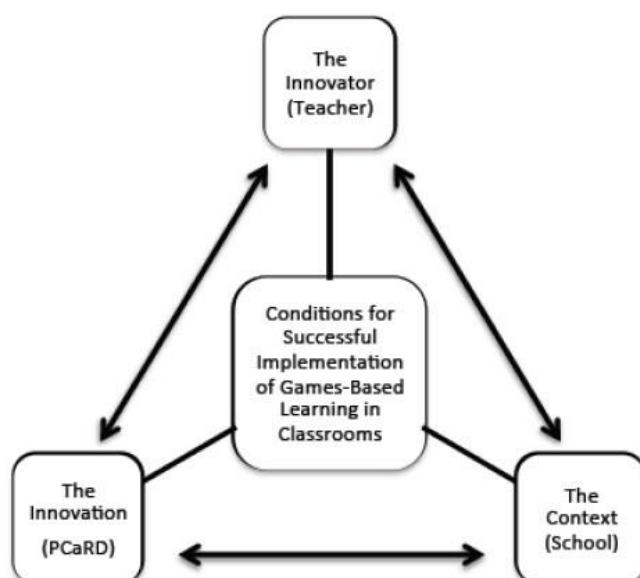
Note. From "Undertaking an ecological approach to advance game-based learning: A case study" by M. Shah & A. Foster, *Educational Technology & Society*, *17*(1), p.31.

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[2] The innovation in Shah and Foster (2014) is the Play Curricular activity Reflection Discussion (PCaRD), a pedagogical model which exploits a digital game to facilitate learners' thinking skills.

Further, another crucial issue that emerges in game-mediated teaching adoption by teachers is the technological affordances of employing such practice. As a solution to this, teachers could be invited to adapt or create their own tabletop games for language learning. A study by Sardone and Devlin-Scherer (2016) involved candidate teachers in board game design which would align with school curricula objectives. The authors conclude that such practices are teacher friendly as they help teachers develop their practice creatively. Most significantly, teacher-designed board games "offer an approachable format to deal with current issues or traditionally taught content" (Sardone & Devlin-Scherer, 2016, p. 221).

Hanghøj (2013) also discusses teachers' sense of ownership over the teaching method or tool they use in their classroom. By training teachers design their own games, teachers can turn from being *passive consumers* to *active designers*. "Games should not only be seen as tool to support teacher's teaching, but also empower teacher's professional identity as active and self-creating subjects" (Molin, 2017, p. 659).

Last but not least, teachers have reported that they use games as individual activities and for a short time (Mathe et al., 2019) or at the end of the lesson as a reward (Koh et al., 2012). Typically, games do not seem to be taken full advantage of, nor is their social nature explored. Teachers seem to have briefly touched upon games, mostly from a gamification viewpoint, which points to the weak pedagogical foundations of applying games in the classroom. It becomes evident that teachers need training to be able to meaningfully integrate games in their classroom (Foster & Shah, 2020). Particularly for language teachers, it would be beneficial to delve into the social practice of gameplay and exploit this medium (but not let it exploit them) to facilitate meaningful communication in the target language. Balancing the entertaining and learning goals of the games and aligning it with the curriculum is the main challenge for teachers in adopting game-based teaching.

Summary

This chapter has presented how emotions are understood in (language) education and has positioned the political view of emotions that will shape this thesis. Tenets of Positive Psychology were presented, which will also shape the pro-active direction of this Action Research study. The PERMA model was analysed as it can be a powerful tool to understanding language teachers' emotions and psychology contextually. Lastly, research on games in (language) education was discussed to clarify this commonly misconstrued and misrepresented domain and to form my position for moving away from gamification in language education.

3. CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The aim of this Chapter is to describe the methodological decisions I made for conducting this study. First, the research questions, objectives, and the context in which the study took place are outlined. The qualitative and interventionist research method and instruments are also presented with reference to related literature. Further, this chapter provides an analytical description of the data collection procedures, piloting instruments, and ethical considerations. Finally, it addresses issues of data quality and researcher reflexivity, which are of utmost importance to qualitative inquiry.

3.1 Research Aim and Research Questions

This study proposes a game-informed language teaching approach and examines its impact on teachers' emotional and professional lives. The aim of the study is to apply novel pedagogies by involving language teachers actively in the design of the game-informed activities. The language teachers' active involvement in the research process aims to bridge the theory-practice divide (e.g., Burns, 2019), highlight the collaborative relationship between researcher and participants and empower educators professionally. As Dewaele puts it nicely:

> Applied linguists have a major responsibility towards foreign language teachers and learners, which means their work should contain implications for the garden of theory and practice. (Dewaele, 2019, p. 85)

The emancipatory character of the study is embodied in the soft Action Research design which will be followed in this study and will call language teachers to radicalise their teaching methodology by offering guidance and freedom at the same time. Emancipation might seem a bold word to use in the so-called first world educational context. However, the standardised curricula of language teaching (Richards & Jones, 2015), the angst on attaining

certificates without acquiring communicative language skills that is particularly found in the Greek ELT context (Kostoulas & Stelma, 2017; Papaefthymiou-Lytra, 2012) and the worshiping of (gamified) digital applications as the pinnacle of innovative pedagogies or the solution to everything (Bogost, 2015) *call* for emancipatory change in language education. This change will not only be elicited in language teachers' creative practice but will also have impact at the institutional and social level.

The research questions are:

1. What are teachers' attitudes towards game-based teaching?

2. What are teachers' emotions while designing and after applying game-informed teaching? How and why do teachers' emotions fluctuate throughout a school year?

3. What issues do teachers touch upon when designing and delivering game-informed teaching?

4. How do teachers (and students) reflect on game-informed teaching and what do the former change in their practice?

This qualitative study does not propose an intervention directly targeting emotional skills of teachers or learners. Rather, it introduces a game-informed language teaching approach which has the potential to foster social and emotional interactions between peers and the teachers. As Dewaele et al. (2019) highlight, Positive Psychology theory and its applications seem to thrive in Applied Linguistics research, such as the emotional engagement and wellbeing of both learners and teachers. The authors call for more Positive Psychology Interventions and refer to previous interventions ranging from poetry to practicing gratitude. I have chosen a game-informed approach to be applied in the classroom, as the psychological but also learning and social gains of games are often found in research and literature (e.g., Ryan, Rigby, & Przybylski, 2006). Applying game-informed approaches is a highly creative practice. Hence, it is worth researching teachers' emotions in this vein, as

creativity or lack thereof is interconnected with heightened emotions, positive or negative (Yang & Hung, 2015).

Most importantly, this study does not take an experimental protocol as the aim is not to evaluate games as a learning tool, for which we would expect control groups as well. The objective is to explore *how* teachers choose to implement game-informed practices in their classroom, *how they reflect* on this emotionally and pedagogically and lastly explore whether game-informed teaching can be a *"positive" language teaching practice*.

Finally, the overwhelming interest on researching student emotions and attending to their engagement has reinforced the need to look further into teachers and their own wellbeing. The context of language teaching in Greece, which will be described below, attests to the significance of investigating teachers' perspectives, psychology and professional wellbeing, without of course ignoring students from the equation.

3.2 Research Context

The research context of this study involves language teachers working at private language schools/centers in Greece. In private language institutions in Greece, English (along with other foreign languages) is taught in an intensive manner. For the purposes of this study, the intervention is addressed to language teachers of English in foreign language classes.

This context was selected for two main reasons: a) my own experience, b) the idiosyncrasy of the institutions. I have seven years of learning experience and four years of teaching experience in private language schools in Greece. This provides me with an emic perspective (valuable to qualitative research) of the social, institutional, and educational principles that bind such contexts. Experience in teaching, instructional design, and lesson planning via TESOL (postgraduate) courses and practice has made me confident in designing an instructional approach and a training workshop for language teachers. Finally, my personal experience of the positive impact of creative and interactive teaching practices on students'

and teachers' psychology had a motivational pull to investigate this practice formally. As for the second reason for choosing this context, there are certain characteristics that render private language English classrooms in Greece worth researching, which are analysed in the following sections.

3.2.1 English Language Teaching in Greece: The Case of Private Language Institutions

English language teaching in Greece is available in both state schools and private foreign language schools, aka *frontistiria*. I will first take a brief look on how English language curricula are set in Greek state schools, which will help juxtapose the differences between these contexts and attest to the idiosyncratic character of frontistiria in Greece.

State-school national curricula in Greece are in constant change and in relation to the teaching of English as a foreign language. For instance, before 2012 in state schools, English was first taught in the third grade of state primary schools. However, the English for Young Learners programme (PEAP Programme) introduced English in the first grade of primary school, at first in a pilot stage, but has since then been formally introduced in state schools (Karavas, 2014). Since then, English is a mandatory subject in the first grade of compulsory education in Greece and is taught one hour per week for the first two grades of primary schools and three hours per week for grades 3rd to 6th of primary schools. The recent EAN programme (Alexiou, Penderi & Serafeim, 2022) has also now been formally integrated in state pre-school education in Greece. It is coordinated by the Ministry of Education and the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.

Despite the constant initiations and efforts by the Ministry of Education to promote the teaching of English through enhanced state-school curricula and progressively offer English language courses as early as possible in compulsory state education (Gkaintarzi, Kostoulas, & Vitsou, 2023), the role of shadow foreign language education in Greece still

holds its prominence. Shadow education refers to both frontistiria and private lessons, which complement the studying of foreign languages that takes place in state schools. Both "(1) credentialism, an imperative to provide learners with certification; [and] (2) 'supplementation', a drive to attain learning outcomes that students failed to attain in the state school system" (Kostoulas & Stelma, 2017, p. 354) have been found to be present intentionalities in the teaching and learning that takes place frontistiria in Greece and also reasons for their sustainability (Kassotakis & Verdis, 2013).

Private language schools offer intensive courses and many hours of language teaching per week, and they guarantee attainment of ESOL certifications (Angouri, Mattheoudakis, & Zigrika, 2010). Lessons take place in the afternoon or evening hours, and they range - depending on students' level and needs - from four to nine hours per week. The norm is that schools follow specific EFL textbooks and very rarely do teachers design all the materials to be used in any class. Following the textbook is a very common practice and is valued in the Greek educational context, both in the public and private sector. Language teachers may produce their own additional materials, but the textbook is what guides their practice. After five to six years of EFL, learners usually sit ESOL examinations, and passing successfully these exams is the cornerstone of English language acquisition for Greek learners (Papaeythymiou-Lytra, 2012).

Taking into consideration the large and mixed-abilities classes and few language teaching hours in state schools, parents in Greece prefer to invest in private language education. Private language institutions guarantee both successful attainment of accredited ESOL certificates and higher standards of educational practice (Kostoulas & Stelma, 2016, also Kormpas, 2022). Specifically,

> the state sector is not openly linked to preparation for a particular high-stakes examination…As a result, the private sector absorbs virtually all the interest from parents, teachers, school owners, examining bodies, materials designers etc., in

preparing learners for high-stakes proficiency examinations. (Tsagari & Sifakis, 2014, p. 213)

Frontistiria are thriving businesses in Greece (Angouri et al., 2010). Despite the economic crisis in Greece, household expenses for the learning of foreign language have increased in the past years (Foundation of Economic and Industrial Research, 2019). Given their intensive character and pressure that their students pass (inter)national standardised tests, the language teacher's practice is molded accordingly (and inescapably) as test-centric and standardised.

3.2.2 Games in Greek EFL (e-)Books

Language teachers in Greece working at private language schools usually follow EFL textbooks by ELT publishers such as Express Publishing, Hillside Press, Burlington Books, just to name a few. There are common patterns that encompass the textbooks, despite them having diverse contents. The Study Packs available for language teachers to use include a Student's or Pupil's book (the main textbook), a Companion and Workbook (both of them are usually grayscale or single color and the first offers Vocabulary lists and exercises, while the latter focuses on drilling grammar and vocabulary activities). Finally, there is also the Grammar book, which teachers also opt to use independently of the other books, for extra practice on grammar aspects of the English language. To familiarise students with such standardised tests, ELT textbooks feature a variety of exam simulation exercises, multiple-choice quizzes, and grammar drilling practice.

Most ELT publishers offer e-book versions of their textbooks and interactive whiteboard software which enables educators to use their books in an interactive fashion. The e-books and interactive software have the same content as the books but also additional activities for students, presented as games. The games are usually "located" at the end of each unit of the e-book or as a separate section. As presented earlier, in Section 2.3.2, most of the

games look like gamified quizzes (grammar or vocabulary exercises with rewards and fancy sounds and graphics). They are actually gamified exercises that drill students on particular aspects of the language which are visited in the current teaching unit. These "games" have a behaviourist perspective, as they engage learners in filling-in-the-gaps and multiple-choice exercises, and reward them with points for correct answers, while losing points for incorrect ones.

During preliminary interactions with participants, they expressed to me some of their concerns using these "games". They mentioned that they use these games usually at the end of class as a reward for students, but most of the time students are disengaged and they prepare to leave the class rather than concentrate on the game. I was surprised to hear that a colleague had also a similar experience where students reacted with packing up their bags and responded that "I don't wanna play" when she invited them to play a game near the end of class.

These incidents indicate that fancy digital and gamified applications on their own do not necessarily engage students meaningfully in language learning. Researchers have realized the limits of gamification (e.g., Nicholson, 2011, 2015 and York & DeHaan, 2018), and have pushed for meaningful integration of games in the language classroom and going beyond gamification. Having other educators share the same concerns indicates the necessity of reframing games in the language classroom and investigating how they could be situated in the language class as a transformative learning and teaching experience and not as a mere behaviourist task to which students are reluctant or even negative to participate in the long term. Inadvertently, disengaged students make for disappointed and potentially disengaged teachers.

3.3 Researching Teacher Emotions: a Post-Structuralist Perspective

This section discusses how emotions are viewed and interpreted in this study. Although these was also touched upon earlier in the literature review, I will reiterate some of the notions here in relation to how the epistemological understanding of emotions has shaped the methodology for this study. As discussed earlier (Section 2.1.2), I stand by Zembylas's political and post-structuralist view of emotions. Emotions are:

> particular forms of social practices and performances that involve processes of production, embodiment and interpretation of meanings, which are based on particular social conventions (Zembylas, 2007a, p. 294).

How language teachers feel about their practice is in direct correlation with the institutional and social expectations which are already prescribed. Emotions are subjective experiences, neither private nor individual, and they are responses to particular social and political norms. The interest of this study is to research emotions from a post-structuralist perspective. The study is not limited in finding whether a game-informed approach can shelter positive or negative emotions in the language classrooms. Such binary categorisations of emotions (pleasant versus unpleasant and active vs inactive as in Schutz et al., 2009 and other Appraisal-Theory perspectives, or "enjoyable" versus "painful" as found in Cuéllar & Oxford, 2018) are short-sighted and not in-line with post-structuralist thinking (Kubota & Miller, 2017). Through interviews and observations, the task is to unearth how teachers talk about their emotions and how emotions affect their practice and vice versa.

Considering the above, employing qualitative measures to investigate teachers' emotions seemed the most suitable approach, given the subjective nature of emotions. Dörnyei (2007) highlights that the increased interest and acceptance of qualitative research since the last two decades is due to the "growing recognition that almost every aspect of language acquisition and use is determined or is significantly shaped by social, cultural, and situational factors, and qualitative research is ideal for providing insights into such contextual

conditions and influences" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 36). Qualitative research indeed provides ground for deeper investigation into behavioural and psychological factors of language learning and teaching from a topical viewpoint as it brings attention to the research setting and promotes insider meaning (Dörnyei, 2007).

Furthermore, given that emotions are *elusive and subjective*, I have examined them through two different ways: classroom observations and interviews. During interviews, I have asked teachers to talk about and reflect on the emotions they experienced during teaching and while designing game-informed activities. In classroom observations, I have recorded teachers' emotions as expressed in the classroom. Hence, on the one hand I have collected teachers' own self-reports of their emotions, and on the other hand my personal understandings and interpretations of teachers' emotions as observed through classroom observations. More information regarding decisions about the method and the design of the instruments is found below.

3.4 Research Method: The Qualitative Method

Ontology refers to the study of being, while epistemology refers to what it means to know, "the philosophical theory of knowledge" (King, Horrocks & Brooks, 2018, p. 8). The epistemology to be followed in a study mandates the *way* this knowledge will be applied and how the findings will be interpreted. It is challenging to delineate certain paradigms or set the epistemological approaches apart from one another, as there are different interpretations and categorisations of the different ontologies and epistemologies. For example, while Richards (2003) delineates between three qualitative paradigms, namely post-positivism, constructivism, and the critical perspective, King et al. (2018) identify three different epistemologies, that is realist, contextual and constructionist. Despite the different terms, what is common understanding is the greater division between natural versus social sciences and quantitative versus qualitative paradigms respectively. Moreover, for some researchers

the word "paradigm" has been abused to define "almost any way of research…. and when ideas change, the approach is called a paradigm shift" (Holloway & Biley, 2011). However, as Holloway and Biley (2011) argue, reference to particular paradigms makes it easier for researchers, especially in qualitative inquiry, to outline their interpretations under a well-accepted epistemological or philosophical framework and establish their research within it. Indeed, as Braun and Clarke (2020) point out, "paradigmatic, epistemological and ontological assumptions inescapably inform analysis" (p. 4).

A researcher following a realist ontology and positivist epistemology looks for the one and only truth that brings the world together. The findings are time- and context-free and are interpreted as such. A positivist stance can also be applied in qualitative research e.g., by passively observing phenomena, looking for verification (Lew et al, 2018). However, such a positive stance is rare. It becomes evident that following a specific epistemology does not determine whether quantitative or qualitative methods will be used. Quantitative research has been associated with a positivist paradigm that aims to generalise data and unearth the one and true reality in the field of study. It is the core approach of natural sciences that seeks to determine the laws that bind our cosmos but also to accurately capture "aspects of the social world that are then expressed in numbers, percentages probability values, variance ratios etc." (Richards, 2003, p. 7). It therefore falls under what researchers call a realist ontology and epistemology (King et al., 2018).

On the other end of positivism lies interpretivism. Qualitative research has been associated with interpretivist and constructivist approaches.

> Rejected is the view that there is an objective truth waiting to be discovered. What we have is meaning that comes into existence out of our engagement with the social world. Meaning is not out there waiting to be discovered; rather it is brought into being in the process of social exchange (King et al., 2018, p. 22).

Interpretivism and constructivism both hold that knowledge is socially, culturally constructed, and multiple. In addition to that, constructivism implies that "social phenomena and categories are not only produced through social interaction but that they are in a constant state of revision" (Bryman, 2016, p. 33). Researcher's reflexivity (Mann, 2016) is core to these approaches, as knowledge is interpreted subjectively and in reference to a particular historical and cultural space.

Qualitative research differs from quantitative not only in its methods and tools but also in its philosophical, ontological and epistemological underpinnings. Qualitative research focuses on meaning rather than measurement, on words rather than numbers, and is hence grounded on different ontological beliefs than quantitative research. It does not necessarily aim to establish causal relationships in people's behaviour or search for the one overarching truth. It is mostly idiographic as it describes "aspects of the social world by offering a detailed account of specific social settings, processes or relationships" (King et al., 2018, p. 11). Inevitably, knowledge constructed through qualitative research is exploratory, largely topical and reflects the researchers' reflexivity. Given the multiple interpretations and the different theoretical perspectives on the knowledge to be acquired through qualitative study, it becomes essential to delineate the ontology and epistemology followed in qualitative studies as this will explain how the knowledge acquired is processed and interpreted (Lew, Yang, & Harklau, 2018).

Somewhere in the middle of the aforementioned epistemologies is what researchers call post-positivism (Creswell & Poth, 2016) or critical realism (Maxwell, 2015). To me, the differences between post-positivist and critical realist approaches are vague, as both seem to share the same system of beliefs: a confession of our limited capacity to interpret the world objectively and the impact of the social systems on our ways of knowing and interpreting this reality. Post-positivists criticise the limited, nomothetic view of positivism while standing by

their belief that there is one truth; however, this reality might be imperfect or influenced by the researcher's perspective (Richards, 2003). Critical researchers, also influenced by realism, hold that "reality is a product of social and historical forces, an apprehendable construct that is taken for granted as though it were independent of and uninfluenced by the very factors that give it shape" (Richards, 2003, p. 39). The critical researcher's aim is to unearth the structures that give shape to this reality and expose the power relationships.

Our capacity to be truly knowledgeable of phenomena has often been questioned by (poststructuralist) philosophers. The word "phenomena" itself illustrates our limited way to know the truth, as a phenomenon is what it seems to be rather than what it actually is. "Foucault sees all systems of knowledge as discourses, not as 'truth' but as 'regimes of truth', that is, widely shared and accepted systems of representation, often 'scientific', and sees a commitment to system as characterizing modernity" (McNamara, 2012, p. 475). Foucault's term of "regimes of truth" emphasises the need to delineate the theoretical underpinnings of the research methodology and the ontological stance of this study.

This section does not aim to feed the paradigm "wars", but rather to justify my choice of the qualitative method as the approach to be followed in the present study and the post-structuralist perspective framing of this inquiry, which has also been the case for recent investigations in language teacher emotions (e.g., Benesch, 2017). The study takes place within a specific context, private foreign language schooling, which is idiosyncratic (see Section 3.2.1). Data acquired in these venues is contextual, culturally, and historically dependent. Not only is the educational context unique, but also the times when this study took place are historic. The Covid-19 pandemic has brought forward a "new normal" in language education and education in general: the mode of teaching at that time was blended, distant or online, while materials often being more interactive (or not at all). Covid-19 undeniably impacted teachers' practice. Examining teachers' practice or psychology in a

certain time without taking into consideration the socio-historical context would deliver poor and invalid findings. Post-structuralism assumes that regularities identified are not the same in all historical periods and in all cultures, but specific to times and places.

The post-structuralist stance taken in this study is also found in the detailed description of the social context. The main topic to be investigated is teachers' emotions, and the interpretations of data from the qualitative instruments will be influenced by post-structuralist theory. The aim is not to draw a line between "negative" and "positive" emotions or engage in such binary oppositions. The qualitative design aims to offer thick descriptions of teachers' emotions which are performative (i.e., teachers' practice affects teachers' psychology and vice versa) and influenced by power relations and social expectations.

3.5 Research Design: Soft-Action Research

The research design of this study is influenced by Action Research. AR focuses on "concrete and practical issues of immediate concern to particular social groups or communities… it is conducted by and with members of the actual community under study" (Burns, 2003, p. 24). AR in Applied Linguistics refers to research usually undertaken by teachers, who investigate their own contexts or classrooms. Given that teachers who are involved in AR projects are not necessarily experienced or trained in research and that they investigate their own contexts, this has raised questions about the credibility of data and subjectivity of interpretations (Heigham & Croker, 2009). Undeniably, AR is topical and does not aim to generalise findings; however, any conclusions drawn could also resonate with other teaching contexts (Heigham & Croker, 2009). Regarding credibility of data, Burns (2009) argues that objectivity of results could be pursued through triangulation of methods, instruments, and other kinds of triangulation such as time, space and researcher triangulation.

This study takes a soft-AR approach, meaning that the responsibility of designing the research instruments and orchestrating the research process is exclusively on myself, the

researcher, and not the teacher-participants. In turn, teachers will be trained to design their own pedagogical intervention during this course of study, apply the intervention in their classes and then reflect on it in a longitudinal manner.

AR can be undertaken with varying degrees of involvement by the practitioners and or researcher (Richards, 2003). For instance, collaborative AR requires institutional or cross-institutional involvement, and the building of communities of practice. There can be AR projects where language teachers work together with researchers from universities or simply language teachers eager enough who commence on their own journey of researching their own classrooms. AR is undeniably a participatory method as it provides ground for "collaborative investigation by teams of colleagues, practitioners and researchers" (Burns, 2003, p. 30).

In the literature there are different approaches to AR, such as Participatory AR (PAR), which emphasise further the collaboration of communities of practice. The idea is that people research their own communities in order to improve their contexts. In their book, James, Milenkiewicz and Bucknam (2008) argue that PAR:

> offers a practical and effective approach for educators to study, assess, and improve their own practices, because PAR researchers intentionally make positive changes through the action cycle as they progress with the project. While the scientific view insists on absolute quantifiability, the PAR view appreciates subjective reflection as a form of data, giving credence and respect to intuitively driven moments and epiphanies (p. 8)

In the above quote, of special interest are the words "practical", "positive changes" and "subjective reflection". These terms are core to the methodological character of AR in general. As for "practical", AR crystalises the need to bridge research and practice. It brings educators together, within a specific institution or cross-institutional to investigate their settings and apply change. The outcomes of AR, contrary to other qualitative studies do not stop at exploring a context or investigating individual. AR is premised on producing practical

outcomes and forces participants to explore strategies, produce knowledge, change their practice and construct new meanings.

Positive change is also a key characteristic of this method. Engaging in AR does not necessarily mean that the context in which it will be situated is problematic. AR is mainly proactive, as it is not undertaken to explore malicious phenomena but is about experimenting with new strategies and encourages educators to apply new methodologies in their teaching. As Burns (2009) puts it:

> AR involves taking a self-reflective, critical, and systematic approach to exploring your own teaching contexts. By critical, I don't mean being negative and derogatory about the way you teach but taking a questioning and 'problematising' stance towards your teaching. My term, problematising, doesn't imply looking at your teaching as if it is ineffective and full of problems. Rather, it means taking an area you feel could be done better, subjecting it to questioning, and then developing new ideas and alternatives. (p. 2)

AR is about educators who are willing to be involved in lifelong learning and improve their teaching or simply are curious to experiment with their context and achieve positive change. Thus, AR can be seen as a continuous professional development opportunity for teachers. This proactive mindset and iterative process is embodied in the well-established cyclical framework of AR too: Plan-Act-Observe-Reflect (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988).

This iterative process brings us to "subjective reflection". AR projects are situated within a specific context, and the data collected are interpreted subjectively by the practitioners. Teachers' journals, interviews and observation consist of the tools that are usually applied in AR. Journal writing as well as interviews are subjective accounts of events and/or critical incidents. It is crucial for language teaching to have insight into the teachers' activity, perceptions and reflections of what is happening in the classroom. Reflecting on these subjective experiences is at the center of change and building up agency.

I will now discuss how I have proceeded with the Action Research part of the project. Embarking on an AR project with close collaboration of researchers and practitioners can

have great benefits for both and advance not only the ecological validity of data collected but also ensure the methodological validity of the process. As was the case for the study, I was the main supervisor of activity in the AR project. Specifically, the participants and myself have had varying degrees of involvement in the AR cyclical process. I have been mainly preoccupied with the steps of Plan and Observe, while the participants have been involved in Action and Reflection (see Figure 3.1 below).

Figure 3.1

The Action Research Cycle for this Study

Reflect:
Teachers and the researcher reflect on game-informed class through interviews, data from observations and questionnaires

Plan:
1) Train teachers on game-based language teaching
2) Guide teachers in organising game-informed activities for their classes

Observe:
The researcher observes the game-informed class

Act:
Teachers deliver their Game-Informed activities in class

Planning involved introducing game-based language teaching through a workshop to participants (and beyond, given that other teachers working within the language schools that had shown interest in this study were also invited to the workshop). AR takes a preventive research approach, and therefore introducing game-based language teaching was proposed as a positive teaching approach. Through the workshop I presented theory and applications of

game-based language teaching, but also involved the audience into designing their own activities based on this approach.

Planning also involved language teachers in designing their lesson plan using the game-based language teaching approach (and later on game-informed approach, this change will be explained in Section 3.12). Language teachers worked in collaboration with me to design game-informed lesson plans. My role was to primarily guide teachers and offer insight when and if needed.

Acting involved language teachers delivering their designed game-informed lesson plan in class.

Observations of the language classroom were undertaken by myself, and I took fieldnotes while the game-informed lessons were being delivered. The observation task involved the recording of emotionally weighted events, with the teachers being the main focus. However, since context is crucial to the understanding of emotions, other classroom data and events were recorded as well, such as student-teacher interaction, type of activity and the targeted skills (for further analysis see Section 3.7.4).

Participants were asked to **reflect** after they had delivered their game-informed lessons through interviews. Observation (Section 3.7.4) and student questionnaire data (Section 3.7.1.2) were used during the interview as prompts to help teachers reflect further or be reminded of certain events. The interviews will not be only a means to investigating teachers' emotions further, but also help them reflect further, improve professionally, and use any lessons learned for their next planning of a game-informed lesson.

MacNaughton (2001) claims that fourth generation action research embodies:

> educational transformation and emancipation by working with others to change existing social practices and by using critical reflection and social criticism as key research processes. It is therefore collaborative, change-orientated and overtly political (p. 210).

Through this cyclical research plan, the aim was to challenge educators to apply a commonly underestimated approach, game-informed language teaching, and explore in action whether the advantages of this method as outlined by theory could be found in actual practice and help professionals thrive. AR provides language teachers with the opportunity to improve their practice through exploration and reflection, while the researcher works towards accommodating methodologically sound research in a naturalistic environment, with practical ends and transformative aims. Raising awareness at the institutional level (e.g., by coordinating with headteachers to disseminate lessons learnt from the AR widely) and the social level (e.g., informing parents) was also pursued through this AR project.

Table 3.1 below summarises the workshops that have taken place as part of the "Plan" stage of AR. As mentioned earlier, workshops were open to educators as a professional development opportunity without obliging them to participate in the research project.

Table 3.1

Workshops on Game-Based Language Teaching

Workshop on Game-Based Language Teaching (online)	Teacher Participants	Participants in Total	Dates in school year of 2021-2022
School 1	Teacher 1	4	September 12th
School 2	Teachers 7, 8	2	September 9th
School 3	Teacher 9	2	October 16th
School 4	Teacher 6	10+	September 30th
School 5	Teachers 2, 3, 4, 5, 10	10+	October 10th

3.6 Research Participants

There are two main paths a researcher can follow at the stage of recruiting participants: non-probability or probability sampling (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2013). The latter concerns recruiting participants randomly or via strata, who will be representative of the general population. Participants are carefully selected, given that the study's validity depends on how generalisable the findings can be from the chosen sample.

This study, however, does not aim to find patterns within the general population or measure the statistical significance of results. This study investigates a specific language context, has a targeted sample and therefore follows a non-probability procedure through purposive and voluntary response sampling. The specific audience are teachers of English, working at private language institutions in Greece. Given the AR design of the study, the active participation of educators in the research process and its longitudinal character, which requires dedication from participants, I decided to first approach educators that would probably have an invested interest in professional development. Therefore, I approached established communities where language teachers seek to actively improve both their network and their teaching practice.

The first step was to approach educators who are active in the TESOL community in Greece. TESOL Greece "is an independent, volunteer, non-profit professional association for teachers of English as a foreign language and other ELT professionals working in Greece" (tesolgreece.org). The community lists over 500 members. Attending the TESOL conference in March 2020 helped me approach language educators working in private language schools and identify those who would gladly participate in research. I received positive responses from a handful of educators, whose contact details were collected for formal invitations to the research project.

The second step to recruiting participants, which occurred simultaneously with the first, was the posting of the online teacher questionnaire on game-based language teaching (see Section 3.7.1) in relevant Facebook groups, where foreign language educators in Greece are members (e.g., "Foreign language teachers in Greece" Facebook group). The questionnaire prompted respondents to share their e-mail address if they would like to be involved further in this line of research, so that I could contact them at a later stage.

Follow-up email and invitation to participate in the research project were sent both to contacts made through TESOL Conference and to the respondents of the questionnaire. I also set up Skype meetings with the interested parties to discuss further what is expected from the participants and consider some research logistics (i.e., if there was permission to observe classes, if classes could be video recorded etc.).

Some of the respondents were freelance language teachers (not working in private language schools). Doing private lessons is a tad different context from being employed in a language school in two main regards: a) there may be only one to three students per session and thus teaching hours are fewer, and b) there are no institutional expectations- so there is a lot more autonomy in private lessons. Even though researching private lessons is not the context to be targeted in this study, I decided to run the study *and* with those teachers given that they were really enthusiastic about the project, and I did not wish to disappoint them. Although the results from private classes are not to be aggregated with data from the private language schools, it might be interesting to juxtapose them at a later stage or individually interpret the data from private classes as well.

The research participants are categorized based on the school they are employed in or own. Four private language schools participate from the area of Athens, and one from Kos, both located in Greece. The individual teachers' background was gathered at the beginning of the first interview with each language teacher. As Dawson (2002) advises it is good to start

with questions that do not require an opinion to break the ice and build rapport. Teachers' background and other demographic information was thus gauged through my first one-to-one session with language teachers and is presented below in Table 3.2. The teaching experience of the participants varies from relatively novice teachers to very experienced ones. The frequency of using games in the classroom also varies greatly and is not contingent upon teachers' work experience. More information about each teacher's participating classes and designed work will be presented in Section 4.1.

Table 3.2

Participants' Demographic Information

Participant	Gender	Years of teaching experience	Frequency of use of games in class
Teacher 1	Female	20+	Sometimes
Teacher 2	Female	6-10	N/A
Teacher 3	Female	1-5	Daily
Teacher 4	Female	6-10	Daily
Teacher 5	Female	6-10	Rarely
Teacher 6	Female	11-19	N/A
Teacher 7	Female	11-19	Sometimes
Teacher 8	Female	6-10	Rarely
Teacher 9	Female	20+	Never
Teacher 10	Male	1-5	N/A

The approach to analysing the data collected from research participants in this investigation followed a post-structuralist approach. The analysis of the data may thus appear "fragmentary and multivocal rather than unifying and systematic" (Fox, 2014, p. 1857). The person, i.e., each participant in this study, "is no longer considered as an independent entity, but as situated within a network of biological, psychological, cultural, economic and abstract

relationships to other bodies, objects, technologies, ideas and social organisations" (Fox, 2014, p. 1858). Similarly, to the person-in-context relational view, as described in Ushioda (2009), the aim in analysing participants is not to make generalisations based on individual teacher's input. At the same time, it is neither the case that an individual differences approach was adopted. This investigation looks into how individual language teachers decide to integrate games in their classroom and delineate their emotional experiences but also digs deeper in what drives their pedagogical decisions and emotions. Again, the aim is not to determine the individual characteristics that result in such pedagogical practice or emotions. Also, as for the "in context" part, this study takes into account the unique idiosyncrasy of frontistiria in Greece, see Section 3.2.1, but most importantly context is seen as the current classroom for which each teacher-participant designed and implemented game-informed lessons. The characters of this classroom (students and teacher) and the happenings in it is the context in which the teacher emotions and pedagogical decisions are examined in. Finally, as discussed earlier, the aim is not to make correlations or draw conclusions that game-informed practice can lead to experience of certain emotions; the aim of this investigation, in line with post-modernist and post-structuralist perspectives, is exploratory and interpretive; it pays attention to each participant situationally and proactively, rather than in a generalising manner or reactively.

3.7 Research Instruments

This section presents the research instruments; the research questions each instrument addresses are mentioned in Table 3.3 below.

Table 3.3

Research Instruments & RQs

Research questions	Teacher questionnaire	Pre-interviews and design	Classroom observations	Post-interviews with teachers	Student questionnaire
RQ1. What are teachers' attitudes to game-based teaching?	✔				
RQ2. What are teacher emotions when designing and while delivering game-informed teaching? How and why do teachers' emotions fluctuate?		✔	✔	✔	
RQ3. What issues do teachers touch upon when designing and delivering game-mediated teaching?		✔		✔	
RQ4. How do teachers and students reflect on game-mediated teaching and what do the former change in their practice?		✔	✔	✔	✔

3.7.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires are the easiest way to acquire data from a large set of participants and can be easily designed to fit the aims of different disciplines. Given the smart software and plethora of questionnaire templates online, designing and administering a questionnaire has become even easier for the researcher as well. Collection of data and their analysis in comprehensive charts have become automatic, given the new features of online questionnaires. Google Forms, Qualtrics, SurveyMonkey all provide data reports and descriptive analysis automatically after the collection of responses. This is particularly time- and effort-efficient for the researcher (Dewaele, 2018), as it allows more time for interpretation of results, and critical analysis of the aggregated findings.

Nevertheless, as is the case for every research instrument, there are always drawbacks or limitations attached (Zacharias, 2011). Online questionnaires are no exception (Salmons,

2021). For instance, self-selection bias is inherent to the dissemination of online questionnaires as only the population that feels strongly about the topic of the questionnaire will respond to it (Dewaele, 2018). For this study, self-selection bias was advantageous to my research goals, as the teacher questionnaire was used to identify and recruit participants who would like to be further involved in the study.

In terms of the format of questionnaires, the inclusion of only closed-ended or Likert-scale items can only speak for the trends in the participant population (Dörnyei, 2007). The overuse of Likert scale items can help establish trends. However, deeper insight and explanations for the attitudes, beliefs and emotions that participants report is difficult to be sought. An alternative way is to include open-ended questions to gauge responses to questions of "how" and "why", which is what was adopted in the study.

Open-ended questions can be tricky as well. Including too many of them may be too much of a hustle for the participants and cause the fatigue effect, which refers to the respondents' tiredness to complete the questionnaire in its entirety. Responses to open-ended questions are harder to analyse, and the respondent cannot be found later to explain what they meant in their responses (Zacharias, 2011).

In this study, questionnaires were not the main instruments, but supplementary ones, and were used at two different stages to attain completely different goals and target different audiences. The aims and design of these two questionnaires are analysed in the following sections.

3.7.1.1 Teachers' Questionnaire

The first instrument was the teachers' questionnaire, titled "Teachers' attitudes to game-based language teaching". This questionnaire corresponds to RQ 1: What are teachers' attitudes to game-based teaching? The Questionnaire used can be found in Appendix C.

The aim of the questionnaire was threefold: a) gauge language teachers' profile, background and general attitudes to games in language education, b) invite interested parties willing to participate in the Action Research, c) use the collected data to customise the content of the following seminar workshop.

The questionnaire was distributed online, taking advantage of social media, specifically Facebook groups addressed to EFL teachers in Greece. The questionnaire was designed ad-hoc and had two main parts. The first part asked participants demographic details (age, gender) and their teaching background (level of students, years of teaching). The second part queries whether respondents use games in their classroom. In case of a negative answer, respondents were requested to list their reasons for not employing games in the classroom; in case of a positive answer, respondents were further queried on how they use games. It was intentional that no definition of "games" was given in the questionnaire for teachers to interpret games the way they felt appropriate. Further respondents were asked to provide more detail on the kind of games they use in their classroom, give an example of a game used, and report their roles and emotions when employing games.

Finally, all respondents were asked whether they would be interested in receiving training on game-based language teaching. They were also invited to provide their e-mail addresses in case they would like to be further involved in research.

3.7.1.2 Students' Questionnaire

The student questionnaire is an adapted version of Brookfield's (2017) Critical Incident Questionnaire (CIQ), which has been used in Action Research projects, as a post-lesson student evaluation questionnaire. Brookfield suggests that after gathering students' responses, the teacher should read through them and identify commonly reported issues. A short report of the core issues is then drawn which is later discussed with students, elaborating on contentious comments further. According to Brookfield, the CIQ is an ideal

way to gather students' reflections on a particular class and "detect problems before they get out of hand" (Brookfield, 2017, p. 110). Most importantly Brookfield uses the CIQ to justify changes in his teaching methodology; based on student feedback, Brookfield reflects on approaches and activities that have been helpful or confusing for students and adapts his practice accordingly.

The CIQ is a qualitative measure which has been used by researchers to gauge students' perceptions of their learning and help teachers improve their practice. There have also been adaptations to the instructions of the questionnaire and the wording of responses (e.g., Keefer, 2009). The CIQ has been primarily used with adult students. However, the students participating in this study are attending classes that range from A1- preB1 levels; only two teachers have involved students attending C1-C2 level classes. Furthermore, most student participants are 8-16 years old; especially for the younger ones it would be hard to complete the CIQ as it prompts for high reflection, and attention to the wording would be needed to make the questions comprehensible to young learners. Hence, I have decided to simplify the wording and translate the CIQ in Greek, so that students can express themselves clearly and effortlessly. Participants were also given freedom to explain the questions to their students if needed. The adapted CIQ used in this study (in English and Greek) is provided in Appendix D.

The questionnaire was administered to student-participants by their teachers and included five open-ended questions. Answering the questionnaire would not take more than ten minutes and would be handed out to students at the end of every designed game-mediated lesson. The questions asked students to describe the classroom moment in which they felt most a) engaged, b) distanced, c) surprised. Two other questions asked participants which action that anyone took in the classroom was a) affirming/helpful and b) puzzling/confusing to them.

The questions were translated to Greek for students to be able to comfortably answer in their mother tongue as most of them were beginners at their English language skills. Despite that the items of the questionnaire were translated to Greek, students at certain cases still had some questions about how they should approach some of the items; it was hard for the younger students to realise what "engagement" or "feeling disconnected" means. More simplified language or emojis could assist in prompting students to give feedback on attended classes. The presence of the teacher in the distribution of the student questionnaire proved helpful in that regard.

The CIQ uses wording and adjectives that address a variety of emotions or behaviours. Gathering this data from students was helpful in triangulating data received from teachers during interviews in regard to perceived students' emotions and engagement. Juxtaposing the student reflections with those of teachers yielded insight into the experiences of both in the same environment. During the data collection, students' questionnaires were distributed by only three of the participants. Hence, the questionnaire data could not serve towards a holistic analysis or were not considered into the development of the themes due to the inconsistency in collecting them by participants. However, these few collected questionnaires were used as points of discussion in the post-interviews (Section 3.7.3.1) with the participant teachers to help them further reflect on their practice and consider students' input and feedback.

3.7.2 The Game-Based Language Teaching Workshop

Most interventions follow an explicit experiment to treat what is "malicious". However, the mindset of this workshop was proactive rather than reactive. Facilitating and taking advantage of games in the language classroom did not aim to treat "anxiety" or comfort anxious learners. Its purpose was to empower teachers professionally and emotionally by asking them to work on a practice that is inherently creative and potentially

emotionally evocative. As it was discussed in Section 2.3.5, language teachers are hesitant in adopting games in their classrooms for a variety of reasons. Arnab, Minoi, Mohamad, Morini, & Clarke (2019) argue that:

> to promote the sense of ownership and autonomy to break the barriers of adoption, not only that teachers should be part of the development process but they should also be empowered to create or co-create their game, removing the barriers to the development of game-based learning resources (p. 32).

Involving teachers in game-based language teaching and creative practices can help them take advantage of this powerful genre and employ it successfully in their teaching.

The intervention of this study included an interactive workshop designed and administered by myself called: "Designing gameful language teaching activities". It was a hands-on workshop, aimed at in-service foreign language teachers, and was held as a workshop/continuous professional development opportunity before teachers-participants were asked to design their game-informed class. The workshop consisted of two parts: a theoretical and a practical part.

The theoretical part of the workshop had two aims: a) to define and delineate game-based language teaching from other game-mediated teaching methods, e.g., gamification; b) to outline the benefits of using game-based language teaching in the classroom. In terms of the first aim, it is essential to bring attention to the theory behind game-based language teaching, given that I received a lot of questions from my pre-study meetings with participants on "what is game-based teaching?", "is there a difference from gamification?". Participants also asked me to repeat definitions and write them down as they would like to know more about that. It seems that for the Greek context, gamification is a buzzword that has toppled and possibly tarnished the reputation of game-based language teaching, which embodies totally different goals and teaching mindset from gamification as outlined in the previous Chapter (see Section 2.3, especially Subsections 2.3.2 and 2.3.3). In terms of the second aim, emotional, social and communicative learning benefits were highlighted, by

referencing related research literature and Positive Psychology theory. Practical examples, taken from my personal previous teaching practice, were exhibited to demonstrate those benefits and to give attendees a point of reference for brainstorming in the practical part of the workshop.

The practical part involved the audience in educational game design and gameplay. Depending on the number of participants, I would present and involve participants in playing either "Spyfall" or "Codenames", two well-known party games with high inferential mechanics and social game play. After the game(s) was over, I would ask the audience to think how these games could be adapted in their classrooms or what elements of them they would partake in their lessons. Critical discussions followed and I shared with them how I had in the past used these and other games to teach specific language skills (e.g., "Guess Who" for practicing questions or descriptive adjectives). Engaging teachers and providing them with the necessary guidance and prompts can empower them professionally, foster the feeling of ownership over materials created, and cultivate positive community practices (Arnab et al, 2019). At some instances, and where time allowed, I also involved teachers in designing their own small game-informed activities as groups.

3.7.3 Semi-Structured Interviews

Interviews are widely employed in qualitative research and in the social sciences as they are highly versatile and a well-known method of communication even in everyday life (Dörnyei, 2007). Methodology books present three types of interviews based on their structure and freedom of answer from the interviewee's part: structured, semi-structured and unstructured. The latter two are especially prominent in qualitative methods and are in stark contrast with the first one. Structured interviews are very much like a closed-ended questionnaire, the main difference being that asking questions is done orally by the interviewer and the interviewee answers synchronously. Structured interviews may ensure

higher response rate than answering a questionnaire on ones' own time. However, they fail to dig deeper into the reasons behind every respondent's answer (Dörnyei, 2007).

Given the exploratory nature of the research questions and the qualitative nature of the study, I opted for semi-structured interviews as my main research instrument for the study. Unstructured interviews, though an option, are very much like a conversation with a general topic given and allow too much leeway to the interviewee. This study aims to identify the language teachers' emotions during the design and after the implementation of a game-informed class. It therefore has specific research questions to be tackled through interviewing. Moreover, given my previous experience in interviewing language teachers, it became evident teachers like to talk and are likely to divert from the questions at hand. Even during the teacher recruitment stage for this study, I found myself talking to teachers for a quarter of an hour about the scope of the study and for an additional hour we ended up discussing their current inhibitions or worries about the next school year, in face of the unprecedented Covid-19 pandemic (which unavoidably has also affected the study).

Considering the above, semi-structured interviews provide the perfect balance: the interviewer can dig deeper into issues on the research agenda without restricting the interviewee from pointing out other concerns, which might prove of special importance; but also, the research agenda focuses on topics that are of interest to the investigation (Dörnyei, 2007). The next section will describe the schedule for employing semi-structured interviews and will present the topics as set on the interview guide (see Appendix B).

3.7.3.1 Pre-and Post-Interviews

Interviews with language teachers took place in two different stages in this longitudinal inquiry. Pre-interviews took place simultaneously and by the end of the design session of the game-informed lesson plan; that is before delivering the designed lesson. Post-interviews took place after delivering the designed lesson to the students. Given teachers'

heavy schedule during the day, post-interviews were sometimes conducted the following days, if not possible right after their lesson but within reasonable time so that classroom events remain fresh in participants' memory. As this is a longitudinal study, pre- and post-interviews were conducted at different times during the school year and depending on teachers' availability.

The language of the interviews was English despite that all participants and myself share Greek as a native language. This was a decision that was agreed upon with the teacher participants at the beginning of the interview. It is common for English language teachers in Greece to communicate with their colleagues in English and in most cases, this was the most natural path to follow, as preliminary communication with participants was also done in the English language. Participants stuck to the English language throughout the interviews; I had a few times codeswitched, especially when brainstorming about the design of specific tasks.

All interviews were conducted online, through Skype or Zoom. Educators around the world have considerably practiced using synchronous online platforms, such as Skype during 2020, given the forced option to do online classes, in face of the Covid-19 pandemic. All discussions with language teachers during the participant recruitment stage were conducted online. Teachers felt comfortable using both Skype and Zoom as they had been doing most of their lessons online. Both Zoom and Skype are excellent tools for conducting interviews, and I have previous experience using it during my MA study, in which I also employed semi-structured interviews. A useful feature that both applications share is the option to video/audio record the interview (when recording is on, it is always visible to both parties). Using Skype or Zoom to make a video recording might also feel less intrusive than having camera equipment facing only the interviewee.

In the first interview with each participant, I tried to break the ice by enquiring about the teachers' background, experience in language teaching and the groups that they are

teaching in the current school year. Dawson (2002) proposes not to rush into the research questions but spend some time establishing rapport with the interviewee. Asking more general questions or making a short polite conversation before the interview can help build rapport with participants. The game design part of the interview allowed for the participants and me to build greater rapport, through sharing ideas and reflecting on what could or could not work for their classrooms. After both parties were satisfied with the game-design part, I would move into the pre-interview questions where I prompted participants to look at a list of twenty emotions (as in Zembylas (2005), and later adapted by Miller & Gkonou, (2018)) and choose the ones that reflect how they feel for having designed a game-informed lesson. Teachers will be asked to give explanations for their choice of emotions. In the pre-interviews, teachers were asked to "predict" how they feel their designed lesson would go (their concerns or positive attitudes to it). They were also asked to comment on how they think their students will react to or feel about the lesson (see Appendix B for the interview guide).

In the post-interviews, teachers were shown the same list of twenty emotions and were asked to reflect on how they felt for having delivered their game-informed lesson. Further, they were prompted to comment on positive, negative, or unexpected incidents/outcomes of the class. Again, teachers were asked to comment on how they think their students felt during the class. Another key question on the interview guide concerns what teachers would do differently if they were to deliver the class again.

In summary, pre-interviews tackled RQ2: "What are language teachers' emotions when designing and when delivering a game-informed class?" and RQ3: "What issues do teachers touch upon when designing and delivering a game-informed class?". The post-interviews also addressed RQ4: "How do teachers (and students) reflect on the integration of the game-informed teaching and what do teachers change post-reflection?" The main

difference is that in the pre-interviews teachers were asked to predict, while in post-interviews teachers reflected on their actual practice.

In both interviews, I additionally gauged teachers' perceptions of student emotions/reactions to the game-informed classes, with an effort to juxtapose their answers to students' answers in the questionnaire. This was essential to triangulating the data as multiple perspectives would be obtained on the research field: students' and teacher's perspective. This was made possible with only few participants, however, as explained in Section 3.7.1 and generalisable conclusions were not made possible but the collected data assisted into further prompting teacher participants into reflections. Even though the protagonist of this study is the language teacher, students' emotions and reactions are an essential part of the investigation as themselves can be "responsible" for teachers' emotions and vice versa. As seen in Section 2.1.3, emotions are highly contagious in the language classroom, therefore ignoring students from the equation would be a substantial omission. The general climate of the language classroom is core to the investigation of teachers' emotions and, therefore, classroom observations will be the second most important and recurrent research instrument of the study. Details on conducting classroom observations and why they were chosen as a research instrument for this study will be explained in detail below.

3.7.4 Classroom Observations

Classroom observations are the most naturalistic research instrument in educational research. It is one of the main instruments in ethnographic studies but can also support other quantitative or qualitative research designs. Observations allow the researcher a naturalistic view of the setting under investigation and immerse them directly in the research environment. They are thus powerful as they yield direct data from the field, rather than participants' reports of what has occurred in the setting of investigation (Dörnyei, 2007).

A researcher might choose between participant and non-participant classroom observations. The first requires the researcher to be an active participant in the classroom activities, while for the latter researchers remain uninvolved in the learning or teaching activities. For this study, non-participant observations were conducted to ensure a more objective observation experience. As Wajnryb (1992) states:

> When we teach, we are often so absorbed in the purpose, procedure and logistics of our lessons that we are not able to observe processes of learning and interaction as they occur through the lesson. Being an observer in the classroom, rather than the teacher, releases from these concerns and affords us the freedom to look at the lesson from a range of different perspectives outside that of the actual lesson plan of the teacher (p. 7).

If the researcher is actively participating in the classroom during the observation, this will allow for less teacher autonomy and less time to grasp occurrences or incidents of interest to the investigation. Given the non-prescriptive and emancipatory AR approach of this study, I have chosen to remain as a non-participant observer.

Observations are not only categorised based on the mode of the researcher's participation but also on the method of acquiring data. In structured or evaluative observations, researchers will have an observation protocol (also referred to as observation scheme or schedule) with columns and rows where they report frequencies of events, interactions, length of teacher/student talk by adding tally marks in the corresponding category (event sampling) or by recording events at fixed intervals (time sampling) (Dörnyei, 2007). Structured observations yield quantitative data as they record the number of occurrences of a certain aspect of language teaching or learning. Researchers have argued that a quantitative approach to observations, despite the plethora of codable data, can be detrimentally narrow (Richards, 2003). This relates to inattention blindness, which refers to the inability of individuals "to see clear stimuli enter the visual field when attending to something else in that field" (Vallett, Lamb, & Annetta, 2013, p. 2183). The researcher might ignore critical events that could be of great importance to the study if they will only

laboriously attend to specific actions or behaviours that were determined a priori, for example through the observation protocol.

On the other hand, unstructured or descriptive observations allow more freedom to the researcher and the topic is not always previously determined but emergent (Dörnyei, 2007). In unstructured observations, researchers usually take fieldnotes instead of following a pre-designed observation protocol. In practice, however, some combination of structured and unstructured procedures might take place, which is also the case for this study. I did not have a detailed observation scheme with predetermined categories, but I entered the classroom with a clear focus and observation task: recording language teachers' emotions or other emotionally weighted events.

According to Wajnryb (1992), an observation task is:

> a focused activity to work on while observing a lesson in progress. It focuses on one or a small number of aspects of teaching or learning and requires the observer to collect data or information from the actual lesson (p. 7).

Copland suggests that it is good to focus observations "on overarching research questions" which can in turn "reduce feelings of being overwhelmed by information and detail…However, the researcher should be open to noting whatever appears interesting at the research site as new foci can emerge as studies develop" (2018, p. 256).

The aim is not to measure how frequently specific emotions are observed in the language classroom, but investigate how emotions are situated in the classroom, and what may trigger specific emotions. As Zembylas (2007b) points out, emotions are situated, interactive and performative, so it is important to examine them in context, not necessarily in a causal manner but with an interpretive stance. Examining the language classroom in situ can elicit powerful data on how emotions are situated in practice and interactions amongst classroom participants.

As language teaching can be laden with emotions, and fieldnotes might be chaotic because of that, I followed Copland's (2018) advice in taking fieldnotes. I organised my field notes in a consistent and chronological manner, using neutral descriptions. A systematic checklist was compiled at the beginning of the observation recording aspects such as the setting, seating, participants, and timestamps for each activity. In this way, I was able later to reliably compare notes from the same or other settings and "changes and differences are quickly recognised" (Copland, 2018, p. 257). Further, this enabled the reconstruction events later and offered a context for the emotions recorded. Soon after the observation, I fully wrote up the notes and added reflective comments for the critical events recorded. The data recorded from observations were also used during the post-interviews with teachers to elicit their interpretation of classroom events and help them reflect further.

Online classroom observations took place given the Covid-19 guidelines for remote research and teaching. The remote character of observing the classroom is a forced decision and even when schools delivered on-site lessons, I again observed the lessons online. The silver lining in the adjustments I had to make concerning observational procedures is that both teachers, learners and parents had become accustomed to the presence of technological tools and the intrusive character of cameras during their teaching (at school or in their homes). Video recording classrooms is one of the most intrusive methods of observations and raises ethical issues (Dörnyei, 2007). However, the current pandemic has brought a certain degree of familiarisation with synchronous recording tools, and the intrusive nature of these tools has subsequently lessened.

3.8 Data Collection Procedures

This section describes the research processes during the pilot and the main study and gives a detailed timeline of the research stages.

3.8.1 The Pilot Study

The pilot study ran through April and May 2020 and the research instruments were piloted with postgraduate research students, involved in the English language teaching group of the Department, who also had experience in teaching foreign languages in other contexts. Given the experience of the students in both research and teaching practice, I was able to gain valuable and constructive feedback. The option to pilot the instruments with research students instead of language teachers situated in Greece was a forced one, as most schools in Greece were not operating (or were running limited online classes) due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The first instrument to be piloted was the research questionnaire addressed to language teachers. The feedback for the original questionnaire was positive, as it was short (it took participants approximately 5 minutes to complete) and to the point. Questions 2 and 3 (concerning the levels and age of learners the educators teach, respectively) were originally combined, but were then made separate to avoid confusion. No further changes were made to this questionnaire.

The seminar-workshop that would be delivered to educators was also piloted with research students and academics of the Department. It took about 1 hour to deliver, which was the intended time but did not include the practical part where attendees design their own game-based activities. The initial workshop offered theory on GBLT and some examples of games to be used in the language classroom. However, as was pointed out by the attendees, there were loose links of employing games with the language learning curricula. This was fixed and examples of games or game-based activities presented were directly linked with curriculum objectives. Also, I added specific steps on how to create an educational game based on my own previous experience in creating games for the classroom (Savvani & Liapis, 2019). Furthermore, the actual seminar also incorporated a workshop, where teachers

were asked to design their own activities, and thus adding the practical steps to the workshop could help guide even the not-so experienced or hesitant teachers in game development.

The interview and one-to-one design session were also piloted with one research student in the Department. The length of the session was an hour and a quarter. This interactive session went well, as I guided the participant through the steps of the design process. Through guidance and co-creation, the participant managed to create a game-informed activity, based on a previous example I had showed but adding new learning objectives to it. The interview questions seemed to work out fine as they were clear to the participant.

3.8.2 The Main Study

The main study commenced in September 2020 and was completed in mid-June 2021; these dates had been set as they signify the beginning and end of the school year in Greece. Figure 3.2 below presents the stages of the research in chronological order. Each iteration mentioned includes a) designing a game-informed activity with each teacher, followed by a pre-interview, b) observation of that class and c) post-interview with each teacher.

Figure 3.2:

Stages of the Main Study

| Designing game-based activities workshop September 2020-October 2020 | → | First iteration with 10 participants October 2020-February 2021 | → | Second iteration with 10 participants November 2020-March 2021 |

| Third iteration with 6 participants February 2021-April 2021 | → | Fourth iteration with 4 participants April 2021-June 2021 |
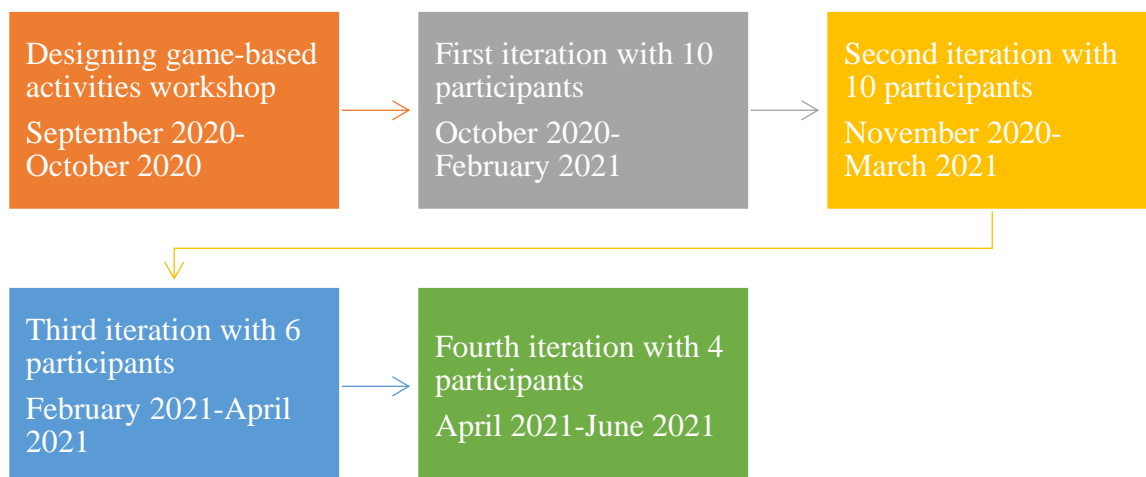
After having the registered interest from five private language school owners for participating in my study, I coordinated with them in order to set a date for conducting the first step of the research design: the game-based language teaching intervention, as discussed earlier in Section 3.7.2, titled "Designing gameful language teaching activities", which was to be delivered online by myself. As agreed with school owners, the workshop I organized was not only addressed to research participants but open to all language teachers working within the chosen institutions for my research. Therefore, I conducted the workshop in five different occasions as was the number of the participating schools (see also Section 3.5). This decision allowed the following: a) motivating language teachers to participate in the study by informing them in depth around the rationale of the study, expectations, and thus helping them make an informed decision, b) maximising attendance could be beneficial for the workshop part of the intervention as more ideas would be circulated in a cooperative context, c) promoting an open research culture and give the opportunity to language teachers to

experiment with alternative teaching methodologies and hone their professional skills. Participation in the intervention was voluntary and language teachers themselves got to decide whether they wished to be engaged further in the study; yet school owners encouraged their employees to join in the premise of attending a training opportunity. All the workshops took place at the beginning of the school year, that is during September and October 2020 and lasted from one hour and a half (when there were few teachers attending) up to three hours (when there were more than 10 teachers attending). By the end of each workshop, I contacted individually the language teachers who were willing to participate in the next steps of the research. I communicated often with research participants to request of their availability for the next research step, i.e., interviews and classroom observations, so that any overlaps between participants would be avoided and that the arranged dates and times would suit them best.

The next step for every teacher participant was to design a game-informed language lesson with my guidance, followed by an interview, all taking place online. Prior to the design sessions, I asked participants to fill in an Excel sheet listing the level of class they would like to apply the designed lesson to, the overall lesson objective, and times/dates of when they would like to run the designed intervention. This allowed me to provide teachers with rich insight and ideas when designing their game-informed lesson, addressing the learning objectives they had in mind and calibrating in accordance with their students' level. Also, knowing when they would like to run their lesson was important in order to keep good track of the availability of other teacher participants and be able to offer a flexible schedule, but also propose ideas that would be feasible within the timeframe between lesson design and the delivery of it so as not to overwhelm teachers or add unnecessary workload. All interviews and design sessions were audio-video recorded and conducted primarily in English, but in certain incidents (especially during the game design phase) Greek was also

used, as per my initiation; this was allowed, as Greek was the native language of all participants.

After having completed a game-informed lesson design session and the pre-interview part with each teacher participant (see Section 3.7.3 and Appendix B for interview questions), I discussed with them classroom observation logistics. Issues that were addressed were: a) whether I would be able to attend the whole lesson, b) technical issues concerning the placement of the recording equipment, c) whether they would like me to greet students at the beginning of class (as I had followed a non-participant observation protocol). These details were important to be discussed as most teachers had not been observed before, and classroom observations and being observed on its own can be stressful for participants (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2011). Discussing these issues made participants feel comfortable and I emphasized during the interviews that they were not being evaluated. Finally, as my research design involved a student questionnaire, I also discussed with participants at this stage how to disseminate it in class, after having acquired parental consent from students' parents. I had e-mailed Participant Information Sheets and Parental Consent forms to teachers, who then in turn would forward them to students' parents. I had provided the student questionnaire to teachers in electronic format, and this is how it was disseminated to students, given that the 2020-21 school year ran almost exclusively online. On some occasions, teachers asked me if they could read the items of the student questionnaire to students and then ask students to write their answers (instead of typing, which can be a time-consuming and hard task for young students), and I allowed this level of flexibility given the unforeseen circumstances that did not permit the circulation of hard copy handouts.

Classroom observations were all conducted online; in circumstances that I had received consent from all students' parents and the teacher for the class to be recorded, these were audio and video recorded; on some occasions where teachers had not acquired consent

for recording from all students, or did not want to record their class, I simple observed while taking field notes. For most classroom observations, I joined the classroom and kept analytical field notes. I had followed a classroom observation guide keeping track of lesson stages, type of activities, and participation in the lesson along with appropriate timestamps. This was done to capture the progression of the lesson and keep track of any changes as observed by teacher behaviour, especially when moving from "traditional tasks" towards the game-informed part of the lesson. Most importantly, while keeping field notes I focused my attention on the main research question: keeping note of emotions as expressed primarily by the teacher and secondarily by the students, but also facial expressions, body language, and voice intonation when critical.

Given the soft-AR design of the study, I also allowed teachers to comment if they liked and their schedule permitted on student questionnaire responses. Teachers were primarily responsible for collecting student questionnaires. In certain occasions, class time did not permit for their dissemination, or when students were assigned the task of completing the questionnaire at home, these were not returned to the teacher.

After classroom observations were completed, I would again contact the participants to arrange a date and a time, as close to the observed lesson as possible, for a post-interview, which would allow time for reflection, and comment on the implementation of the designed game-based lesson. Again, post-interviews were audio-video recorded, held primarily in English, and were then transcribed by me. There were in total approximately twenty-five hours of classroom observations and forty hours of interview data collected.

As this study follows a longitudinal design, all the above steps except for the initial game-based language teaching workshop, were reiterated at least twice with each participant. Table 3.4 below further exemplifies the data collection stages with each participant. As mentioned earlier data collection took place during the school year of 2020-2021.

Table 3.4: *Data Collected by Participant*

Participant	pre-interview 1	observation 1	post-interview 1	pre-interview 2	observation 2	post-interview 2	pre-interview 3	observation 3	post-interview 3	pre-interview 4	observation 4	post-interview 4
Teacher 1	16 Oct 2020	22 Oct 2020	30 Oct 2020	5 Nov 2020	n/a	n/a	17 Apr 2021	21 Apr 2021	21 Apr 2021	n/a	n/a	n/a
Teacher 2	30 Jan 2021	5 Feb 2021	10 Feb 2021	23 Apr 2021	24 Apr 2021	26 Apr 2021	11 Jun 2023	n/a	12 Jun 2021	n/a	n/a	n/a
Teacher 3	2 Nov 2020	n/a	n/a	11 Dec 2020	21 Dec 2020	27 Dec 2020	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Teacher 4	27 Oct 2020	3 Nov 2020	3 Nov 2020	12 Apr 2021	13 Apr 2021	13 Apr 2021	11 May 2021	11 May 2021	11 May 2021	10 Jun 2021	n/a	11 Jun 2021
Teacher 5	30 Oct 2020	5 Nov 2020	5 Nov 2020	29 Jan 2021	9 Feb 2021	9 Feb 2021	23 Feb 2021	25 Feb 2021	25 Feb 2021	25 May 2021	n/a	15 Jun 2021
Teacher 6	1 Feb 2021	5 Feb 2021	5 Feb 2021	5 Feb 2021	12 Feb 2021	12 Feb 2021	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Teacher 7	23 Oct 2020	26 Oct 2020	26 Oct 2020	31 Mar 2021	1 Apr 2021	6 Apr 2021	6 Apr 2021	8 Apr 2021	13 Apr 2021	15 Apr 2021	15 Apr 2021	16 Apr 2021
Teacher 8	23 Oct 2020	27 Oct 2020	17 Dec 2020	31 Mar 2021	6 Apr 2021	8 Apr 2021	8 Apr 2021	9 Apr 2021	9 Apr 2021	23 Apr 2021	23 Apr 2021	26 Apr 2021
Teacher 9	29 Nov 2020	1 Dec 2020	4 Dec 2020	19 Apr 2021	19 Apr 2021	27 Apr 2021	27 May 2021	28 May 2023	28 May 2021	n/a	n/a	n/a
Teacher 10	6 Mar 2021	6 Mar 2021	13 Mar 2021	4 Jun 2021	n/a	5 Jun 2021	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

3.9 Data Analysis

This section will present how data were prepared and analysed. Thematic Analysis was used as the sole data analysis method and the specific stages are mentioned below.

3.9.1 Preparation of the Data

Following the design sessions, interviews and classroom observations, I would keep these data in a separate folder for each participant, keeping only their initials as file names in a password-protected USB device and as a back-up option in my password-protected computer. I transcribed myself all interviews verbatim (an example interview transcript can be found in Appendix G) and translated any (very few) English parts of the interview that were conducted in Greek, selectively. Student questionnaire data were all translated in English, as students responded in Greek, given their young age and level of English. As for classroom observation data, I had kept field notes, and then rewrote those in a clearer and more readable manner, adding my own reflections and summaries of each lesson (Appendix H).

For each research participant, I would start analysing the transcribed data starting from the first instance with each participant, which included the design session and pre-interview, followed by the classroom observation field notes, then post-interview and where applicable data from the student questionnaire.

3.9.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

For the analysis of the data, I employed Thematic Analysis (TA), as described in Braun & Clarke (2012), following their proposed six phase approach: 1) familiarizing yourself with the data, 2) generating initial codes, 3) searching for themes, 4) reviewing potential themes, 5) defining and naming themes, and 6) producing the report.

For phase 1, after each interview I would read at least once the transcribed text to become intimately familiar with the data and as Braun and Clarke (2012) suggest:

> reading data as data means not simply absorbing the surface meaning of the words on the page, as you might read a novel or Thematic Analysis magazine, but reading the words actively, analytically, and critically, and starting to think about what the data mean. (pp. 60-61)

Thus, on a second reading, I would take note of and annotate content that could address my research questions, but also of content that stood out initially, even when I was not sure how it related to my research question. For the interviews, I would use the annotation tools to generate codes in NVivo, and next I would make brief notes and produce analytic memos (Saldaña, 2021) on a Word document or on paper (see Appendix K). While parsing field notes, I would keep notes on the margin, using a different colour of pen than the one used for field notes and post-it notes to comment on incidents in the lesson that seemed to stand out, focusing on the nature of interactions and teachers' actions/behaviours that could denote their emotional state. Field notes were transferred to a Word document in narrative format; an example can be found in Appendix H. While reading field notes, I would often catch myself reliving the observed lesson. This seemed to come naturally possibly because after each classroom observation I would directly re-read my notes and keep notes of my own perceptions of the observed lesson through analytic memos, unless this was interjected by having a post-interview with the research participant right after the observed lesson.

Reading data as data was followed interchangeably with the Phase 2 of generating initial codes, where I started reading more closely the written text and coding data on a chunk-by-chunk basis; line-by-line coding was primarily applied to post-interviews, rather than the design interviews, as the latter were at times think-aloud of both the interviewer and interviewee, share-screening material, and finetuning details. I primarily used the interview questions as a guide and used those as breaks; however, given the semi-structured nature of the interviews, I would often find that participants would readdress the same topic or discuss

it from a different perspective later on in the interview. Therefore, I mainly stuck to coding data chunk by chunk and then I would try to see how these codes could be organised into themes and which codes could potentially answer the research questions.

It helped a lot to keep a summary of the highlighted initial codes and prevalent emotions for each instance with a participant, including data from interviews, questionnaires, and observations. When I had familiarised myself with data from one instance, I would move to the second instance with the same or a different participant and generate codes again. Phase 3, which involved reviewing the one-page summaries for each instance per participant, was a good guide to help me recognise patterns, but also incongruities in the data. In other words, I would compare and contrast data acquired from different times by the same participant or across participants and look for themes and patterns, e.g. whether similar issues arose when designing a game-informed lesson in two different instances, and when necessary I would refine initial codes.

Given that qualitative data analysis is an iterative process, I would move back and forth through Phase 3 (searching for themes), Phase 4 (reviewing themes), and Phase 5 (defining and naming themes) as new data came into place from October 2020-June 2021.

Below I will address the process of coding the data. Xu and Zammit (2020) propose a hybrid approach to TA, especially for practitioner research, which includes both an inductive and a deductive approach to coding the data. Given the naturalistic setting of this study, I also opted for this approach. Using only deductive coding would restrict a thorough analysis of the data, given the particularity of the researched context, and different idiosyncrasies of the participants. However, deductive coding allowed me to organize my codes around bigger themes and consolidate my findings with existing literature. I had thus predetermined codes which were mainly inspired by the PERMA model. I employed the five elements of the PERMA model (i.e., positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning and

accomplishment) as general themes and anchors for my inductive coding. When reading the written texts of data, I would inescapably adopt both top-down and bottom-up coding procedures, and in many instances the same excerpt would be coded in two or more codes.

Figure 3.3, below, taken from NVivo, which was used for the qualitative data analysis, represents the deductive coding, which included the five elements of the PERMA model. Below, I present what data is included for each element of PERMA used as a code.

Figure 3.3

NVivo Coding Process

Codes							
Name	∞	Files	References	Created on	Created by	Modified on	Modified by
Meaning		11	18	8/31/2021 16:	SS	4/10/2022 17:	SS
away from gamified quizzes		5	6	10/1/2021 09:	SS	2/19/2022 17:	SS
Engagement		27	70	8/31/2021 16:	SS	6/29/2022 11:	SS
Disengagement		7	9	8/31/2021 16:	SS	2/19/2022 17:	SS
I can't wait		3	4	10/4/2021 13:	SS	11/8/2021 12:	SS
boredom		4	6	10/20/2021 1	SS	4/17/2022 21:	SS
Flow		2	3	10/25/2021 1	SS	3/21/2022 19:	SS
make students think		3	5	10/25/2021 1	SS	11/8/2021 15:	SS
challenging students		2	2	3/5/2022 19:0	SS	3/21/2022 19:	SS
Relationships		33	96	8/31/2021 16:	SS	7/3/2022 20:3	SS
peer relationships		11	18	8/31/2021 16:	SS	4/6/2022 12:2	SS
teacher help		7	7	9/1/2021 13:0	SS	6/21/2022 12:	SS
class communication		19	38	10/4/2021 13:	SS	4/10/2022 19:	SS
play etiquette		3	4	10/1/2021 09:	SS	3/21/2022 20:	SS
teacher participation in game		9	11	10/4/2021 18:	SS	4/17/2022 21:	SS
co-creativity_sense of communi		8	10	10/13/2021 1	SS	7/3/2022 20:3	SS
Positive Emotions		49	234	8/31/2021 16:	SS	6/29/2022 11:	SS
Accomplishment		8	11	8/31/2021 16:	SS	4/6/2022 12:3	SS
Negative Emotions		36	110	8/31/2021 16:	SS	4/10/2022 17:	SS

(Positive) Emotions: includes subcodes of all the emotions featured in the list of 20 emotion words shown to participants during interviews. Additional emotion words were added in cases where participants experienced an emotion that was not listed in the original words. Emotion words were categorised in positive and negative to make the initial coding more comprehensible. All emotions reported by teachers during interviews were inserted here, but also emotional language that was used, e.g. I worry that…

Engagement: includes data that refer to both teachers' reported engagement during the design or implementation of games, but also observed engagement of students during the game-informed activities, by the teacher or the researcher.

Relationships: includes interactions between peers, student-teacher relationships and the established relationships in the classroom and how these affected: gameplay, rules, allocation of teams and teachers' degree of intervention during the game and relevant teachers' decisions in terms of game implementation.

Meaning: includes data that illustrate teachers' understanding of the meaning of the designed activity, it could be pedagogical meaning or the rationale for implementing the game in a certain way.

Accomplishment: includes data of teachers' feeling proud of their students' accomplishments during gameplay, but also teachers' accomplishments and sense of ownership for having designed and implemented a game successfully in class.

Below, (Figure 3.4), I show an example of how a chunk of data was coded both inductively and deductively. This was primarily applied to teachers' responses to the question "how do you feel about delivering this game informed activity?". Deductive coding was applied when teachers mentioned the emotion, and inductive coding for their attributions for said emotion. Below, I show an example from the second post-interview with Teacher 6. Figure shows teachers' response at the top to my aforementioned question, and how this chunk of data was coded in NVivo.

Figure 3.4

Example of the Coding Process
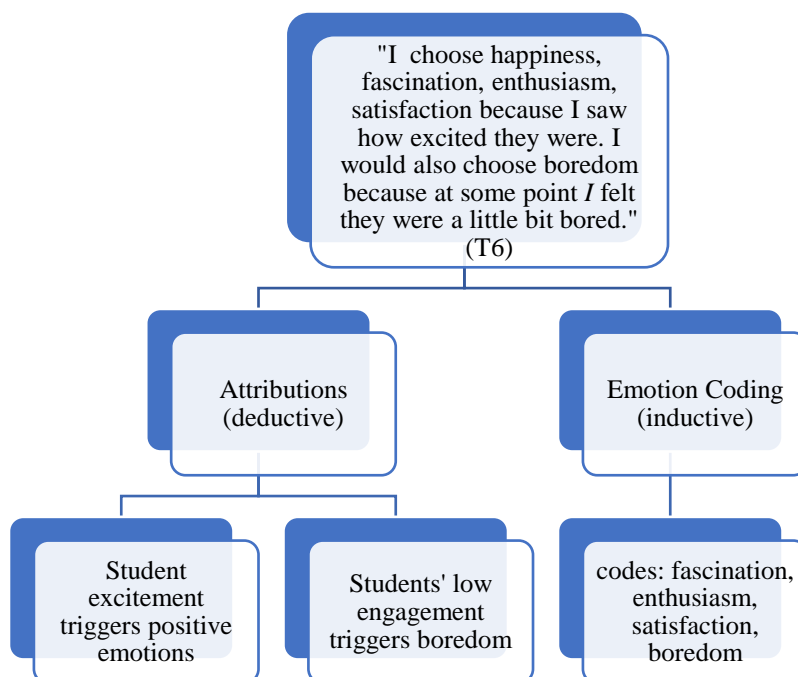
The codes above were categorised later in a theme, i.e., students' engagement make for happy teachers (see Section 4.3.2).

During early points in the data collection and during the first stage of familiarising myself with the data, I would primarily use initial coding. Afterwards, second-level coding was applied, that is emotion coding, values coding, and longitudinal coding. Emotion coding was also applied, and the interview questions that asked participants of their emotions made it self-explanatory on where emotion coding could be applied. However, participants mentioned emotions throughout their interview, and so emotion coding was applied throughout. Values coding was also necessary for my research questions, because they give a good idea of participants' beliefs and values, which could be later correlated with. Word indicators like "I want, I need, I think" were good signifiers for using values coding as suggested (Saldaña, 2021). Longitudinal coding was applied mainly in reference to how participants' emotions fluctuated while designing their activities and after having delivered them, but also in

reference to their future instances. Were the same emotions addressed in the first and the second pre-interview? Did they have similar or different attributions? In summary, emotion coding was applied to answer RQ2 (teachers' emotions) and values coding to answer RQ1 (teachers' attitudes). Both these types of coding, along with longitudinal coding, were applied to answer RQ4 (how teachers reflect on their practice and what do they change their practice). As mentioned in Section 2.1.4, both emotion and cognition (attitudes and beliefs) are interrelated and inform activity, the actual teaching practice; that is why these three types of coding were found essential to the analysis of the findings.

Apart from coding, another iterative process throughout the analysis was the production of themes. As Braun and Clarke (2021) highlight, themes do not *emerge*. They are accumulations and a synthesis of the researchers' interpretation and co-constructed reality based on data received from participants. What makes a good theme? I intentionally avoided using emotions as themes, as this would be a poor representation and not in congruence with the aims of the research to explore what emotions *do* rather than what emotions *are*. I would develop themes based on what was frequently reported by participants and tried to find patterns that would answer my research questions. Emotion words were part of the theme, but they also included attributions for these emotions. A codebook was produced that was defining and naming each theme, and during the review phase data would be parsed again to find all instances that would satisfy each theme. The codebook and main themes can be found in the introduction of Chapter 4.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

Ethical conduct must be applied before, during and after the research takes place, especially if human participants are involved (Sterling & De Costa, 2018). Before approaching participants, I applied for Ethical Approval (Application ID: ETH1920-0489) to the University's Ethics Committee through the Ethics Review Application and Management

System, where I outlined the research aims, procedures and participants and uploaded relevant forms, i.e., consent forms and Participant Information Sheets, for teacher and student participants (see Appendices E & F). I gained Ethical Approval on January 22, 2020, and I was then able to contact potential participants. I had also amended my Ethical Approval Application on January 18, 2021 (Application ID: ETH2021-0818) to also include the online mode of researching participants (i.e., online conduct of interviews and classroom observations), following the Covid-19 guidelines (see Appendix J for first and amended Ethics Applications).

Participants involved should in no way be harmed or if they run a risk of being harmed, this should be stated to participants prior to the start of the research. Especially for educational research, Christensen argues that "it would seldom if ever, ran the risk of inflicting such severe mental and physical harm on participants" (2004, p. 111). Admittedly, educational research is driven by improving learning and/or teaching experience. As for this study, not only was there no risk or harm for participants, but parties involved benefitted professionally and/or personally. Taking part benefited participants as they were involved in a continuous professional development opportunity, as outlined earlier (see Section: 3.5).

Having said that, and considering the longitudinal character of the study, one may argue that participation in the project could have added workload for teachers or distract them from their everyday work and practice. Though this might be true, as language teachers were involved actively throughout the school year, they had the right to withdraw at any point and without giving any explanation, as is stated in the Consent Form (see Appendix E). Furthermore, in an effort not to cause teachers' burnout, the designed activities would modify existing lessons, within participants' normal teaching hours, and not have teachers conduct additional lessons. During the pilot study, I had estimated the one-to-one design sessions to take about an hour. Unless for when the teacher-participants asked for more time themselves,

these sessions did not take up more than one hour each, resulting in approximately 4 hours of designing game-informed lessons in the whole year. The time and effort spent on these sessions is small compared to the outcome, given that the designed lesson plans or activities could be reused or adapted for other classes and/or the next year(s).

Additionally, some research instruments in the study, i.e., classroom observations, can be considered intrusive. The researcher taking field notes during class is "often equated with evaluative practices and so can make teachers uncomfortable" (Copland, 2018, p. 261). The headteacher and owner of one school which participated in this study, had raised this concern as voiced by some of their employees. It was clarified to participants that these measures are by no means evaluative of their practice. Instead, observations would allow them to reflect on their practice and respond accordingly if they wish. In few cases where language teachers wished to (continue to) participate in the study but not be involved in observations, they were exempt from the observation phase.

I had intentionally kept the recruitment of participants in the study voluntary and have not coerced participants into this undertaking, given the long-term engagement needed from their part. To ensure that, I approached language teachers from TESOL Greece, a teacher practitioner community, actively engaged in classroom research and teacher training. Through the Teacher questionnaire, I also invited teachers to participate in the research project. To those who answered positively to my invitation (see Appendix A for Recruitment letter to teacher participants), I asked to hold a meeting with them (online, in most cases, due to the Covid-19 pandemic) so that I could describe in detail expectations of their participation, share the aims of my research, and answer any questions or respond to their requests. The language teachers-participants were exceptionally enthusiastic about their involvement, after having provided them with the details of the research project. I believe that their positive reactions were also reinforced by our common beliefs around teaching and

learning (as these were also discussed during these meetings) and their desire for lifelong learning. Most of the participants were also previously involved in research, through their master's program, so they recognised the benefits of being involved in research studies. Their genuine enthusiasm for my study can attest to its meaningfulness.

Pimple (2002) states that ethical research is both meaningful and useful. This study has practical implications for language teaching (see Section: 3.5) even from the early stages, e.g., when participants were involved in a seminar-workshop on building their skills around game-based language teaching. Pimple (2002) also lists two other components of ethical research: "truth in reporting and representing data; fairness in citing and using the work of other" (as cited in Sterling & De Costa, 2018, p. 164). Being truthful as a researcher entails reporting results in an accurate manner. Although the nature of qualitative research involves subjective interpretation, reliability of the findings must be ensured. A researcher should not indulge in cherry picking, that is choosing quotes from interviews that are not representative at all of the data collected or without framing the data in context or distorting their words, just because it serves their own narrative. To ensure truth in data reporting, I applied member and peer checking after the data analysis had been completed, processes which will be further elaborated upon in the next section.

As for fairness, the participants were equally voiced in the results. Fairness was sought as I also brought teachers together through the workshop, which allowed for free circulation of ideas and practices, inclusion and cultivation of a wider positive research community. Again, this was done in a free of coercion and voluntary manner. Any teacher who did not wish to participate further, their right was respected. This brings us to another key aspect of conducting ethical research: anonymity.

Sterling and De Costa (2018, p. 172) pose an interesting question: "how do we balance a participant's right to confidentiality with his/her desire to be known for

participating in research". The authors conclude that the answer to this question depends on the aims and processes of the research and that this decision is ultimately taken by the researcher. For this study, participants remained anonymous, to protect student participants who were minors, but also because the field of investigation, emotions, is a rather private matter, even for adult participants (at times). From my conversations with participants, I understood that they had already advertised their involvement in research, as they were very enthusiastic to be participating in it. However, every care was taken from my part to keep both teachers' and students' anonymity and confidentiality of their responses.

On another matter, long-term commitment is an indispensable component of longitudinal qualitative research, which raises the issues of participant-researcher relationships. Dörnyei (2007) talks about the way a research project is ended so that participants do not feel used. Upon completing fieldwork, I stayed in touch with participants in a vein to benefit them further practically (even language teachers who were not involved in the study). In addition, I wish to publish best practices and game-informed activities as they were developed through the study, having gained the consent, and properly acknowledging participants. This could be done in a collaborative manner if participants wish. My relationships with them have not ended abruptly. In contrast, I aimed to cultivate a positive research community and cater further for their professional development.

So far, I have discussed ethical issues of risks to participants, usefulness, truth, fairness, anonymity and relationships during the course of my study. An appropriate consent form was designed, which was signed by each teacher-participant and myself. The consent form and the Participant Information Sheet can be found in Appendix E. Both forms include statements regarding: the aim of the study, participant expectations, data collection procedures, participants' rights (e.g., anonymity and withdrawal). Also, the consent form tackles the issue of data security. All collected data were stored in a password-protected

computer. Both my supervisor and I had access to those. Student questionnaire data were shared with the corresponding teacher as well, as this is part of the AR approach taken in this study. These data, when available, were used during post-interviews with teachers to have them further reflect on their practice and possible assumptions towards students' behavioural and emotional responses during that specific class.

Teachers were the main focus of the study. Inescapably though, students were also present and participated in two research stages, i.e., classroom observations and student questionnaire completion. Given that students in this context were minors, their parents or legal guardians had signed a Parental Consent form in case they agreed for their children to participate. In case a parent did not consent to that, their child(ren) would be asked to complete the questionnaire. As for classroom observations, I did not record any interactions of the teachers with students who did not wish to participate in the study. The parental consent form can be found in Appendix F.

3.11 Data Quality: Reliability and Validity

Given that qualitative research is highly subjective, contextual and interpretive, issues of data quality that concern validity and reliability of the findings have to be addressed. First of all, validity "is concerned with producing research findings that can be substantiated…it requires the researcher to provide explicit evidence to support claims (Copland, 2018, p. 257). Data validation in qualitative research differs from the processes of validation in quantitative or mixed-methods studies, as the latter seek to attain generalisable findings and draw nomothetic conclusions. Qualitative research though digs deeper into specific contexts and provides thick descriptions and interpretations. It is more interested in internal generalisability, i.e., generalising findings within a specific community or developing theory based on data within the target population: for this study, language teachers in Greece. Dörnyei (2007) mentions strategies that can be applied *before* and *during* the course of

research to ensure data validity, namely: respondent feedback, triangulation, prolonged engagement and longitudinal research design (Figure 3.5). Below I will briefly describe those concepts and discuss how these strategies were used to tackle different types of validity (see chart below), as described in Dörnyei (2007), originally taken from Maxwell (1992).

Figure 3.5

Validity in this Study
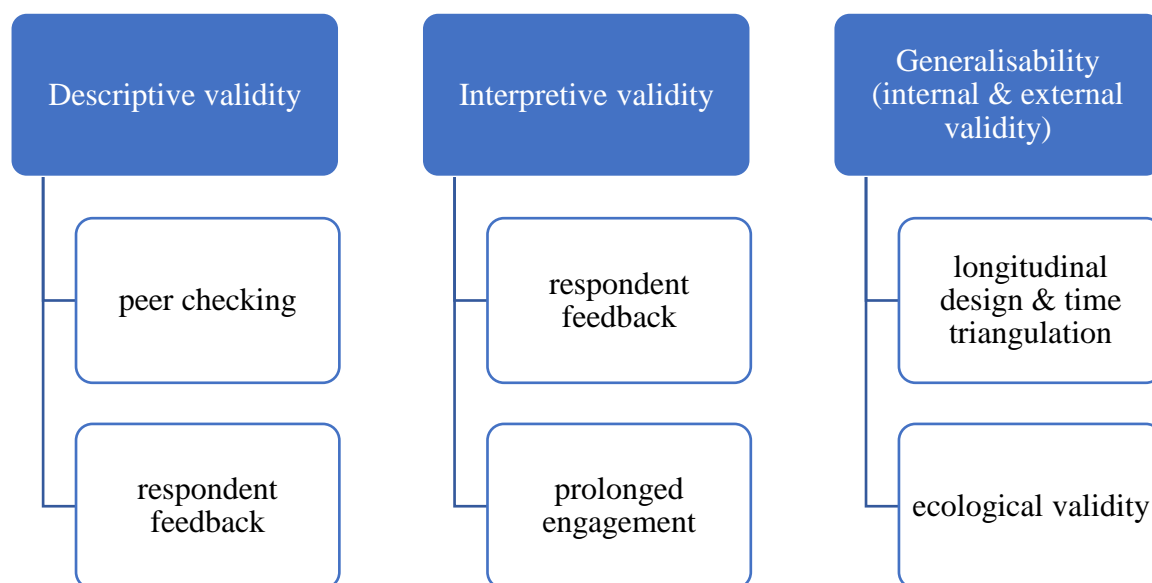
Respondent feedback, also referred to as member checking, "occurs when a researcher asks participants to read a manuscript prior to publication to ensure that the data accurately represents the participants" (Sterling & De Costa, 2018, p. 173). On the downside, this strategy can be time-consuming or difficult to conduct in research designs where the researcher does not have frequent contact with participants (e.g., one-off experiments). Respondent feedback is also a way to tackle descriptive validity, which concerns "the factual accuracy of the account" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p. 135), and interpretive validity, which is "the ability of the research to catch the meaning, interpretations, terms, intentions that situations and events, i.e. data, have for the participants/subjects themselves, in

their terms" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, ,p. 135). Researchers caution qualitative researchers not to draw conclusions out of one quote or provide a quote without a context. Taking participants' transcript records and keeping some parts that fit the researchers' narrative will not yield valid data nor is it an ethical practice (Dörnyei, 2007; Sterling & De Costa, 2018).

In this study, I had monthly communication with participants, so it was easier to contact them and ask them to read interview summaries I had compiled. Given the large amount of data analysed and mentioned in the thesis, I chose parts of the analysis that included each participant's quotes and asked them to check whether they agreed with my analysis, whether they wanted things removed or added. I shared with them parts that I was the most unsure about whether I was representing their reality accurately and gave them a month's deadline to respond to me.

Method or **instrument triangulation** is also highly recommended in qualitative research and refers to examining the same research question through different research instruments. For this study, I chose observations and interviews to tackle two different research questions, i.e., RQ2: "What are teachers' emotions during the delivery of a game-informed class?" and RQ3: "What issues do teachers touch upon when designing and delivering game-informed teaching?". The observations can answer these questions by providing reports of what actually happened, while through interviews, teachers will provide their own self-reports and their personal perspective of classroom events. These two methods can help pinpoint emotion work occurrences: i.e., teachers camouflaging their emotions in class for the sake of their students or for pedagogical reasons.

Time triangulation was also applied (see Section 3.5), which brings us to the issue of longitudinal research design. This type of triangulation "attempts to take into consideration the factors of *change* (emphasis added) and process" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007).

The research design of this study is iterative and takes place throughout a school year. Of interest to the interpretations of data is how each individual teacher responds to the game-informed lessons designed and how their emotions fluctuate in different instances through time.

Prolonged engagement concerns the researcher's engagement with the target community, which may "carry more face validity" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 62), and I would argue that it can reinforce interpretive validity. As a language teacher of English for 4 years in private language institutions in Greece, this has equipped me with an emic perspective of the context. During my early discussions with participants, we communicated and shared same experiences and concerns. Having that emic perspective can help me be more perceptive of phenomena, and highly empathetic, understanding better insider meaning.

Given the highly contextual character of this study, of importance is the term **ecological validity**, which "requires the specific factors of research sites…to be included and taken into account in the research" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2013, p. 195). Ecological validity is closely related to external validity. I have already outlined the idiosyncrasy of private language institutions in Greece (see Section 3.2.1) and this can help transfer or generalise the data acquired in this context to similar ones.

Moving on to **reliability**, this refers to the "degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observer on different occasions" (Silverman 2005, p. 224 in Dörnyei, 2007, p. 57). Reliability in quantitative research is a synonym for "dependability, consistency and replicability over time, over instruments and over groups of respondents" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p. 146). Of special interest to qualitative research is the concept of replicability and dependability, which will be addressed here.

For Clarke and Braun (2021), reliability measures such as intercoder reliability are central and in congruence with positivist research and quantitative models; it is not that they are not of significance for the evaluation of qualitative research. However, the epistemologies embracing qualitative research, and specifically thematic analysis, are tethered to the subjective, yet informed and contextualised interpretations of the researcher. Hence, employing intercoder reliability is problematic in the sense that it does not echo the co-construction of knowledge and researcher's reflexivity to the phenomena under exploration. Most importantly, intercoder reliability is most frequently (and abusively) calculated by percentage. "However, percentage-based approaches are almost universally rejected as inappropriate by methodologists because percentage figures are inflated by some agreement occurring by chance" (Connor & Joffe, 2020, p. 8). I had examined this prospect and attempted with a peer to code part of the anonymised interview data but some unanticipated complexities came up due to the coding not being done line-by-line (rather by chunk; hence, inconsistencies emerged) and that multiple coding was also allowed; there were cases where chunks of data were coded by one researcher, and not the other, or that one researcher had applied two codes in the same data chunk while the other one. As Connor and Joffe (2020) argue, it would make more sense to pursue intercoder agreement in a systematic way if frequency of codes is to be reported during the thematic analysis and is of high importance to answering the research questions.

To cover for reliability in qualitative research, Clarke and Braun (2021) propose instead to pursue robustness in qualitative research through dependability and trustworthiness, which are more in line with the epistemological consideration of interpretivism. I explain how I tackled those below.

Dependability can be attained through respondent feedback, which was described earlier, and peer checking. The latter refers to having other investigators or colleagues do

some aspect of the research process (Dörnyei, 2007). This can involve colleagues doing an observation task or coding (a portion of) the data, and then comparing both reports. The comparison between a researcher's and a colleague's account can provide useful feedback and new directions in interpreting data. Undoubtedly, qualitative research entails multiple perspectives, so observing how other people tackle a task can be very insightful. This strategy also addresses replicability: would another investigator come to the same conclusions when exposed to the same data? For the reasons outlined above, I have not pursued inter-coder agreement but have consulted a peer after we had done some coding individually over a data excerpt and afterwards discussed what the codes mean to each of us and which themes they could be best applied to.

Replicability has two more forms, according to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2013): **stability of observations** and **parallel forms**. This first is concerned with whether the same results would have been obtained if the study ran in a different place and time; the latter answers the question: would the same observations and interpretations have been made if other observations had been conducted at the time? As for the stability of observations, given the highly contextual character of this qualitative design, one cannot guarantee that a researcher would arrive to the same observations by using the same method. In fact, this would be feasible in a similar context, but impossible in my opinion in a different time. The historical situations of the present (i.e., Covid-19 pandemic) have brought great changes in the educational landscape. Given the uniqueness of the present time, it is almost impossible to guarantee replicability over time.

As for the parallel forms, replicability could be ensured by providing thick descriptions not only of data, but also of the context and procedures. In this way, other researchers could decide upon different yet suitable ways and research instruments for examining the same phenomena. This is why I have given details of the research context and

will continue to analyse findings having in mind the idiosyncrasy of it. Leaving appropriate audit trail, and providing thick descriptions are core to building research integrity and establishing trustworthiness, which I have applied to the best of my knowledge and ability throughout the analysis.

3.12 Researcher reflexivity

In its broadest sense, reflexivity responds to the realisation that researchers and the methods they use are entangled in the politics and practices of the social world (King, Horrocks & Brooks, 2018, p. 126)

This Section will discuss how methodological reflexivity was adopted in this study and how it has affected my interactions with participants. I shall discuss below how a) philosophical self-reflection and b) methodological self-consciousness were embedded into my research practice.

Philosophical self-reflection entails "an inward-looking, sometimes confessional and self-critical examination of one's own beliefs and assumptions" (Lynch, 2000, p. 29). During this study, I had to drop previous strong beliefs. Section 2.3.3 made a strong case for game-based teaching and slightly presented gamification as the "devil" of meaningful language teaching. These beliefs and stemmed practices were presented during my workshop with teachers that found them in agreement. However, given the emergent remote teaching that occurred in the first quarter of my fieldwork, and heavy work schedule, I had to rethink how game-based language teaching could be integrated in classrooms. There is a plethora of online tools on how to design gamified activities, but there is almost none on designing game-based language teaching. Physical objects were now a thing of the past and notions such as game cards, game boards and pawns became unattainable in the online reality.

"Reflexivity entails a sensitivity to the researcher's cultural, political, and social context." (Bryman, 2016, p. 388). Emergent remote teaching was the current political and social context that pushed me towards rethinking game-based teaching and gamification,

given that the latter is more intuitive in online environments. It is then that I decided to re-evaluate my beliefs and take a more lenient approach to both game-based language teaching and gamification. The wide variety of online tools was a good start point to guide participants into thinking of how gamification could be *meaningfully* integrated in the classroom. This change was both due to the online mode of lessons' delivery (political context) and the aggregated workload of teachers (professional context). Therefore, I shifted my heavy focus on game-based language teaching and proposed to participants a more flexible approach: game-informed language teaching. It is meeting game-based teaching and gamification somewhere in the middle. Game-informed teaching proved a more practical approach, as game elements would again be integrated without having to design a whole new world and brand-new game rules as would happen in an educational game. However, contrary to gamification, game-informed teaching is more pedagogically ground as its aim is not to reward players and *evaluate* their skills but rather help them *practice* a specific language skill. Inescapably, some participants opted for using game-informed teaching as an assessment tool, which I allowed as well.

During the study, I saw how each participant adopted game-informed teaching to suit their own goals and my philosophical stance towards gamification shifted a bit. It is not that suddenly gamification or soft game-informed approaches were met with high pedagogical and educational affordances. It was the realisation that especially for teachers with little previous knowledge on games or game-mediated teaching, gamification proved as a smoother template to introducing them to game principles, game mechanics, and game rules. As we will see in the Findings Chapter, teachers themselves took a rather criticising approach to gamification.

Methodological self-consciousness is another form of methodological reflexivity, which entails "taking account of one's relationships with those whom one studies" (Bryman,

2016, p. 388). Having shared professional teaching experiences with my participants, I was highly aware of their own (time, effort, and other) constraints and was at the same time mindful of my role as a peer and guide rather than an evaluator or supervisor. Being aware of participants' constraints made me flexible in my fieldwork in an effort to sustain long-term engagement of participants. For instance, I am aware from my own experience that the final classes of the schoolyear are highly private and touching moments, and thus would offer participants the option to not observe theses classes, but instead have pre- and post-interviews with them. I offered this to participants that I had already three iterations with (and consequently three classroom observations from each) so I could be flexible without missing on priceless data. The pre-interviews, which also included the design of the game, were highly flexible in terms of the following: I did not prescribe a specific game to be designed/adopted, I encouraged participants to bring their own ideas (if they had any) or I would offer suggestions in what to be done in relation to their current syllabus. Participants valued this flexibility and were glad when I had certain ideas handy, but also happy that I allowed them to implement things in their own way. I was highly conscious that I would not like to dismiss my participants' ideas; hence when I felt that a suggestion would not work, I would roleplay their suggestion out loud, and it was easier for participants to reflect on it and re-adapt it. Any guidance that I offered was in relation to the designed game-informed activities and not to other parts of the lesson. I was not in a position to judge their overall teaching style nor did I want to.

> "Personal reflexivity involves giving consideration to the ways in which our beliefs, interests and experiences might have impacted upon the research" (King, Horrocks & Brooks, 2018, p. 128)

Analytical memos were kept as part of the process that also reinforced my personal reflexivity (Saldaña, 2021). I would mainly reflect on what participants had enjoyed or found useful in our sessions and these reflections on my first interactions with participants shaped

the way for the future ones. For example, I had asked participants for feedback on the workshop I had delivered, and they mentioned that they liked the abundance of ideas along with the push for more meaningful games. During the sessions, participants also mentioned that they enjoyed the idea of co-creativity and that I had alternatives to propose when it came to game design and at the same time valued the level of freedom that I provided them with. I kept that in mind and made sure for future interviews to always have a list of ideas prepared, new tools to show, and keep the same level of emancipatory guidance that seemed to work well from interview one till the last one.

Summary

This Chapter has presented the research aims and questions for this research. It has provided a clear context in which this study was conducted and a rationale for choosing the Greek private-language sector as the context. Ontological and methodological positions were reviewed to conclude on an exploratory approach towards knowledge for this study, and a post-structuralist interpretation of this knowledge. The research method, soft-AR, was presented, along with the appropriate research instruments and data collection procedures. Ethical considerations, data quality issues, and researcher reflexivity were discussed through literature, and I described how these were tackled for this study, and how both the aims and the method of the research impacted certain decisions. Finally, I provide a detailed conduct of the data analysis procedures. The next chapter will present the findings by presenting the main themes that answer the research questions for this study.

4. CHAPTER 4: QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

Introduction

In this section, the findings from all the stages of the research project are presented. They are divided into five subsections, following both the stages of the research and the research questions. In the first section, an overview of participants' profile and designed game-informed tasks is presented. In Sections 4.2 and 4.3, teachers' emotions and attitudes as observed and reported by participants while designing and delivering their game-informed activities are analysed and presented (RQ1 and RQ2). The emotions are analysed, not by categorising and addressing the emotions in an individual manner, but rather finding the common patterns and reasons behind each emotion. This decision was made since the aim of the Thematic Analysis is not to pinpoint and identify particular emotions as emotions are inherently nuanced, but rather to identify the causes behind the emotions and analyse the common patterns that seem to drive the emergence of particular emotions. Therefore, the aim is not to analyse whether the reported emotion of "happiness" by participants is actually "happiness" or "enthusiasm", but rather situate the emotions in context and interpret their appraisals analytically. Section 4.4 is concentrated on looking at teachers' emotions in a longitudinal manner, and with a focus on the language that teachers used when talking about their emotions in a holistic manner (RQ 2). The last part features main themes as were identified in interviews with teachers but also during classroom observations, which go beyond emotions and address challenges teachers had to face, their pedagogical concerns, but also teachers' attitudes and practices (RQ 1, 3 and 4). Throughout this chapter, participants' quotes are edited lightly for flow (from verbatim transcription) and important points that highlight the arguments in the text are in bold.

The presentation of findings follows the research questions by interpreting both the deductive and inductive coding that took place iteratively throughout the data collection and

analysis processes. Figure 4.1 below lists all the generated codes that were later constructed and re-organised into the themes that tackle the research questions of this investigation. The generated codes on their own do not answer the research questions directly but served as a basis for identifying main patterns of thought, practice and emotions through teachers' discourse and practice, and were later grouped into meaningful themes (See Sections 4.2, 4.3, and 4.5).

Figure 4.1

Generated Codes (Inductive Coding)

> **Teacher concerns**
> - Delivering the game
> - Time management
> - Students' stress/pressure
> - Teachers' preparation & effort
> - Covid affordances
> - Game implementation logistics
> - Points & rewards
> - Keeping track & consistency of progress
> - Technological affordances
> - Research concerns
>   - Class selection
>   - Observer effect
> - Teacher's performance
> - Classroom management
> - Giving instructions
> - Helicopter parents

> **Deep reflections on emotions**
> - Emotional contagion
> - Fluctuating emotions
> - Reading students feelings
> - Final class emotional affordances
> - "Fun even though they lost"

> **Pedagogical affordances**
> - "Outside the book"
> - Learning goals
> - Use of L1
> - Testing skills with games
> - Kinaesthetic learning
> - "It's just a game"
> - "Students play seriously"
> - Game design
>   - Customising a game
>   - Setting game rules

> **All about students**

- Balancing game difficulty
- Students' progress
- Students' gaming ideas
- Student autonomy
- Building socio-emotional skills
- Students feeling safe
- Students' reactions
- Getting students interests into account
- Individual student characteristics
- Student motivation
- Student participation
- Students' abilities/weaknesses
- Students' established knowledge

➢ <u>Bringing something new in class</u>
- Change of practice
- Room for improvement
- Reapplying a game
- "I would try again"
- Keeping a positive mindset

➢ <u>Beliefs about games</u>
- Better learning through games
- Self-made vs ready-made games
- Games vs other tasks
- Games are for the young ones
- Games as revision
- Game-lesson balance

➢ <u>Other codes</u>
- Teacher expectations
- Unexpected incidents
- Being fair
- Teachers' (non) confidence
- Past experience with games

4.1 Participants' Profiles and Designed Work

In this section, participant teachers' attitudes regarding the practice and use of games in the foreign language classroom will be discussed by bringing evidence from the questionnaire data. Based on questionnaire data and my interactions with the teachers, individual teacher profiles are also presented here, in Table 4.1 (the last column of the table signifies how many rounds of designing, delivering, and reflecting on a game-informed task was conducted per participant).

Table 4.1

Participants and Participating Classes/Schools

Participant	School	Students' level	Number of iterations per participant
Teacher 1	1	A1-A2	2
Teacher 2	2	B1	3
Teacher 3	2	Pre-A1	2
Teacher 4	2	Pre-A1	4
Teacher 5	2	A1-A2	4
Teacher 6	3	A2	2
Teacher 7	4	A1-A2	4
Teacher 8	4	A1-A2	4
Teacher 9	5	C1-C2	3
Teacher 10	2	C1-C2	2

In total, five different schools participated; three of these schools were relatively small, with the participant teachers running and being the manager of the school at the same time; this goes for Teachers 1, 7, 8, 9. The two other schools were a lot bigger, with multiple establishments; the participant teachers, i.e., Teachers 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 10 of these two schools were not the administrators. The participants taught different levels of students (except for Teacher 9 and Teacher 10, who only taught advanced level students). The table above only mentions the level of class the teachers chose to participate in this study. Most teachers opted to work with elementary or junior classes for this research project. Participants had mentioned at the early stages of research that games are more "appropriate" for the younger ones or there are more possibilities that can be explored in teaching younger lower-level learners through games.

Below, in Table 4.2, the games designed by teachers are briefly mentioned (N/A signifies that there was no third or fourth instance with that participant). Analytical game

rules, winning conditions, and gameplay of each designed activity can be found in Appendix I. The aim here is to briefly introduce the games as a point of reference, as they will be addressed in the following sections and categorise them according to the game-mediated approach they most closely follow.

Table 4.2

Participants' Designed Games

Participant	Instance 1	Instance 2	Instance 3	Instance 4
Teacher 1	Monopoly Race (Present & Past Tenses)	Bamboozle on Passive Voice	n/a	n/a
Teacher 2	Feel me Feel me not (The Wimpy Kid)	Art Theft (modal perfect)	Spyfall	n/a
Teacher 3	Find your way (locations)	Tic Tac Toe (Comparative/Superlative)	n/a	n/a
Teacher 4	How do I get there?	Pronunciation Game	Pronunciation Tic-Tac-Toe	Hangman & Taboo
Teacher 5	Card game on Conditionals	Boardgame on Grammar	Boardgame on Vocabulary	Mysterium
Teacher 6	Black Stories	Murder Mystery	n/a	n/a
Teacher 7	Storytelling game (Past Simple)	Bamboozle on Irregular Past	Boardgame on Past Simple	Boardgame on Past Simple (revision)
Teacher 8	Taboo (musical instruments)	Bamboozle on Vocabulary	Board |Game on Vocabulary	Bamboozle on Vocabulary
Teacher 9	Feel me Feel me not	Debate on Censorship	Taboo	n/a
Teacher 10	Sherlock Holmes	Mysterium	n/a	n/a

The game-informed activities designed by teachers could be categorised in three main categories:

a) Vernacular: commercial games that were used as they are, with little or no modification for the language learning class. This category reflects a game-enhanced approach. (See Section 2.3.1)

b) Game-informed: games that were purposefully created for educational purposes by teachers (e.g., How do I get there?) and were not gamified exercises, i.e., answering closed-ended questions to accumulate points. This category also includes games created by teachers, which were inspired by vernacular games, but were totally redefined to a great degree as far as gameplay and winning conditions are concerned and were also tailored to address and help students practice specific learning content.

c) Gamified: games created by teachers with the assistance of online platforms such as: Baamboozle.com and Flippity.net were used to create "race" or "trivia" games, where students would have to answer correctly grammar or vocabulary questions in order to receive points for their team to win (e.g., in Bamboozle) or move forward and finish the race (e.g., in Flippity).

In Section 2.3.2, I had made a clear case for game-enhanced and game-based approaches since those approaches to game-mediated teaching can solicit more meaningful interactions and are not exclusively driven by pointification. This was one of the key takeaways of the workshop I had created and delivered to teacher participants. However, given the sudden change to online teaching, around the middle of this study, new affordances came into place as a result. Teachers were less available timewise; further, the online delivery of lessons hindered the application of using tangible game materials (e.g., game boards, cards etc.) and also synchronous talking by members of the class; hence gamified practices seemed to be more viable for the online mode of teaching. For this reason, the activities designed by teachers varied in their weight of gamified vs game-based approaches as seen in the continuum, i.e. Figure 4.2 below,:

Figure 4.2

The Game-Mediated Continuum for the Designed Activities

Gamified	Game-informed	Vernacular
• Bamboozle • Flippity games	• Storytelling • Debate	• Mysterium • Black Stories
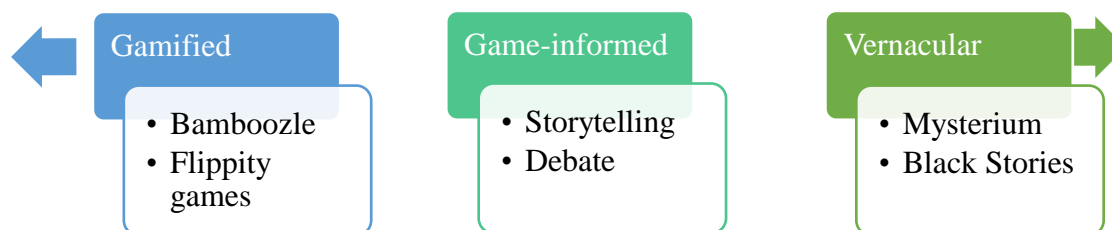
Through my interactions with teachers, gamification seemed to be the easier way to approach gameful learning with teachers that rarely used games in the classroom or had little experience with those. How heavy emphasis was put on pointification depended on students' level, as well. Teachers who taught A1-A2 classes established clear game goals and winning conditions in their design. Teachers who had more advanced learners also planned out the winning conditions during the design phase. However, during the actual lesson the emphasis shifted away from points towards communicative goals, deductive thinking and storytelling.

In all instances, however, the games that were used or created were in total alignment with current learning objectives and/or skills development. Games were designed in an effort to practice either or both of the below, almost explicitly for language skills, and most of the times implicitly for 21st century skills:

a)   Language Skills: thematic vocabulary (e.g., giving directions, colors), grammar structures (e.g., Passive Voice, Conditionals), pronunciation of specific sounds (e.g., /t/ vs /d/)

b)   21st century skills: Critical Thinking, Communication, Collaboration, Information Literacy, Creativity, and Social Skills (e.g., making inferences, expressing opinions, establishing arguments)

Before initiating the pre-interviews with teachers individually, which included the design process, I would ask them to provide me with information as to students' age and learning level, and what they are currently teaching or aim to teach in the upcoming week. The reason for that was to prepare myself and be able to provide teachers with ideas that could work for their specific audience but also address their specific teaching goals based on their current syllabus. This ecological perspective would enable teachers to adopt game-informed approach to teaching, by respecting their current curriculum, syllabus and goals. This would ideally lead to a meaningful integration of games in teachers' classrooms, rather than using *any* game just for the sake of it. As will be discussed in the following sections, the pedagogical affordances and learning objectives were prioritized by teachers themselves as well during the interviews. Taking into account students' needs and the current syllabi also enabled the pre-interviews to be more targeted and lasted a reasonable time, which was also an advantage given teachers' limited availability timewise.

4.2 Teachers' Emotions while Designing Game-Informed Tasks

This section presents the most frequently mentioned emotions by teachers as expressed during the pre-interviews, where the preparation and design of the game for the next class appeared. Teachers were shown a list of 20 emotions and were asked "Of the twenty emotions listed below choose the ones that reflect how you feel about delivering a game-based learning class and why?". Their answers to these questions are presented below, organised based on the reasons and rationale for the emotions they chose. I will then proceed to analyse each of the themes separately. Four themes are presented here, with the primary emotions being: happiness, enthusiasm, care, and anxiety.

4.2.1 Games as Inherently Happy Objects for Learning and Teaching

All participants apart from one, who consistently chose the emotion of "eagerness", mentioned "happiness" and/or "enthusiasm" as the strongest emotion(s) they felt for designing and delivering a game-informed class to their students. These two emotions were primarily, but not exclusively, attributed to teachers seeing games as happy objects for a) learning, b) teaching, and c) for seeing the design process as a happy process per se. This section will tackle the first two attributions, the third will be further analysed in Section 4.2.3

Teachers mentioned that when they play games themselves or observe gameplay, they are happy. For instance, Teacher 1 when asked how she feels about designing a race game based on Monopoly for her class for the first time mentions:

> "The first thing that comes to mind is **enthusiasm** because **I feel happy when I'm involved in a game even as an adult so let alone when you're a teenager**." (T1, pre-interview 1)

Teacher 1 recognises the inherent ability of games to make the involved people happy, speaking from her own personal experiences, and she sees this quality of games to be transferable in class. Similarly, Teacher 4 recognizes the power of games making young students happy, and this in turn, makes her happy herself, almost in a vicarious fashion, as she will be able to observe perceived students' happiness. Characteristically, she mentions:

> (I feel happy) because they are **happy students** when they play a game. So, I think, that's enough **reason to be happy for**. (T4, pre-interview 1)

For Teacher 4, in particular, we see that her own happiness of designing games is highly dependent on perceived students' reactions. During the course of the study, and as the relationships with students are strengthened in terms of familiarity, she predicts students' reactions more explicitly and vividly. Consider the extracts below from the third and fourth design interview with Teacher 4:

I'm already listening to their voices and their reactions […] they are always super happy to play Tic-Tac-Toe; they love it. (T4, pre-interview 3)

I'm feeling very excited and **enthusiastic** about Taboo because **I really love when kids trying to mime and describe the words** it's very, very nice and it's a very nice game, I really like it as a game. (T4, pre-interview 4)

Teacher 4 is able to visualize how students will react behaviourally to the games based on previous (teaching) experiences with games, but also through her own accumulated interactions with these same students. In evidence to the latter, Teacher 4 mentioned in her third post-interview for two of her students: "I can hear Student A's voice; I understand how he's feeling from his voice. haha I'm trained now. And Student B, she shows how she's feeling". Becoming more familiar with students enables the teacher to be able to judge how students will respond, and this in itself triggers similar emotions in them.

Teacher 2 also comments on teacher-student relationships and how this has got her to know that her students like to play games. Since she will be using a game in class, this triggers enthusiasm and fascination within herself:

I'll probably say (I feel) **enthusiasm**, because **I know they're gonna like it (the game),** because I know these kids. **Fascination,** because I'm interested to see what answers they'll give. (T2, pre-interview 2)

Similarly, Teacher 7 looks forward to playing a storytelling game in class because:

I have done stories before and because I've seen the kids' reactions and I really look forward to seeing that again […] **I get as excited as they get** (T7, pre-interview 1).

Teacher 3 also considers heavily what students' interests are and is confident that her students like playing games:

I feel love and care because I think this (playing the designed game) is something **that my students will like**. And they will be engaged enthusiastic. So, I think that's best for them, and **this makes me actually happy in myself**. (T3, pre-interview 1)

From the above quotes it is evident that teachers value games as happy learning objects. It is not only their noticing positive and enthusiastic student behaviour when playing games in the classroom but also their beliefs about games having the power to solicit enthusiasm and happiness amongst students, which in turn facilitates similar emotions to them, in an emotion contagion fashion. Questionnaire data also corroborate teachers' beliefs in games having high motivational and emotional power. When participants were asked why they use games in the classroom, they almost unanimously mentioned that games are fun and engaging for students. When teachers were asked if and why they would like to continue using games in the classroom, all responded positively. Below we present two evocative quotes as to why they will keep using games for language learning:

> "Definitely! Apart from the aforementioned benefits of playing games in class, a great variety of games can be used to teach the same grammar point, vocabulary set, or social skills. Games are always **motivating** and can reduce the students' stress, thus constituting one of the **best teaching tools**." (T3, questionnaire)
>
> "I realised that **playing is the most natural thing for children** and it is through play that they can achieve a deeper learning that goes beyond books and classroom language. It entails natural and spontaneous language use away from the mechanical structure." (T5, questionnaire)

These two quotes extend teachers' beliefs that games are motivating as they can provide students with alternative classroom experiences that go beyond the traditional, but also cater for their emotional wellbeing. Teacher 5 highlights the inherent nature of play for young students and sees its applicability for learning. Teacher 3's response also highlights the fact that games are also great teaching tools apart from learning tools. How is this different from saying "games are good learning tools?" I stand to highlight the difference here, as games for this study, were not ready made, but rather materials that teachers worked on and designed themselves to bring into their classrooms; games were an object of their own creation, and thus a *teaching* tool as well. From questionnaire responses, teachers mentioned

that games foster creative practice, and this is another reason they choose to use them in the classroom. Next, the notion of games as happy teaching objects will be highlighted further.

4.2.1.1 Games as Happy Objects for Teaching

Games are not only learning tools, but also teaching tools; not every teacher would use a game in the exact same way another teacher would. Being allowed to use, modify, and create games in their own teaching was another reason that filled participants with emotions of happiness. Especially for teachers who mentioned that playing board games is amongst their hobbies, integrating games in their work environment made them particularly happy.

For Teacher 10, board games are their passionate hobby and below is his testimony of sharing this passion with his students:

> I also love board games so it's something that it's my passion as well, so teaching something that you love also, makes me always happy […] it's something [the game] that makes my job easier; first of all because it's something that students enjoy, and because you can see that, when you manage to give them something that appears like even appears like again like a quiz, for example, **they're extremely excited, and so I am excited as well**. (T10, pre-interview 1)

Sharing passions with students is also expressed by Teacher 6, who feels particularly happy and fascinated with using games in their classroom:

> I love playing games, both in my everyday life, and in my work […] (I feel) fascination because it (Black Stories) is a game I play with my friends and generally people I love, so playing Black Stories with my students **is like sharing my own feelings, sharing the happiness I feel** on the spot that time we're playing the game, I know that I pass these same feelings to them as well. (T6, pre-interview 1)

This idea of shared happiness and sharing passions is a repeated theme in both teachers above. They are avid game players themselves and being able to integrate their passion in the work environment makes them particularly happy. Apart from sharing a

passion, teachers also highlight the shared emotional experiences a game can solicit. Consider the dialogue below with Teacher 5 in her fourth and last design interview for this study:

> Teacher 5: I feel enthusiasm, happiness because it (Mysterium) is a game that I have played in the past, so I'm sure I will enjoy it. and um what else? uhm and I would say, also uhm (laughs; long pause). A bit of caring it's hard to explain, but **I would like them to enjoy the same things I do** and help them with speaking practice.
>
> Interviewer: I also like to do that I choose games that I like so that I play, too (in class). Sometimes when we played Taboo, I also play Taboo. […]
>
> Teacher 5: It's a guilty pleasure that you're having fun too.
>
> Interviewer: yeah
>
> (T5, pre-interview 4)

Both Teacher 5 and Teacher 6 talk about a specific board game that they enjoy playing in their own pastime. The positive experiences acquired through playing it in the classroom have convinced them that it can have a significant effect on student enjoyment as well. For Teacher 10 and from previous teachers' quotes on how games are happy learning objects, happiness is induced because they can imagine students being excited about gameplay in general. However, for Teacher 5 and Teacher 6, they wish to bring a specific game in the classroom that *they* enjoy and thus hope to trigger similar emotions to students. At this point I am not ignoring the fact that Teacher 10 in particular is also happy for being able to use games as this is one of their passions and being allowed to use it in a work environment feels liberating and fulfilling for themselves. Teacher 5 and Teacher 6 seem to see the emotion contagion cycle in reverse compared to Teacher 10, as they first want to *actively cultivate* and *engender* the same passion and enthusiasm they hold for a specific game to their students. The feelings of excitement for all three teachers above stem from teachers knowing that students enjoy gameplay; however, for Teacher 5 and Teacher 6, this is interwoven with being able to further trigger students' enjoyment because they will share with them their personal interests.

Teacher 2 also highlights the above in a more holistic manner. She had listed the emotions of happiness and satisfaction as the strongest ones, paired with fascination and love in her first design interview; below, she explains why she experiences those emotions for having designed a game for her class:

> I don't know they [games] make the atmosphere lighter both for us as teachers, but also as the students so […] like to be more like my students than they are to me I'd like to b**e at their level and feel how they feel**. (T2, pre-interview 1)

The chance to integrate novel methodologies in class makes both classroom agents happy. Teacher 1 in the same line with Teacher 2 also mentions that she feels enthusiasm, fascination and happiness for delivering a gamified activity in class, she responded:

> because [the game] it's going to be used for revising through game, I think it's **more intriguing way** for **both the teacher and the students**. (T1, pre-interview 2)

Similar emotions were expressed during the second design interview with Teacher 7:

> I definitely feel **enthusiasm and happiness**; it's how *I* usually react to games; It's going to be something **different to a very dull everyday lesson** because we haven't had the chance to do any kind of online game during online classes. And that goes for both emotions. (T7, pre-interview 2)

For Teacher 7, the first game was designed while classes took place in person, but for the second game it is the first time that she would implement games in an online class. Despite the teacher's limited experience in using games in online contexts, she anticipates those in the most positive terms. It seems that teachers have equated games to an experience that can evoke positive emotions both from students but also within them as they challenge their own practice.

In general, as evidenced from the quotes above, games are happy *teaching objects* as teachers can envision the positive students' expressions when gameplay is solicited in class. Further, they are also happy objects for the teachers who enjoy playing games in their

pastime; integrating their hobby in a classroom environment per se intensifies their enthusiasm. Most importantly, sharing those passions with their students further intensified the argument of games as happy *teaching* objects, as teachers actively seek to engage and share game experiences with their students.

What is interesting here is that teachers reference the emotional contagion cycle even before having experienced students' reaction in class when playing a particular game. Their belief and positive orientation they have towards the emotionally evocative power of games have had them see games as both happy learning and teaching tools.

It is important to signify at this point that the emotional contagion aspect as a reason for teachers' happiness is primarily found in the first interviews with participants, as evidenced above. It may be the case that this attribution is primarily created because of the beliefs they already hold about games, and which have inescapably motivated them to involve themselves in this study.

Past experiences with games in or outside class have a significant impact on how teachers expect students to emotionally react to the games, even if they had not implemented games with the same students before. Teachers' cognition, i.e., their own beliefs as established by former teaching experiences, seems to influence how they feel about their upcoming lesson and sets positive expectations. Developing closer relationships with their students during the schoolyear helps teachers establish those beliefs and initial expectation and boost their confidence further, an aspect which will be elaborated further upon in Section 4.3.2.

4.2.1 Being Creative is the New Happy

In the previous section, I analysed how games are seen as happy objects for teaching and learning. The current section will highlight how the game *design process* itself is a happy one as well. During and after having designed a game for their class, the majority of the

teachers commented that they had found the experience of (co-)designing games intriguing or fascinating. It is important to highlight here that during the first instances with teachers I would offer more support and was ready with game design ideas that would fit the goals of the teachers, and thus the process was heavily co-designed. During the course of time, though, teachers would come to me with ready with ideas and I would primarily offer any guidance or support, hence my role became more consultant heavy.

Teacher 1, for example, commented that she found the design phase "interesting and exciting definitely." (T1, pre-interview 1) and seems to value the spirit of co-creativity as it enables:

> new ideas to come to life…**we exchange ideas**, one leads to the other and at the end we may come up with **something different from the initial idea** and **this is the beauty of it** […] I think it makes me more active. (T1, pre-interview 1)

It was common during the interviews when I offered alternatives to teachers mainly about the game mechanics and implementation logistics, that they would respond that they had not thought of this before. Teacher 4 shares Teacher 1's view and comments:

> And especially (talking) with someone who knows about these things (laughs) who's knowledgeable because it's easier this way to make decisions. And I have concluded to some specific things that were not so clear and wasn't sure about. I also saw your responses to my ideas- you were really **open** and you had this; I felt some kind of **freedom and flexibility**. So, this is nice to keep in mind while designing and while playing to feel to try not to restrict yourself and feel nice, you know, for any mistakes you may make. (T4, pre-interview 1)

It is hard to visualise how things can go into a game and playtesting is a good way to see what can go wrong before attempting to play the game in class. I offered that perspective to teachers and given my experience of both implementing games in the classroom as long with a high game content knowledge, I could suggest optimal alternatives to teachers. The alternatives mainly included splitting the class into groups, taking turns, winning conditions

while also keeping in mind the pedagogical implications. However, the teaching and pedagogical goals were to be determined by each teacher and I would not intervene in this aspect, but rather work around it. Teacher 4 seems to value the level of freedom I demonstrated during the design interviews, which was a predetermined position before starting the research process with teachers (see Section 3.5). The purpose of this was as said not to impose additional stress and limitations to teachers but provide them with a ground that they would cultivate as they would wish; I guided them along the process and offered suggestions, but the final decisions were up to the teacher.

Simultaneously, teachers also valued that I came into the interview with game-informed proposals that could integrate in their classes in line with their teaching goals. Teacher 2 specifically mentions:

> **It was very helpful that you actually had a game in mind. Had you not, it would have been more difficult to find something** […] also (I liked) how we tried to connect it to what we have been doing with our literature book which they find very interesting. (T2, pre-interview 1)

Integrating a game with specific goals in mind or creating one that would satisfy the learning objectives or the content of the lesson is a process that I encouraged at the very start or even prior to the beginning of the design interviews. I would ask teachers to inform me about their next language and teaching goals so that I could propose ideas in line with the current syllabus and in an attempt to meet each teacher's curriculum needs. This enabled me to think back to my own experience and propose activities and games that had worked well in my own classes when going through similar curricula and textbooks. Thinking and developing something anew can be a painstaking task but editing or adapting a pre-worked practice has better potential, is less time consuming, and is rather more sustainable for teachers, whose workload had increased immensely due to several changes in their work schedule given the pandemic.

Before reaching the end of the first school trimester (November 2020), governmental guidelines mandated for online teaching only due to the pandemic crisis. Even though most teachers had done online teaching before (in the last trimester of the schoolyear 2019-2020), embedding games in online teaching was a whole other concept for them. Also, the workshop I had delivered to teachers at the beginning of the schoolyear primarily demonstrated how games could be integrated in onsite environments. Therefore, I found it necessary to search for additional tools that could assist in digital game-informed design and ran some additional sessions with the participants, showcasing different applications that they could use. Teachers enjoyed the process of exploring new platforms that I had suggested. Teacher 8 mentioned she found the process of creating her own Bamboozle game "super fun" (T8, pre-interview 2). In addition, Teacher 5 had found great potential in the Flippity platform and for her it was "enjoyable making it (the game-informed activity)" (T5, pre-interview 3). All platforms that I had suggested to teachers would require linguistic input and content from teachers (e.g., typing questions) rather than having to take decisions on how to visually represent this information or engage in complex art design. Most of the tools were straightforward to use: input would be added on excel worksheets or similar layouts and then this information would be processed automatically and presented visually as board-game templates or other below I show some examples of before and after, taken from teachers' "favourite" tools: Flippity.net and Bamboozle.com and prior to (or during) the interviews I would create a mock game with teachers to see how it works. For Teacher 5, the result was rather satisfying so it was why most probably she continued using it.

Most importantly, being creative also helped teachers develop a sense of ownership with the designed materials. It was then that they felt rewarded, but also time is of the essence. Teacher 5 summarises this dilemma of producing something original and producing something more time-effective:

I haven't come up with anything original because I didn't have time and. Last time, **it was more much more original and that's why it was better**. (T5, pre-interview 2)

Teacher 1 also recognises that creativity does not stop with the teacher but can also be appreciated by the students:

alright I'd say caring maybe because when you have prepared all these things and when you have planned a different lesson **beyond the textbook**, I think it shows caring for the students. **And the students realise that**; they like the cardboard, they like the colours, they like the idea, they like that their teacher had prepared something quite different, I think. So that's why I think caring is the strongest emotion-enthusiasm is you know as you prepare the whole thing, but as you deliver it it's caring. (T1, post-interview 1)

4.2.3 Caring to be Novel; Happy to go beyond

Care was another frequently mentioned emotion by seven participants, across the iterations of design interviews. Care manifests in participants in three different ways: a) caring for students themselves, b) caring for students' learning, c) caring about being a *good teacher* and delivering a lesson *well*.

Teaching is undoubtedly a caring profession, and participants often mentioned that they love and **care about their students**. Characteristic examples of this are quoted below; teachers explain why they feel love and or care for delivering games in the classroom:

(I feel) as always care and love; it's what teachers - I don't know- you can't teach without it. (T7, pre-interview 2)

(I feel) caring, love, satisfaction; I'll go with these; very positive. Basically, this has been one of the best classes I've told them this: **they're my favourite class** I've had ever. I don't know it's really- it was really challenging for me in the beginning, because up until now, I only had very young learners so I was used to junior classes and I was kind of sceptical about having these kids (high-intermediate students, teenagers) but some of them I knew from my junior classes and **they've really bonded as a team and myself included**. (T2, pre-interview 3)

So yeah, I love, love. I love every student I meet every year. I just love every new student I have and I'm new to this school as well. So, I love it I'm here. I love my students; they're really nice kids. E**ven if they weren't, I would still love them**. But all kids are good and nice and I love playing with language. (T4, pre-interview 1)

The unconditional love teachers feel for their students becomes very evident in the above touching quotes. Teacher 7 acknowledges that the teaching profession cannot come without love or care. Simultaneously, apart from declaring the love they have for their students, Teacher 4 and Teacher 2, further highlight how creating close relationships with students further intensifies emotions of both love and care.

Undoubtedly, the above quotes primarily reflect how teachers feel about *teaching in general* rather than **teaching with games**. Teaching means caring, teaching with games means caring more and below I will analyse how teachers demonstrate this both through their instructional choices and reflections during pre-interviews.

Based on teachers' interview data, care is primarily manifested as caring for students. Teachers volunteered for this research project because they care both for their students and for providing them with alternative and engaging ways of learning. They care both for the students themselves but also for students learning. Integrating games in the classroom was a way that could satisfy both these two pillars.

Teacher 7's response to how she feels about designing and delivering a game in class in her first pre-interview sheds light into the difference of caring when teaching and caring because of introducing new directions in teaching:

> I'm happy. But I'm always happy when I work because I love what I do and if **I can do something new** with the kids or something different, even better. […] All those feelings of love, care, satisfaction, but these are things that come from my work anyway. **A story-this different activity will just enhance that**. (T7, pre-interview 1)

It is because teachers care about the students that makes teachers put effort in into bringing "something new or something different" to class. Almost in a cyclical fashion, it is teachers' effort in integrating games that further stimulates not only emotions of care, but also happiness and enthusiasm. As mentioned previously, (Section 4.2.1), the experience of *designing* a game is also a happy process.

The idea of bringing "something new" in class was repeated by other participants as well. By exploring the possibility of embedding games in the classroom, teachers show care for their students:

> I **care** about delivering it (the game) in a relaxing way and in a **fun** way and in an **effective** way because language is our goal after all, far from all the other things like **having fun** interacting. (T4, pre-interview 1)

> I think that (I feel) **caring** also; it shows that you care about the students when you **don't want to just cover the book and go home**. (T1, pre-interview 1)

Teachers introduce alternative activities in the classroom, not only in an effort to have fun, but also to further instigate effective learning. Caring for Teacher 1 is also going beyond the textbook. The statement "I don't want to just cover the book and *go home"* also signifies the effort that the teacher has to put in, preparation- and reflection-wise. Introducing novel pedagogies requires thinking and demonstrates teaching behaviour that does not treat teaching as yet another bureaucratic activity, but a vocation that calls attendance beyond the walls of the classroom.

In addition to the above, Teacher 9, even though she does not *explicitly* mention "care" as an emotion she is expecting very positive reactions from students because she will be introducing something novel:

> I think they'll be very pleased that we're not doing regular exercises or taking a quiz or doing dictation or testing **or any of the normal crap that we do**. I think they'd be happy about that. (T9, pre-interview 1)

Teacher 9 has always followed a very traditional approach to teaching and applying a game in class is an outside-of-the-box method for her; hence she is expecting students to recognize this shift and she also has a positive outlook on this as she expressed that "I'm eager to see what happens, what they come up with". Across the data teachers seemed to welcome different approaches to learning; they recognize the motivational benefits that

integrating a game in class can entail for their students but also for themselves as it is a creative challenge process that forces them to step outside their "normal ways" and experiment actively.

Consider the following quote by Teacher 3 when asked about how she feels about integrating another game in her class:

> I think I'm gonna answer the same thing that I answered last time**; I want to do this for my students actually**. So, this reflects the caring aspect and the love I have towards them (the students) and it **makes me feel satisfaction** because I think that when they're having fun, o**bviously, the lesson goes better**. And they're more engaged and now with the online classes, things are even more complicated than they were, and they get more tired more easily than before. So, it's even more important to have gameful activities. I really want to try more games more things, see what works, what doesn't work. And have more of it. (T3, pre-interview 2)

Teacher 3 is very explicit that she wants to provide the best learning experience for her students and is willing to explore how games could be best integrated to facilitate this. She acknowledges how dynamics have shifted during online teaching, and for her games can provide the much-needed engagement to students. She frequently applies scavenger hunts in her own teaching in a manner to cater for student wellbeing and being active both physically and cognitively. As she mentioned in the second post interview "We already play lots of games in class, e.g., scavenger hunts; this is a must in online lessons because you need to get them moving" Keeping students kinesthetically active, is of high importance to the teacher now that online delivery of teaching has inescapably imposed a sedentary lifestyle. Catering to students' own needs can in turn reinforce feelings of satisfaction to the teacher, in line with the emotion contagion theory (further data corroborating this will be presented in Section 4.3.2): seeing students happy, can activate emotions of satisfaction to the teacher. Especially for satisfaction it is triggered not on the grounds that students enter the classroom in a positive mood; it is rather grounded on the fact that the teacher has managed through her own practice to activate the engagement and emotions of enthusiasm amongst students.

Pedagogical caring addresses the second pillar of teachers caring for **how students learn effectively, engagingly, and safely.** Going a bit deeper, teachers would also consider the finest details and how they can take a game to another level for their students. They did not rely on the fact that they will use and design *a* game, but they also put a lot of thought in *how* this game would be implemented, primarily by taking into account students' learning needs and interests.

While designing the "how do I get there?" game, where students would have to reach a specific place based on the directions of their peers, Teacher 4 considers of making the game even more physical and says:

> I was thinking that if they walk it, if they walk the game, you're in a walking experience, it's easier for them (students) to learn. So, **it would be better even if it's harder to design**. (T4, pre-interview 1)

What is evident from the quote above is that teachers do not mind taking extra time and putting more effort into designing a game that they feel would be pedagogically impactful by engaging students in kinaesthetic learning simultaneously.

In the second design interview with Teacher 3, we developed a game-informed activity through which students will use the visual prompts of the game to create sentences using the superlative, which was the grammar structure that the teacher wanted them to practice. Previous vocabulary on animals would also be revised through the game, as students were expected to compare animals. Upon my question on how Teacher 3 is going to insert rewards in her game-informed activity, she responds:

> I don't know **if this is the right way to do it**, but usually they only get to take their turn if they answer correctly or, you know, almost correctly. I mean, I don't mind if they don't say "longer than" and the say "the crocodile is longer the giraffe". It's ok I am going to give it to them (count it as a correct answer and assign points). So, this is how I usually do it. (T3, pre-interview 2)

This extract shows the teacher's pedagogical caring in two different ways. First, Teacher 3 wonders if they are approaching rewards in games *correctly*. She is sharing with

me how she usually goes about assigning points to students upon them giving correct answers. The fact that the teacher ponders on whether she does it "the right way" shows caring from the teachers' part as far as their own practice is concerned and the impact it can have on students. Secondly, caring is also shown in the leniency the teacher suggests she will demonstrate in case students give half-correct answers; she is willing to accept such answers as correct as her main teaching goal is for students to consolidate the -er suffix for the superlative form. Probably this consideration is because the teacher wishes to motivate, encourage weaker students as well and provide a "**safe**" environment in terms of not discouraging students when the responses are not entirely correct; In Section 4.5.5, I will show how this caring aspect was integrated in teacher activity during classroom observations.

During the third instance with Teacher 2, we explored together how to take the "Spyfall" game a step further. Spyfall is a social-deduction game where students need to figure out their shared location by asking and answering questions. The game comprises of a list of different locations and students have to figure out who is in the same location with them, and we were considering with the teacher how the roles and locations could be added in an effort to challenge them further. In the extract below, Teacher 2 shared a classroom incident where she was showing the list of locations of the game to students:

> I started screen (the locations of the game) with them at first to tell them how the locations will appear. And then they saw the list with all the locations, and they said "Oh, why don't you put the Day Spa (location) in?". They had the preference and I'm like: "**Okay, so, since you want that in, I'm putting that in**". (T2, pre-interview 3)

Teacher 2 is taking into account students' interests and is very willing to include students' own preferences in the game to reinforce their participation and engagement. Recognising and integrating students' interests was an aspect mentioned by other teachers as well. For instance, Teacher 4 had noticed students' enthusiasm about using the Zoom whiteboard function to draw and had reflected on how to pedagogically include drawing as

well as part of the classroom activities (see also Section 4.5.5) as the teacher not only wanted to facilitate students' interests but also make this integration a pedagogically informed one.

Teachers also demonstrated care about students' learning and hoped that the designed murder mystery games will challenge students enough without overwhelm them. Consider the extracts below; Both Teacher 5 and Teacher 10 implemented murder mystery games that would challenge students' deductive skills:

> they (students) like mystery games and the hints that they will receive are food for thought and can be interpreted many ways, so I think they **will find it (the game) intriguing** and **hopefully not too much challenging;** just enough to keep their mind at work and. I think they will like it. (T5, pre-interview 4)

> this is what I think might go wrong, especially with some of the students are intimidated by reading and they might start saying that they're confused, I know that, but **I will be there to encourage them** so hopefully this will be okay, but I know that what I think will go right is that this is a board game murder mystery things **that almost everybody loves so they'll get into it.** (T10, pre-interview 1)

Both teachers take into consideration how challenging their games might be for students. Teacher 10 is predominantly concerned about the long reading tasks involved in the board game where students need to figure out what had happened in the murder story, while Teacher 5 worries that the unstructured nature of the game would overwhelm students. Inescapably, going beyond the textbook and implementing games, a not-so-expected practice in class, comes with its "risks". Teachers are aware of these risks but simultaneously know that students are particularly fond of murder mysteries and hope that this will balance things out. Caring demonstrates here as being mindful of a) students' interests, b) anticipated difficulties, and c) teachers' own responses for potential challenges. Teacher 10, for example, is reassuring, even when things may potentially go "wrong" during class: "I will be there to encourage them". This phrase also highlights teachers' care in providing a safe classroom experience for students while at the same time keeping it challenging.

Care has been demonstrated by teachers in different levels as shown by the exploration above. However, it is also the case that teachers sometimes take up the role of a guardian, especially with younger students, and this is where care demonstrates as worry or as anxiety. For example, Teacher 5 wishes to adjust a racing board game that she has used for her intermediate classes in the past and plans to use it for her junior classes. She mentions while reflecting on her emotions about delivering this game to younger students:

> I have positive feelings about (the game) because it's a platform that I have tried, and now I have expanded it bit more. I wonder how it will work if they're too young for this or no. There is a little bit of anxiety in the side-lines and as to the level and, if they can handle a game like this […] It (anxiety) refers to the competitive message of the game, because they could get upset easily; they don't handle their emotions so well as older, more mature kids so they could get upset if they lose […] **So, part of this insight is to make sure that they understand all the rules and they don't make a fuss at the end.** because some of the cards do say that you can move a player, you can put him back, and this will upset them. (T5, pre-interview 3)

Even though Teacher 5 has witnessed the success of the designed game during the previous instance with older students, she worries about how her younger students will react to the game, primarily due to its competitive nature. Her belief, and possibly past experience of younger students getting upset over "unfair" mechanics in the game (e.g., moving other players which can lead to them losing or staying behind in the game) has had the teacher consider her practice and reminded herself to delineate rules clearly so that such instances are avoided. Possibly it is this particular group of students, given their young age that has had the teacher feel anxious about the implementation of the game. Again, however, this anxiety seems to stem from teachers' care about students feeling safe while engaging in game-informed activities.

The fine line between care and anxiety will be further explored in the next section, putting primary emphasis on the third pillar of care that was introduced earlier: caring and worrying about being a good teacher and delivering a good game-informed lesson.

4.2.4 Teachers Worrying about their Performance and Student Involvement

The previous sections have highlighted teachers' positive attitudes towards games and participants correspondingly reported emotions of happiness and enthusiasm for designing games as this makes them feel creative in their own practice, but they also know that games will also exert positive emotional and learning experiences to students. Their involvement in this study and their invested efforts in creating good games is an indication of care for both students and their own learning. This section will bring attention to aspects that have had teachers worry about the implementation of games and has triggered emotions of anxiety or stress, which were mainly attributed towards a) being well prepared and doing things the *right way* and b) students' participation and involvement.

During the pre-interviews, teachers had mentioned emotions of anxiety for delivering a game in class. They had attributed these two emotions primarily not to the game itself but to the **preparation** that was needed to integrate them in class:

> The second (emotion) is a little bit of **anxiety** in what sense; I know that preparing a game **takes a lot of effort** and you have to be very meticulous in that sense a little bit stressful because it needs **very good organization and preparation**- that's the only thing. (T1, pre-interview 1)

Similarly other teachers had voiced their anxiety, powerlessness, or a feeling close to these that did not stem from the effort needed to successfully employ a game in class but from their **own ability to successfully implement it, especially before the first delivery.** Specifically, they mentioned that they feel:

> And maybe a little **anxious** so that it all goes well **because you need it.** That's all. (T7, pre-interview 1)

> I better say that **frustration** is also a possibility (laughs) if things don't go smoothly. That's also possible. […] And it's, it's likely that I might feel **powerless** uhm because **I won't be able to get out of them what I want to be getting out of them**. And let's

see. **I guess my ultimate goal will be for me and them to feel enthusiastic.** I hope that this will happen. (T9, pre-interview 1)

and my first thought was yes, some maybe **anxiety** so that **everything is delivered right**. […] I'm just thinking it's a game and **we can make mistakes** and we can just rehearse it and play it again and **I'm there with the students creating this experience with the students**. So, I'm not really anxious and stressed. […] this feeling of making everything right. But this is kind of when we have an experience when you want to create something for the students. something new, **something that is not written, something that is prepared by you**, you have this feeling of anxiety, but I'm not sure this is exactly the words; it's heavier than I'm feeling it. (T4, pre-interview 1)

Teacher 4 also contemplates on whether they feel frustration, and they mention:

Frustration? No frustration. It is just this process of designing, what you would want to do for the lesson plan. The fact that we are discussing it probably signals that there might be some kind of frustration, but not really. It's just this: I'm looking forward to it. And when **you're looking forward to things, you have these like I don't know butterflies in your stomach**. This kind of thing. (T4, pre-interview 1)

Both Teacher 7 and Teacher 9 had not used games before in class and this was their first intervention, so they worry about how things will run or feel slightly unprepared; Teacher 7 in particular wants things to work because she feels responsible for the research project ("because you need it"). Teacher 4, on the other hand, allows herself to make mistakes; the potential anxiety is primarily caused by the fact that she has created the game herself, which has not been tested before. The inexperience of Teacher 7 and Teacher 9 in applying games in the classroom but also the inexperience of the third teacher regarding the use of a specific game have led them to feel "a little bit anxious". However, Teacher 4 tries to rationalize this worry and highlights in the same interview that she is "ready for the mess" and that she will try to handle mistakes or diversions from planned activities with an open mind. The same mindset from Teacher 4 is found during the second pre-interview, as she contemplates:

I think mistakes are going to be made; not exactly mistakes but some kind of confusion as to what exactly is you know, the goal of the game, but it's okay. (T4, pre-interview 2).

As seen by the above quotes, teachers wish to offer a positive and engaging experience to students, but they also take into account their effort in preparing the game and this causes a little bit of anxiety to them. Some teachers are more amenable to making mistakes and expect that planned activities may not go as planned, but they also have a feeling of anxiety, even when this is rationalised as a motivational force.

Aside from teachers worrying whether the designed activity will go well, they also felt anxious about **students' classroom participation and enjoyment**. Teacher 9 mentions:

I admit that I have a little bit of anxiety. Not too much, but a little bit **because I want the students to enjoy this […]** I'm **worried** that they might not get it. And might, you know, just not engage in a meaningful conversation and meaningful discussion. Again, because they're too embarrassed because they don't want to put themselves out there because they don't find it interesting or whatnot, for whatever reason. **If they don't engage, I will be you know, as I said, frustrated and disappointed and everything else.** (T9, pre-interview 1)

Teacher 9 plans to include a game-informed activity where students will be fictitious awkward stories and would then be involved in discussions trying to infer their own and classmates' responses to such situations. It is an activity that would require students to be active and talking, and this is what makes Teacher 9 worried: whether she will be able to hold deep discussions with students or whether students will shy out. Being able to engage students meaningfully and actively seems to be a top-priority concern for other teachers as well.

Teacher 10 had planned to use two vernacular games during two different interventions in class with little pedagogical adaptation. Teacher 10 seems to be particularly anxious about the game itself; this anxiety may stem from their need to see that a game they enjoy playing themselves and are passionate about, works for their students, too (see Section

4.2.1). Teacher 10 mentioned feeling a bit anxious for the delivery of the game they are about

to employ in class:

> I feel **anxiety** because I haven't done a full lesson using a board game Okay, and also a little bit of anxiety because it is quite an **advanced board game** it doesn't have extremely complicated mechanics but, it requires a lot of reading a lot of deduction and so we'll have to see how they will adapt to the needs of the game, so this is why and well, I am a bit **anxious as a personality** as well, so this is okay, this has to be taken into consideration (T10, pre-interview 1)

Teacher 10 is aware of the complex game mechanics and worries about his first time

implementing a whole lesson around the game. However, at the same time, Teacher 10

cannot hide their fascination:

> I'm **fascinated** because I would love to see them engaged in this project and **pride** because okay I think I've worked hard enough to give them a lot of preparation for this since we've been working on unreliable narrations for around a month now. We've done a lot of little, short stories […] so I prepared them, I think, for these, and I want to see how it plays out. Maybe they will get hooked by the premise of the game, this is my the most- what would make me happier because, for example, I have one student who is very silent, Okay, and I would love him to participate, to feel okay. (T10, pre-interview 1)

Despite his feelings of anxiety, Teacher 10 knows he has prepared students well in

tackling reading tasks, which will also be part of the game. Awaiting students' engagement

and managing to have them participate actively is what Teacher 10 hopes for. He also

considers even one student who is generally hesitant and worries about their engagement, a

worry that was also voiced from Teacher 2 in the second interview. Teacher 2 is confident

that students will be enthusiastic about the game, but at the same time worries about the

engagement of students who are generally more distant or disengaged during class.

> I might be a little bit **disappointed** actually **if some people don't participate**. That there's two people in this group that usually you know- they don't talk much. And if they talk it's always like "I don't know; I don't care". yeah so, they're good kids but I don't think I've won them over. (laughs) we'll see tomorrow with this." (T2, pre-interview 2)

Having the whole class participating is important to teachers, and achieving this can engender even more positive feelings in them. Overall, emotions of anxiety or worry appear when teachers consider their own performance: will they be able to tackle the game successfully? but also when considering students' performance and participation: will their students be hooked and involved? Failing in the latter would trigger emotions of frustration and disappointment in teachers as their efforts of creative practice would not be acknowledged by their students.

Nevertheless, it is important to highlight that emotions of anxiety or stress when mentioned by teachers are accompanied by the words "a little bit" or "maybe some", which suggests the light impact of this emotion and could also be attributed to the fact that they *care a lot*, as was established in the previous section. Moreover, anxiety was an emotion that was never referenced as the sole emotion, it was always accompanied by others, e.g., fascination, enthusiasm as can also be seen in Teacher 10's quote above. It is also to be noted here, that mentions of anxiety or powerlessness are mainly found on the first instances with teachers and fade away as the study progresses and teachers' gain greater confidence in both their performance regarding game-informed tasks, and because of developing stronger relationships with their students.

4.3 Teachers' Emotions after Delivering a Game-Informed Class

During the post-interviews with teachers, the same list of emotions was used as in the pre-interviews. Teachers were asked to talk about which of the twenty emotions reflect how they felt about today's class and to explain why. Teachers' emotions are also categorised here, as in Section 4.2, based on the reasons teachers provided for experiencing those.

4.3.1 Students' Success over Challenges Makes for Happy and Proud Teachers

Teachers' most cited emotion after having delivered their designed game-based class was happiness (7 participants), often overlapping with emotions of satisfaction (7 participants) and pride (6 participants). Teachers attributed those emotions to **students' performance and (language) accomplishments** during gameplay. Relevant examples are presented below:

Teacher 1 who delivered a game on Passive Voice mentions: "I was **more happy t**han them (the students), I think. because especially with Student A, I was afraid that you wouldn't you know cope with it, but she did very well." (T1, post-interview 3). Teacher 1 was particularly anxious before implementing the game as she believed she had created a very difficult game for her students (as claimed in the third pre-interview), especially given that the designed game was on Passive Voice, a grammar structure that students have not had been allowed much time to consolidate.

Teacher 2 is happy **with students' progress**, when reimplementing a game they had played before. Teacher 2 had altered the mechanics of the "Spyfall" game and added also roles, not only locations (as is the case with the simpler version of Spyfall; see Appendix I) and noticed a different, more engaged, attitude from students:

> I was happy to see that they tried to ask different questions and to elaborate a bit more on their role […] (I feel) enthusiasm; **they were very you know passionate and excited to play** and. **I was happy to see that they tried to ask different questions and to elaborate a bit more on their role**. And what else. I would say satisfied and also proud that you know they've improved so much. (T2, post-interview 3)

Teacher 2 is aware of students' **progress** and is proud of their students. Noticing their vociferous responses of engagement triggers even more active emotions in the teacher. How

students' own engagement can impact teachers' emotions will be presented in the next section.

Teacher 10 is also happy for seeing students **overcoming challenges**:

> I'm happy because we were able to complete or almost complete a case in three or three and a half hours I'm happy because, **even though the students were struggling at some points, they were able to overcome a lot of challenges**; they were able to read huge texts and end **enjoy reading them while playing** the game, even though there was on their part, some frustration, we have to be honest okay; but I think I'm really happy because I understood **that this kind of- this way of teaching can work**: I love games; students generally love games and I saw that even when presenting them with a very, very challenging game as Sherlock Holmes Consulting Detective is, they can have fun when learning some very, very complex skills, and I think that's really important and **it convinced me to try it again with other games**. (T10, post-interview 1)

Teacher 10 realises that even though students encountered certain difficulties in the game, the students still enjoyed and at the same time had the opportunity to practice language and deductive skills. It is the first instance that Teacher 10 uses a vernacular game in class with students, with little modifications, and during class (especially at the beginning) it was sometimes hard for students to grasp the game goals and gameplay. However, he acknowledges the pedagogical benefits, which were not limited to language skills, and is happy to see students overcome such challenges during gameplay. More on mediating difficulty of the game will be discussed in a subsection later.

Along with happiness, teachers also feel **pride and satisfaction for students' accomplishments**. For instance, Teacher 1 also acknowledges that she had created a challenging activity for their students, but she feels: "**satisfaction** and **pride** for my students actually. [laughs] Okay, because it's difficult for them again it was. Maybe too much for one lesson." (T1, post-interview 3). Similar reactions from Teacher 4 who reflects on the performance of the whole class as well of a particular student:

> I mean it's like actual communication with the students and **figuring out a solution together** or **a better way to have fun together**. So that's very satisfying when it happens satisfaction. Did you see Student A who used her hands to (find out the

number of syllables in the word); this means that she does remember that we have done this […] and she used it in the game, which was **very satisfying for me to see that she found another way to also help herself**. (It was a) very satisfying that moment; I felt **proud** of her. (T4, post-interview 3)

Earlier during the school year Teacher 4 had told students how to spell words by clapping their hands and used symbols of circles and dashes to denote intonation. It seems that for Teacher 4 this was a rewarding experience for the student to instantly recognise the task when she saw the circles and dashes and started clapping her hands as was also observed during class.

Teachers were **proud** but also **excited** that their students had managed to overcome the challenges put through the designed game-informed activities. Teacher 10 mentions:

> **I was proud of them so because they were able to use English to try and figure out** something, even if it wasn't a problem presented to them in the game, I found it really, really, really **fascinating**; it really **excited** me. (T10, post-interview 1)

Teacher 9 acknowledges that she can go as far as saying that she was **awed** by how much students achieved during the very first game-informed activity:

> I can say probably my overwhelmingly, most intense feeling was **pride**; I really was genuinely proud of the way they handled themselves, I thought it was really just admirable and **I was especially proud of their use of the language**. […] So yeah, pride. You know, you don't have enough positive adjectives here but what you have (list of emotions) is good: **pride,** enthusiasm, happiness. All of that! Even awe! I could actually say that; awe at **how far they've come**. (T9, post-interview 1)

Teacher 9 at the end of the game, and during class, asked students what they thought of this activity in terms of enjoyment and usefulness and received positive reactions from students. Teacher 9 also addressed the whole class how proud she was of their use of language and congratulated students. Teacher 9 was particularly enthusiastic and genuinely proud as was noticed during the classroom observation.

As can be evidenced through the quotes above, teachers commented on their students' progress and particularly use of language during gameplay. During the pre-interviews and design of the activities, teachers would worry about how balanced the difficulty of the game would be (e.g., Teacher 1, Teacher 9 and Teacher 10; see Section 4.4.5). Students' dispelling this worry of teachers and making it through gameplay is what triggered their emotions of pride and happiness over the accomplishments of their students.

4.3.2 Students' Socio-Emotional Engagement Makes for Happy and Fascinated Teachers

Teachers were also happy (7 participants), fascinated (5 participants), or enthusiastic (4 participants) that their students not only achieved the learning goals of their game, **but also for their engagement and positive emotional and behavioural reactions to the game**. Some teachers are more reserved to expressing their enthusiasm, but others are more expressive and outspoken, as evidenced in the quotes below:

> I was very happy obviously because **they were having fun**, while using English, while in a classroom a lot of them participated. (T10, post-interview 2)

> So, here I would choose happiness, fascination, enthusiasm, satisfaction at the end because I saw **how excited they were.** (T6, post-interview 2)

> I feel happy because it was an experience, I guess. And I think the kids had fun. And it was not embarrassing. (T7, post interview 2)

As can be seen from the above quotes, Teacher 7 is less profound than the other teachers in expressing her happiness as she cannot really testify to student engagement in class. Reflecting on classroom observations from Teacher 7's class, it can be noticed that while students are completing grammar exercises on their own, they take turns while speaking, rarely intervene, or choose to share irrelevant personal stories when they have

completed the exercises; but there is generally a quiet climate in class. Keeping turns is respected by all students and followed at all times, which is still noticed during gameplay. However, during gameplay students would often intervene with comments or questions even when it was not their turn, a behaviour which was not seen during other tasks. For example, students would jump in and ask: "Why did she take 15 points?" or they would motivate their peers in the same team by saying "Come on! This is easy!". Also, when a student was responding to a question in the game, peers in the same team would literally be at the edge of their seats and would throw their hands in the air when an incorrect response was given. Students were also noticed laughing with the fun pictures on the game and in general the atmosphere of the class was a lot livelier than when students were preoccupied with standardized tasks. Students' engagement is also found in their utterance from the very beginning of the lesson, e.g, "I'm curious to see what is behind the cards". All the above instances from Teacher 7's class show clear curiosity from students' part, but also engagement, even if they are actually involved in a game that requires them to use the Past Simple tense correctly, which is rather identical to the grammar tasks tackled in class earlier. However, the use of teams, points, and surprising aspects of the game (cards placed face-down) sparked student engagement and participation.

This quality of the teacher being hesitant in stating for certain that students actually enjoyed the designed game, although evidence from the classroom observation speaks to it, is also noticeable and in future interviews with Teacher 7:

> At the beginning of the lesson, they did mention their **eagerness to play**; like they couldn't wait. And I think it was Student A, who said: "I also want to try something new". I'll use that as a positive […] I don't know if somehow this malfunction of the game, from my side, caused them some annoyance or boredom. I think generally positive reactions again. I think. (T7, post-interview 3)

It seems that Teacher 7 is somehow reserved in expressing the success of implementing her game in class, and even if during class students' engagement is noticeable,

it seems as if she is second-guessing the success of the game-informed activity they had created. The phrases used emphatically by the teacher "I think", "I guess" or "I'll use that as a positive" are evidence to the above. A similar pattern is evidenced when Teacher 7 had expressed negatively connotated emotions, as will be seen in Section 4.3.2 with expressions such as "maybe a hint of disappointment" and "I don't know if I would call it frustration". It shows that the teacher is very careful and thinking deeply on how to express her emotions, either positive or negative; and this could be attributed to teachers' own personality and evidence of caring for students while constantly contemplating on whether they had delivered the best result possible.

At the other end of the spectrum, Teacher is very vocal of the classroom atmosphere and is happy about how the game was received by the students:

> As I said what I enjoyed most is just being witness to their progress. [....] They were they were they were just totally...it seemed to me that they were almost all of them **focused on the content not at all, the technicality, or just that they that it was in English or anything like that. They were just like, I mean it was as if this wasn't a class and we were having a discussion on, you know, personality traits character traits, sex differences and responses.** I mean whereas **I was focused on their use of the language** and responses and interaction and time management and all that stuff. They were just completely fine. I don't, I don't think they realize that another not that they didn't realize I don't think they saw it as a class per se at all. It was **more real-world kind** of, you know, upper class kind of discussion, you know, something that you might have at a college coffee shop or something, which made me happy. Now I'm really glad about that. (T9, post-interview 1)

The original game that students had to play involved relaxed rules of guessing each other's emotional reactions to imagined stories, and they would be awarded points for correct inferences. However, in class, these rules were skipped possibly because Teacher 9 was very interested in the content of the game rather than of gameplay, as she had also mentioned during the pre-interview, and allowed the game to flow without reminding students of the rules. Throughout the class, Teacher 9 seemed to listen very intently to students' responses, and this showed through her body language. She would come forward to the camera and or put her hand below her chin showing complete concentration on students' stories. She would

also frequently ask additional questions to students after listening to their reactions to stories, and discussions around societal issues would be developed. In the previous section, it was discussed how much awed Teacher 9 was by students' linguistic performance; through the extract above Teacher 9 comments on student enjoyment and active participation over the real-world game-informed task; it is highly probable that the free-form structure of the game as well as the content of the game had students view this more as a social building activity rather than another language learning challenge. This triggered enhanced socio-emotional dynamics during class and established a relaxed and positive atmosphere where students felt free to express themselves in the second language.

When asked what Teacher 6 enjoyed most about their second game-informed class, they mentioned:

> **Their looks at me** in the breakout rooms whenever I gave them a hint in the last one I was looking at them and I was giving them the last three clues […] and when they realised who the suspect was they looked at me and they did (nodding) and I understood this was ok and at the of course their excitement and even the sound of you know when they did the hooray thing (Interviewer: the drumroll) yeah even that sound; the passion they had at that point **I know it was a success**. (T6, post-interview 2)

Body-language indicators from students and their positive reactions during gameplay give the reassurance to the teacher that the students genuinely enjoyed the game. Earlier during that interview, while commenting on the emotions that she felt during her class, Teacher 6 mentioned:

> I would choose happiness, fascination, enthusiasm, eh satisfaction at the end because **I saw how excited they were**; and I think I would also choose boredom because I think at some point that's **what *I* felt I think they were a little bit bored.** I saw; I was looking at their faces and I think at some point; the first exercises we did the ones that they had to do in class; something could be done Maybe to be more interesting? I don't know. Was it the beginning? I don't know but I like the fact that they did well, and everybody was excited. (T6, post-interview 2)

It seems that Teacher 6 is very perceiving of students' emotions and reactions, and she noticed at the beginning of class that students were not as engaged as later during the game. It is very interesting that Teacher 6 chooses emotions that are in alignment with perceived students' emotions. She estimates that the regular textbook exercises would be a little boring for students, so she chooses the emotion of boredom to reflect how she felt during these tasks as well. When it comes to reflecting on her emotions during gameplay, she chooses active and positive emotions, e.g., happiness and enthusiasm, based again on the emotional expressions of the students "I saw how excited they were". This is in evidence of the emotion contagion theory; emotional contagion occurs when someone's emotions and related behaviours (i.e., students) lead to similar emotions and behaviours in others (i.e., the teacher), and vice versa.

Teacher 8, despite having a disappointing first game-informed class due to students' unwillingness to cooperate leading to not doing the game in class after all, she reflected on her second game-informed class:

> I think I would say happiness definitely and. and enthusiasm and I think this time also things went better. Somewhat satisfied with the result um. I don't have any of the negative feelings, I think it was great I think **we cooperated much better with the kids** this time and no one mentioned anything you know negative **or said something that might hurt me and discourage me**, so I think all is well. (T8, post-interview 2)

Given Teacher 8's previous negative experience in students hindering the integration of the game, for her second class, she seemed genuinely happy and attributed this to students' engagement and cooperation.

Student engagement and successful tackling of game-informed tasks is what drove teachers' enthusiasm, happiness, and pride for their accomplishments and progress. However, when students did not participate as expected or had not studied well this would trigger emotions of disappointment and or frustration to teachers. Disappointment and frustration were cited by three and four teachers correspondingly and it was rather circumstantial and

highly contextualised, i.e., both emotions were not seen to be more frequent during particular times and they had very specific attributions.

Teacher 8 mentioned in her interviews something significant: it is the same students who are interested in the language learning process and do well in other tasks, who enjoy the game-informed tasks more through which their vocabulary knowledge is assessed. The excerpt below is taken from the fourth instance of Teacher 8 applying a game-informed task in their class. Students are taking turns in answering questions, e.g., spelling vocabulary, translating words etc, and are receiving points when responding correctly. Teacher 8 has also allowed students to help each other when needed by giving hints. During this instance below, Teacher 8 thought that another student than the one being assigned the question gave the answer instead of a hint to help their fellow classmate:

> Teacher 8: I didn't tell you to say the word- only the second letter
>
> Student A: *I* said the word (the student who was supposed to answer the question)
>
> Student B: Yes, she said the word
>
> Teacher 8: you have the same voice?! Anyway, I wanted you to spell the word not say it.
>
> Student A: Ah!
>
> [Teacher 8 presses the "oops" button in the game so student doesn't get mark for this]
>
> Student A: Miss!
>
> Teacher 8: it said (the question) "spell", didn't it?
>
> Student A: but I could spell it
>
> Teacher 8: yeah, we would wait for ages for that
>
> (T8, classroom observation 2)

The above excerpt shows Teacher 8's expectation for students to only give slight hints to their peers not the complete answer, but also to respond rather fast as the game-informed tasks addresses vocabulary that they should have studied. In this instance, the teacher thought

someone else had given the full answer, which was not the case; but also at the same time, the student forgot to spell the word as the question indicated, so the teacher was firm and did not assign points to the student for that. There was evident disbelief in teachers' voice as seen in her last comment above, which could also be generated from the fact that some students would take substantial time to think throughout the game. This showed to the teacher that not all students had studied well, so she would allow limited room for negotiation. During the post-interview, Teacher 8 elaborated on her emotions for this class and mentioned:

> **I was really enthusiastic and again happy** with using the Bamboozle game to revise and check vocabulary. My **disappointment** came only from the fact that they **could have studied more and enjoyed it more**. Which is not within my powers to do but it has nothing to do with the game; I mean the game is fun in itself. Generally, I would say again only positive feelings I think it's a fun process. (T8, post-interview 4)

Teacher 8 was somewhat disappointed that students had not studied and maybe this is why she had expressed disbelief as seen through the class exchange cited above. She feels that if they had studied, they would enjoy the game even more as this could potentially give them a sense of accomplishment. However, Teacher 8 is enthusiastic for introducing an alternative way to assessment and she is aware that students are engaged during the game, which is also evident through students' willingness to help each other and students' attempts at negotiating the outcome.

Classroom dynamics and active student engagement (behavioural and emotional) play a key role in teachers' classroom enjoyment. The linguistic achievements of students seem to make teachers particularly proud as seen in the previous section, but it is through the behavioural and emotional responses of students during gameplay that spark emotions of fascinations and enthusiasm in teachers even further.

4.3.2.1 A positive frustration

As established through the previous sections, involving students in the lesson tasks was of paramount importance to all teacher participants. Teachers often worried whether students would participate and engage well with all the planned tasks, but primarily with the game-informed tasks as they had put in personal effort and "went the extra mile" to engage students further. Teacher 6 reflects during the first post-interview on the issues that did not work so well during the murder mystery game (which was based on Black Stories):

> I thought I would spend more time in the breakout rooms just observing and not coordinating. Because they had problems with the Internet connection, so they were out, I had to let them back in, I had to share the things with the room. **So, I didn't enjoy the game because I wasn't there to observe and see how they felt about it**. […]. So, this is the only thing that I wanted them to be a little bit more engaged and more involved and see how they used the tips I gave them at the beginning. (T6, post-interview 1)

For this game, Teacher 6 tried to promote autonomous learning, by helping students think of what questions they could ask the peers in order to deduce the murderer, weapon and location of a hypothetical murder. After she had gone through possible questions with students, and eliciting those from students, she allocated students to breakout rooms, assigned roles (e.g., the game master, who knows the whole truth about the murder, and the "detectives" who try to infer from the game master's clues what had actually happened in regard to the murder).

Connectivity issues during class forced the teacher to assume a more administrative role rather than a supervisory one. It was not the intention of the teacher to intervene during gameplay, or guide students, but she would receive satisfaction by observing her students making inferences, discussing and communicating.

Teacher 6 also commented on a single student's limited participation:

> I didn't feel disappointed because of Student A, who had a problem, he was a little bit shy; he didn't want to do it. So, it wasn't disappointment it's uhm it's the positive frustration we are talking about. **I want him to be to stop being shy and speak and**

communicate with the others. He's a newcomer so he's trying really hard. (T6, post-interview 1)

It is interesting that Teacher 6 refers to her frustration as "positive". This might be due to the fact that the teacher, being empathetic, she recognizes this student's individual characteristics, i.e., shyness, and also the fact that this student has recently been introduced to this class and its dynamics and acknowledges what a challenge this might be for the student when engaging in tasks that are less structured and call for more autonomy and initiative from the learners' part. During class the teacher explained the game rules and then divided the students into breakout rooms, with one game-master each who would tell a short story to their peers and the rest would have to infer what had actually happened by asking questions. One student, however, who was also a game-master had not fully understood the game mechanics and asks additional questions to the teacher. The teacher responds to this student's questions and offers additional support individually to the student. After she explained again to this student what they were expected to do during the game, she let him join the Breakout Room and encouraged him: "Read what happened [in the story card] and join the breakout room because they are waiting for you; join because you're the gamemaster; join and I'll come and help you; don't worry!" (T6, classroom observation 1). The caring and supportive tone of the teacher is evidence to her wanting to facilitate a positive atmosphere in class and encourage students to be involved.

As the teacher admitted in the post-interview, she wishes she could observe the Breakout Rooms more, however both the technical difficulties and the assistance required from one student hindered her from doing so to the maximum. Teacher 6 views this as a "positive frustration"; catering to the needs of an individual student is equally important to having the rest of the class happy and engaged. Teacher 6 has expectations from all her

students, including the most reluctant ones ("I want him to communicate") but they do acknowledge individual differences and do their best to cater for those.

4.3.3 Questioning (Own Competence) in Game-Informed Teaching

As evidenced through the latter two previous subsections, teachers are highly proud of students' achievement and engagement; nevertheless, they are more critical towards their own practice when using a game in class. Teachers mentioned emotions of disappointment (3 participants), frustration (4 participants) or powerlessness (2 participants). These emotions had a common denominator which was teachers feeling that they did not implement the game well or they encountered issues they had not expected or foreseen. Teachers' frustration and disappointment was also attributed to students' limited engagement with the tasks, but this was the case only in few instances, and will be elaborated further in the next section. Most importantly emotions of frustration, disappointment, or powerlessness were also paired with emotions of care, love, or happiness; for the purposes of this chapter, I will consider the attributions of the first three emotions in a standalone manner, in order to dig deeper into the reasons causing them. Data will primarily be presented from Teacher 7, which will also highlight the progression of this Teachers' emotions in a longitudinal manner; the other reason for this is that Teacher 7 was very evocative of the perceived "failures" in class, so data from her interviews will be used to discuss struggles other participants faced as well that had them criticizing or feeling disappointed in their own practice.

In her first interview, Teacher 7 was clear on her feelings of frustration and disappointment:

> (I feel) **maybe a hint of disappointment**, but I **think I was expecting too much from the kids and me.** I'll start with frustration because it could definitely have gone better […] I was frustrated because I **couldn't manage the time** as well as I'd like to; going through all the homework and presenting the new grammatical point satisfactorily; and doing exercises and giving them the next homework, so that they have something to do at home, **while at the same time having enough time to actually do the activity**. That was a little **frustrating**. **Or maybe a little**

disappointing. I guess if I do this more often. I can manage better. (T7, post-interview 1)

Frustration for Teacher 7 was rather low in this first instance and mostly directed towards their time management. Given the loose structure of game-based teaching, Teacher 7 admits that it is probably the case that they need more practice on using games in the classroom. Teachers seem to judge their own performance strictly when introducing novel approaches in class and this might be due to low confidence. Teacher 7 might not be confident yet in introducing games in the classroom, as she has not used gamified teaching in her classes before, but it might also be an indication that unexpected incidents in class or failure to control time are perceived as failures by the teacher in regard to her practice.

As has been mentioned earlier, Teacher 7 was found that she was thinking deeply about expressing her emotions, and the quote below signifies this as it is hard for the teacher to pinpoint the emotion exactly. After having delivered a co-constructed game on practicing the Passive Voice through the Bamboozle platform with students, she mentions:

> I don't know if I would call it **frustration**; maybe it's **anxiety** I don't know because **I cannot tell if I handled it correctly**. I keep replaying the game part of the lesson and then I'm always wondering **okay was that fun enough, but was it educational as well?** Did it work? Was it just a game to the kids? Do they also learn? And maybe a little **powerless**. **Maybe a little because I still don't know how exactly to work with the games unless it's-it's something I've done before or well** (T7, post-interview 2)

The questions that Teacher 7 poses to herself as reflections indicate that they are questioning the impact of the game-based class but also their role in delivering it successfully. It is the first time that the teacher is using an online gamification platform to produce this activity and she cannot but wonder on the significance of it on the learning performance of students; She does recognize the fun elements that it brings but is unsure of its educational value. As is the case with top-down educational reforms, which sometimes

find teachers incongruous to their teaching goals or just simply teachers find it hard to recognize the value of the reform, this will unavoidably trigger emotions of frustration or powerlessness. It is the inexperience of teacher in online game-informed environments and her critical look on whether such gamified tasks work that have left the teacher a) on the educational value of the game itself ("was it both fun and educational?") and b) wondering on their own competence over implementing such a practice successfully ("I still don't know how to exactly work with games").

Regarding the difference in the attributions of frustration and disappointment between the first and the second instance for Teacher 7 it could also be because of the nature of the game-informed tasks. The first instance involved students in a storytelling game-informed task, where they had to build their own story and emphasis was put on practicing Past-Simple through it. In the second instance, students were involved in a gamified task where they essentially had to answer gap-fill questions correctly in order to win. The educational value of the second gamified task is clearly lower than the first, as it follows the reinforcement-reward model, and unless students have already studied there is little *learning* or *meaningful* potential. Whereas the first game-informed task involves the whole class in *creating new meaning* together, a story that was co-constructed in unison. I stand with Teacher 7 in her question over the *meaningfulness* of gamified tasks other than their inherent ability to create engagement. Therefore, both frustration and disappointment seem to derive over the teachers' incompetence ("I guess if I do this more often, I can manage better", instance 2; "maybe I still don't know how to exactly work with games", instance 1), but specifically for the second instance Teacher 7 is clearly questioning the value of the game itself, which turns disappointment and frustration to powerlessness.

Regarding teachers' competence, other participants also commented on how working with games has made them feel more confident over their game-informed practice.

Teacher 3 mentions after the implementation of her second designed game, for which she was feeling unsure whether her young students would comprehend the not-so-intricate gameplay:

> I might feel more confident about **the complexity of the rules** of the game. I mean, it wasn't that complex but still was concerned if some of them would follow. For now, **I'm a bit more confident**. (T3, post-interview 2)

Teacher 3 after the successful implementation of the game-informed task realised that students quickly follow new rules, even if at the beginning it might seem strange to them. Students, during the classroom observation, were observed to pick up quickly what needed to be done. Providing a good example at the beginning of the game is what Teacher 3 felt helped students. In addition, as evidenced through the classroom observations, listening to other classmates' responses during gameplay had students realise potential mistakes, what was needed from the game, and by the second round of the game everyone was given accurate grammatical answers.

Confidence, however, did not always work as expected; for example, for Teacher 5, she mentions in her fourth and last post-interview:

> Instead of doing what I had planned I followed a totally different course; I don't know why. **I took it too lightly**, and you know **from overconfidence nothing but good comes from it** […] I didn't plan it in more detail. (T5, post-interview 4)

As we will be further explained in Section 4.4, Teacher 5 was feeling very enthusiastic and confident because she knew well the game she would implement in class, and she enjoys playing that game and that is why she was enthusiastic for including it in class. Certain mishaps that happened during class had the teacher feel disappointed, and this emotion was strong enough specifically because she felt too confident in the game, even though by now she had designed and implemented four different games for her classroom, and she is an experienced game player herself. Being confident and feeling competent in game-informed teaching is a factor that impacts teachers' enjoyment, yet unexpected

incidents in class can have the opposite effect and leave the teacher disappointed over their own practice. Overall, experience in games or in using games in the classroom is not a false proof guarantee of teachers' feeling content about their practice; the unexpected that can manifest in class, especially from teachers' part can determine the overall emotional experience in class.

Other participants still acknowledged certain issues that did not go as planned or were incongruous to their teaching goals, but they saw this in a more positive light. For instance, Teacher 10 admits feeling somewhat powerless:

> I'm not saying powerlessness as an negative emotion per se […] they (students) started to communicate in you know dialect between English and Greek and **I couldn't stop them but that's good**, in my opinion being if you get them to be engaged in and have fun and discuss with one another **it's okay to be powerless**.[…] They are young learners were acting, a bit like kids do when they have a game in their hands, they lost control of it, but I was, I was fine with that and I didn't want to have the power in my hands know not at all I generally don't want that, when I'm teaching, so it was okay for me. (T10, post-interview 2)

For Teacher 10, "losing power" during the game is welcome as long as students are corresponding in regard to the game, even if they choose to communicate in their native tongue or a mix of L1 and L2 rather than in the target language which is the teacher's expectation. Teacher 10 welcomes the silver lining that comes with powerlessness and sees it as positive, as he recognizes that the game has shifted the power dynamics in class, but this again is evidence to students cognitive, behavioural, and emotional engagement and connection to the task at hand.

Teacher 4 is also aware that there is always room for improvement, especially regarding her practice of integrating games in the classroom: "So I feel satisfaction I would be even more satisfied if I just had found a way more exciting for the person that was waiting." (post-interview 1). The excerpt below shows this ambivalence between feelings of satisfied on the one hand and upset or disappointed on the other:

> When I am **between a negative and a positive** feeling the one that always wins is the negative one for me. **I just want to be nice for everyone**, and exciting for everyone. I would say I was kind of upset for certain points in the game. But, on the other hand, because **I tried, I did my best** and that's why think I want to say satisfaction. So, I think it might be **50-50 disappointment and satisfaction** because overall they used the language, they communicated, they seemed to have fun; but I'm also upset for the things that didn't work well. **I'm not talking about mistakes that students made or the mess**. I really like it when students do these things, and they seem to have fun; just that what I said the faster pace. **Maybe this is practice** and. That's it 50-50 I'd say. (T4, post-interview 1)

Undeniably, teaching is a caring profession (Miller & Gkonou, 2018) and it is the ultimate goal of teachers to make the lesson "nice" and "exciting" for *everyone*, as Teacher 4 highlights above. Teachers reflect on their practice in the strictest terms; for instance, Teacher 4 is satisfied that the *students* performed well but seem somewhat disappointed with *her implementation of the game* as she "wanted a faster pace"*;* and this latter emotion is the one that conquers. Teachers often voiced that they want their students to be happy and cater for everyone in class as much as possible and they see themselves as the main agents in the classroom who can accomplish that. When this expectation is not met leads to emotions of mild frustration or powerlessness as evidenced in earlier sections, or disappointment. What is interesting, though, which was evident in all teachers that had reported disappointment or other negatively connotated emotions after the delivery of a class, is that a "disappointing" memory did not obstruct them from feeling happiness and being eager to try and design another game in the future.

For Teacher 9, the first time employing a game in the classroom caused a change in their usual teaching practice, and they admit that they are happy about that:

> And I was also a little; I was kind of happy with myself, because **normally I get incredibly irritated and disappointed** when they make grammar mistakes or vocabulary mistakes or anything like that in a normal class. **But during that class I was very forgiving and probably it's because the scale was just heavily on the side of their accomplishment**. I thought they were really good. (T9, post-interview 1)

It might be due to the unique character of certain games that cause teachers mixed emotions of frustration and happiness and it seems that it is also down to each teacher's identity how welcoming they will be of the change. Both Teacher 7 and Teacher 9 introduced free-structured games (storytelling games) in their class for the first time. Such games could unavoidably take a longer time and student input might be hard to monitor, which caused slight frustration to Teacher 7, as evidenced above, but for Teacher 9 they allowed themselves to go beyond their usual practice and dedicated the whole lesson to the storytelling game.

What is interesting, though, which was evident in all teachers that had reported disappointment or other negatively connotated emotions after the delivery of a class, is that a "disappointing" memory did not obstruct them from feeling happiness and being eager to try and design another game in the future.

As seen during all the interviews with Teacher 7 throughout the study, she was one of the most hesitant teachers in realizing the success of their gamified lesson.

> It was **challenging** yesterday. I thought we would finish the part we hadn't done from the board game would finish quickly, but it didn't; **it took quite some time**, then I got confused with the dice and I couldn't change it, because it was not responding to me. **I wanted to start the other game; we didn't. I got frustrated it didn't work out** (shaking head). It didn't. **Hope the kids still had fun**, even if I didn't have time to try that game yesterday. I tried to listen to them more; the suggestions they made. I don't know; So yeah, **I am a little disappointed**. anyway. […] I saw other mistakes that **I should have put up beforehand**, for example in a question, where they had to describe things they did, perhaps **I should have mentioned** or written down in a bracket or something that they need to use three different verbs and not just the verb "play"; this is something I saw yesterday. […] **but I should have thought of that and try to prevent it**. And the fact that I didn't play the other game didn't go according to plan. **I hadn't considered what we do with the points once they reached the end**, but they have a larger number on the dice than that but they pitched in and helped because I didn't remember having played a board game for a while […] **Emotions yes different ones today.** I could also mention **powerlessness** because of the Internet are not cooperating the web page was not cooperating with me I don't know what was. So for a minute I was **overwhelmed** because it didn't want to let the kids down, I felt like I wasn't; I didn't know what to do. care and love always there. uhm. that sums it up I think. (T7, post-interview 4)

I have chosen to present this rather long extract from the last post-interview with Teacher 7 for two reasons. First, there is plenty of emotive language ("it was challenging", "I got frustrated", "I am a little disappointed", "powerlessness"). It is interesting that in the narrative above, there seems to be some progression from activating emotions of challenge and frustration, and as Teacher 7 keeps on reflecting, emotions become rather passive (powerless, disappointed) and are toned down in terms of their lasting effect or power (e.g., *a little* disappointed, powerless *for a minute.* Secondly, it highlights different aspects of the lesson that could potentially go wrong and trigger teachers' disappointment or frustration.

Secondly, this lengthy quote offers insight into issues that other teachers had faced in the classroom and triggered similar emotions to them. Teacher 7 mentions "powerlessness" and feeling "overwhelmed" over the unresponsiveness of the online game; for other teachers this manifested as frustration and was attributed once again to technological failures or connectivity issues. It was mentioned by Teacher 9 and Teacher 2; For Teacher 9, the online Zoom meeting of the class threw her out for a while, and for Teacher 2, one student had real trouble connecting to Breakout rooms, so she had to find alternative solutions to implementing a teams-based game without using the breakout room function. Teacher 2 reflects:

> **I was a little bit frustrated in the beginning**, you know when Student A **couldn't connect** and then he was trying to reconnect and all that but that's due to technical issues, not for the activity as such. (T2, post-interview 2)

Technical difficulties have undoubtedly impacted classroom dynamics as it became harder for teachers to reach students if their Internet connection was weak or chose to keep their cameras/microphones off. Teacher 2 acknowledges though that this feeling of frustration was not caused by her own practice or unwillingness of students to participate, but to technical issues. Overall, she reports for the same class that this was a most empowering experience for her: "I felt fascinated. um. very enthusiastic and proud […] I felt very proud

and happy that they enjoyed it too" (T2, post-interview 2). In addition to the above, the primary reason for Teacher 7's frustration is on all the things that she "should have done" in order to "prevent" students' confusion and questions over the clarity of tasks or game mechanics.

Later during the fourth post-interview, Teacher 7 and myself discuss on perceived students' emotions:

> Interviewer: Any comments about students' emotions while playing?
>
> Teacher 7: From what **I understood they really wanted to find out who won**. There was some encouragement between the teams sometimes. At the beginning, they were **eager to play**. I don't know if somehow this malfunction of the game f**rom my side cause them some annoyance or boredom.**
>
> Interviewer: yeah. It shows that they become engaged, are they are more. upbeat let's say more.
>
> Teacher 7: I think they were really (engaged).
>
> Interviewer: They have good initiative, they expressed their opinions, they say things.
>
> Teacher 7: Yes, which is one of the very important things with games like I told you two weeks ago. **I don't want to forget that it is a game, and they should have fun and talk and communicate and it's not just (do) lesson rules exercises. I was trying not to forget that.**
>
> (T7, post-interview 4)

Teacher 7 is again connecting students' perceived emotions to her own competence and performance. She wonders whether the technical issues had caused students to feel annoyed. She also recognizes that students were curious about how winning in the game is determined, and this might have been the trigger for having Teacher 7 wonder on all the things "she should have" taken into consideration beforehand in order not to disappoint her students.

Through this extract the dilemma between keeping a balance between the *game* and *lesson* parts of the lesson comes forth. Teacher 7 tries to remind herself of the "fun" aspect of using games in the classroom. Before implementing the fourth instance in class, I had

suggested to the teacher that in my own practice I take into account students' preferences when it comes into winning conditions or other game mechanics that I find that I do not mind changing and that would cater for further enjoyment from students. Teacher 7 has taken this advice into practice and mentions:

> I tried to listen to them more; the suggestions they made **…I hadn't considered what we do with the points once they (students) reached the end**, but they have a larger number on the dice than that but they pitched in and helped. (T7, post-interview 3)

Teacher 7 in all her interviews had mentioned emotions of love and care for her students:

> I am happy that we tried (thinking) and of course the care and love we feel for what we do has not changed. Maybe care. Because I care to add something new. **I care to deliver the best lesson possible**. And I don't think we did the best possible. So, I care to improve. I care to give students more and have them engage in teamwork activity too. (T7, post-interview 1)

Teacher 7 acknowledges her own perceived failures as points for future improvement and professional development.

Despite the difficulties that arose during classes, teachers do value their efforts on implementing game-based teaching. Even though for Teacher 7 that first game-based lesson did not go as anticipated, they still feel happy and care about their students and are determined to improve professionally.

4.4 A Longitudinal View of Emotions

Teachers' emotions throughout this study varied from anxiety and frustration to happiness and enthusiasm to varied degrees as well. This section will look at teachers' emotions longitudinally and how they fluctuated throughout the schoolyear and focus on how teachers talk about their emotions.

4.4.1 Fluctuating Emotions: from Enthusiasm to Disappointment (and Guilt)

Teachers' emotions as reflected during the design of a game-based lesson and after delivering it were fluctuating in terms of sentiment and valence; teachers may have viewed their planned lessons from a positive light and felt excited and enthusiastic about the to-be-delivered class, but it was sometimes the case that their expectations were shattered by what actually happened in class. Below, I will present an evocative example from Teacher 5.

Teacher 5 had initially expressed emotions of enthusiasm and happiness for her fourth and final game-informed class as she intended to play an adaptation of the well-known mystery board game "Mysterium". Teacher 5 enjoys playing this game and she would find it ideal to integrate it in class for students both to practice their speaking skills, it also related to the current vocabulary in the textbook. Most importantly, during the pre-interview, Teacher 5 admitted that "it's a game that I have played in the past, so I'm sure they will enjoy it (…) I would like them to enjoy the same things I do" (T5, pre-interview 4).

During the design phase, I had seen Teacher 5's confidence in thinking about how to play the game (I, myself, could not remember the rules well, and asked). When there was some questioning as to how students will be awarded points or adding more rules, Teacher 5 was quick to respond and dismiss certain ideas in an effort not to "make our life more complicated than it is". The design part for this class, including the interview, lasted about 13 minutes as there was also some initial preparation through informal discussions through social media with the participant, and the participant was very well acquainted with the game itself.

That particular class started with some unexpected events; only two out of the three students joined the class, and then at the beginning of class the teacher had accidentally shared the solution to the murder to the class instead of the hints. Having realized that

students have viewed the answers, the teacher changed the hints and the final solution, while

expecting for the third student to join. Given this "failure" at the beginning of class, Teacher

5 reported feelings of "guilt" and "disappointment" and frequently criticized herself for the

accidental mistake, even though it was resolved rather fast. Throughout the post-interview the

teacher emphasized her own mistakes, as can be seen the extract can be found below:

> Teacher 5: And generally the feeling I got was that it had so much potential, but **I kind of ruined it by making the first mistake** and then following with other things like the delay of the student and the lack of vocabulary […] but we only played one round, I think we didn't they didn't have the chance to appreciate it more and **that's my fault and I'm the one to blame, this time**, I wonder what would have happened if everything has gone smoothly. I was kind of disappointed too but anyway.

> Interviewer: from what you've told me to so far though there were there was lots of interactions from their part and peer correction as well, which I find pretty interesting.

> Teacher 5: Those are the positive sides, yes. It could have been so much better (laughs)

> Interviewer: Coming down to more specific questions, I sent to you on the chat a list of feelings. So how do you feel about delivering this game in class?

> Teacher 5: Ah guilt (laughs) Because **it was my fault;** disappointment. No; that's it. These are the strongest, I think. It's fun how every time **I get worked up that is going to be fun if the opposite happens and whenever I don't expect it but plan ahead very thoroughly, I'm positively surprised it's always the opposite.**

> Interviewer: Okay, so are there any other feelings or maybe they're not mentioned here?

> Teacher 5: (laughs) No nothing; there is everything.

> Interviewer: All right, so you mentioned these were the strongest ones; was there anything else milder?

> Teacher 5: There is always **a hint of satisfaction for having completed it but it's kind of shadowed by the more negative feelings when things don't go according to plan**. And still I can't say that it was a terrible moment, we still had fun, it was still nice to practice English in a different way other than the book it's just that, **I was expecting so much more to come out of it and it didn't.**

> (T5, post-interview 4)

From the above extract, what is evident is the teacher's strongly critical language

towards their own performance (see highlighted words). Students had been well engaged in

the game, and as the teacher had mentioned in her narrative of how her class responded to the game:

> They were very much into the game they participated lot to the speaking, was very natural and the flow, the way that, for example, the debate, they used slang language and they were so intent on talking to each other, that they didn't mind making mistakes, it was not much accuracy, but fluency process. (T5, post-interview 4).

Teacher 5's feelings of satisfaction are overshadowed as their class kicked off with a mishap. The feelings of guilt and disappointment stem from the teacher's perception of her own performance, and even the evidence of positive results from the game, i.e., high student engagement, were not enough to hinder the teacher from blaming herself. What was probably at high stakes here for the teacher personally was that this was the final class of the schoolyear. Inescapably, the first and last classes of a schoolyear are important for teachers, the first ones to set the tone and establish rules, and the last ones for providing a positive memory token to students. What might also have played a role in this teacher's feelings of guilt and disappointment is the high investment she had in the adapted game of "Mysterium" that she designed, as the original version of it is a game that she also enjoys playing outside the class. Guilt seems to be the most exaggerated emotion that the teacher has reported and is self-directed. It seems that negative emotions have a stronger influence than positive emotions and this seems to have an effect on teachers' perceptions of whether a lesson was successful or not. Having observed students' high engagement and embodied enthusiasm during certain classes, for which teachers later reported emotions of disappointment, signals that teachers' beliefs are so strong and critical in regard to their own performance that evidence of a successful implementation can be overshadowed.

It reminds of Teacher 10's emotions after delivering a class using the "Sherlock Holmes: Consulting Detective" game, for which he is also passionate about. Despite having encountered many issues throughout the class regarding gameplay and readability of

resources, Teacher 10 mentioned that he felt happiness for having delivered this game in class, as it proved to be a challenge both for himself and for the students, but this also convinced him to try harder. At the same time, though, he mentioned feeling "disillusioned" for the following reasons:

> I knew that they would be confused because Okay, if one is familiar with a game, he or she knows that it has an abundance of information and some of them are a very difficult to comprehend, however, **I think that, at times, and they were lost**; I have to acknowledge that that they were lost and I believed that they wouldn't; I told you before that **I believed that I would not need to intervene at all**. That was my hope, but I saw that this hope couldn't become reality in such a complex game; I needed to have a more energetic role in solving the case in order to give them some guidance, **I hope that I wouldn't need to do that**; that's why **disillusion** is one of the emotions that I'm listing. (T10, post-interview 1)

Being enthusiastic about the game, and rather feeling confident with applying it in class did not always work out as Teacher 5 or Teacher 10 believed. In Teacher 10's instance, he took a rather growing approach and acknowledged that he should have reconsidered more things regarding the pedagogical application of the game. For Teacher 5, though, even when the game worked out well, despite an initial mistake of revealing the answers but compensating for it, she could not abandon feelings of guilt. This was the most heightened emotion reported from Teacher 5. Throughout the year, during the pre-interviews, she would report feelings of enthusiasm or happiness for planning the game or low-level anxiety. During the post-interviews, however, she would shift between pride and satisfaction or being disappointed. Guilt seems to be the most exaggerated emotion that the teacher has reported and is self-directed. This confession by Teacher 5 reminds also of Teacher 4's words during the first post-interview, discussed earlier in Section 4.3.3:

> When I am between a negative and a positive feeling the one that always wins is the negative one for me. Uh I just want to think to be nice for everyone, and exciting for everyone. (T4, post-interview 1)

Teachers in the pre-interviews would refer to experiencing emotions of "slight anxiety" or "a little bit of anxiety" over their confidence in delivering the game in the "*right*" way; Similar discourse, in terms of downplaying the experience of negatively connotated emotions is also repeated when talking about frustration or disappointment. What is most interesting, though, which was evident in all teachers that had reported disappointment after the delivery of a class, is that a "disappointing" memory did not obstruct them from feeling happiness and being eager to try and design another game. They might feel low anxiety while planning for a new game, but this would not be dependent on previous experience but would rather be attributed to the new challenge ahead.

4.4.2 Three Different Emotional Rollercoasters

During the design process and pre-interviews, teachers would report emotions of "happiness" and all other emotions with positive connotations, e.g., enthusiasm, excitement, fascination, eagerness along with "a little bit of anxiety". The situation in the post interviews is a bit more nuanced and could be distinguished in three main categories. Given that the emotional rollercoaster has been used in the literature as a way to illustrate teachers' emotions, I will use here different rides found in amusement parks as a simile to picture teachers' (non) fluctuating emotions more vividly.

The Carousel:

This is the ride where the lesson filled the teacher with emotions of pride, satisfaction, happiness, even enthusiasm and fascination post-lesson delivery. I decided to call it the carousel as the fluctuation of emotions before and after the lesson is slight and smooth. Initial excitement and enthusiasm before class, sometimes paired with low anxiety, would be followed with similar emotions upon a successful *for the teacher game-informed* class. Teachers would report emotions of happiness as their efforts are rewarded, proud of themselves for their work and their students for their engagement, and fascination by being

involved in the game and having created a positive atmosphere. This type of ride was found in most participants: Teachers 1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9 and 10.

The Pendulum Ride:

The pendulum refers to instances where teachers reported mixed emotions of satisfaction and disappointment post-lesson. Despite their initial enthusiasm for the game they had developed, incidents that occurred in class caused them to feel disappointed. Despite having met their initial objectives, sometimes teachers would ponder on how things could have gone better, and thus any satisfaction is overshadowed; disappointment seems always to win this ambivalence. This type of ride was found in four participants: Teachers 4, 5, 7 and 8.

The extreme rollercoaster:

This type of ride refers to when teachers would cite emotions after the lesson, with negative connotations which came in absolute congruence with the positive and hopeful emotions during the pre-interviews. Those emotions would include powerlessness, frustration and guilt. These "unpleasant" emotions would be mainly attributed to teachers' own practice and as a reflection to their own handling of the class. Even when the dynamics of the class (e.g., disruptive or disengaged students) did not allow the teacher to implement the game-informed class as she had envisioned, the teacher would always direct their extreme emotions to themselves and their failure to assume control in class. Examples of this were found in three participants: Teachers 5,7 and 9.

Overall, it seems that past game-informed lessons and teachers' own emotional experiences could not impact their future emotions, post-class delivery. Every class was colored with its own unique emotions that depended heavily on the classroom atmosphere, student engagement, and the teacher's perceived own performance. The extent to which teachers might be disappointed or satisfied after the delivery of the game was mostly correlated to their own set expectations and mindsets and this is why it is crucial to cultivate

teachers' emotional intelligence (as in Gkonou & Mercer, 2017). The Carousel seems to be the most frequent type of ride in teachers' experiences of game-informed lesson design and implementation, and this might be due to the positive change introduced as part of this study. What was consistent was the predominantly positively correlated emotions along with some *facilitative anxiety* prior to the lesson, followed by unexpected or not-so unexpected emotions, after the lesson.

4.5. Connecting Teachers' Emotion, Cognition and Activity

In this section, I will discuss prominent themes identified throughout teachers' interviews that go beyond emotions and focus mostly on teachers' actions, which are triggered by or could be attributed to the experience of certain emotions. Each subsection starts with three interconnected circles that denote (from left to right) teacher emotions, teacher cognition, and teacher activity introducing the key points of each theme to be analysed. This is because emotion, cognition, and activity (Golombek & Doran, 2014) are interconnected concepts and teachers' actual practice cannot not be discussed through their emotions, attitudes and beliefs (i.e., cognition). The content of each diagram corresponds to the title of each subsection and summarises its main points.

4.5.1 The Golden Ratio Between a Game and a Lesson

Figure 4.3

Blending Games and Lessons
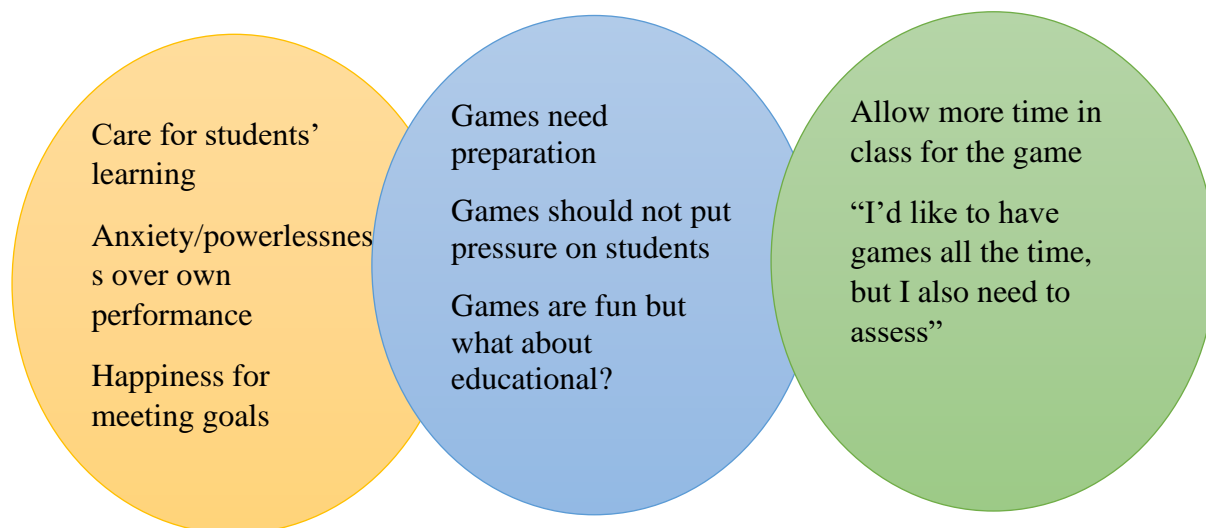
One of the main topics that came up in the design interviews was teachers' concerns of how to make their game-informed lesson both educational and fun. Inadvertently in all observed lessons, the game-informed activity part took longer than expected. Teachers were sometimes prepared for this themselves as it aligned with their current learning objectives but would also decide impromptu to allow themselves to go beyond the pre-allocated time influenced probably by the general classroom atmosphere or because they saw the benefits of prolonging the game-informed activities. Teacher 1 reflects after allowing the whole teaching hour to the first game she had designed:

> I have now realised that **the freer the activity, the more time you need** and because it's a game; you can't rush things. **You can't put pressure** on the students- otherwise it won't be fun; it won't be entertaining. So, I was prepared to dedicate the whole lesson to this. Because actually it was part of the revision; so, it wasn't something that it was out of the syllabus. (T1, post-interview 1)

Teacher 1 had originally decided that the game may take up all the hour and that was an informed decision because she wanted to allow students to revise the grammar tenses of

the game but also because she wanted to provide students with a fun classroom experience; imposing time restrictions would spoil the fun of the lesson according to the teacher. Similar concerns were raised by Teacher 9, retrospectively after delivering the first game-informed activity which took up the whole teaching time; Teacher 9 mentions:

> I don't think I've allowed so much time to relapse. It was, I think, a result of the time as well as the context which they found interesting and were willing to participate. It was the time that allowed that permitted them to engage more fully, because during class exercises normally, it's like: wham, bam, let's get it over with; you just answer the question. **I don't normally give more time and I guess the reason is because I know that a speaking test is timed**; you don't have that much freedom to express yourself. You got to get it out there quickly. So, I put pressure on the kids to do that. **But I see now** that in this case, **because we weren't hurried** and I didn't care about the time, they also apparently felt it and were able to **express themselves more deeply** and fully. (T9, post-interview 1)

The learning needs and age of this particular group of Teacher 9 is totally different than the one of Teacher 1, as the first worked with younger and pre-intermediate level students in her first game-informed lesson, while the latter worked with advanced learners, who were also late teenagers, and there are higher stakes for this latter group given that in a few months' time they would have to sit for nationally accredited certification examinations. The pressure and stress caused by upcoming examinations to both the teacher and the students allow little time for "fun" or unstructured activities in class. As Teacher 9 reports, speaking activities are implemented in a calculated and time-constraint manner given the expectation of standardised tests and the teacher wishes to prepare them appropriately for this experience. "Fun" for this class therefore means to be able to have a less structured conversation and express themselves without having to think of time constraints. The engaging theme of the game itself and the sharing of personal stories and emotional reactions also allowed students to further engage "deeply and fully".

Time was a crucial aspect in achieving a good balance between the learning objectives (lesson) and the fun (game) not only in matters of time allocated to each activity,

but also in matters of how feasible it is to include games throughout the year. Teacher 1 mentions characteristically:

> Of course, it is not always feasible to conduct a lesson with all the lessons based on gaming. **If I could, I would**. But I always try to integrate a small game towards the end usually or sometimes at the beginning even games ready-made games from the coursebook itself to revise to warm up. (T1, pre-interview 1)

Teacher 4 is slightly more optimistic about including games throughout her lessons, but this might also be because was working with very young learners who had just begun their journey in the foreign language and hence no high stakes were at place. She mentions:

> They (students) love games and they like it. […] I don't think they need to open books and do exercises. **They could just have games all the time**. That's true. You learn from the games. I mean, that's true. I suppose. (T4, pre-interview 1)

It seems that teachers' mindset towards how much gaming they would allow in class or throughout the year, would heavily depend on the learning objectives of each class, but also the curriculum and students' needs. In our fourth and last instance with Teacher 4, she expressed in her very eloquently the struggle of how much time to dedicate to the assessment part and how much time to the game-informed part. Consider the extract below:

> But I need to play hangman and I need to play Taboo, so the only thing that can happen here is just assess less [...] we'll see how that goes […] **The objective for today is to play games, enjoy it, and assess.** I need to assess these things, but I also need to enjoy this day so I'm also assessing things through games which is also important; I need to see if they know these words. (T4, pre-interview 4)

Given that this was the last class for this group of students, Teacher 4 made it clear that she *needed* to have as much as assessment completed during this class, but because it was the final class of the year, she would like students to enjoy it to the maximum. In her post-interview, she recognises that this struggle might have been an unnecessary one as she could assess students' knowledge through games only as well. As mentioned in Section 4.4, final classes of the school year, do inescapably impose further pressure on teachers as they

inevitably want to create a positive, memorable, and meaningful experience for their students to remember.

Pondering on the educational and fun value of games had teachers feeling anxious about it and doing it the right way; however, after employing games in the classroom they would see the educational benefit and their teaching goals being met, be it assessment or fun.

4.5.2 Aligning Learning Goals and Skills to Game Design

Figure 4.4

Aligning Learning Goals to Games
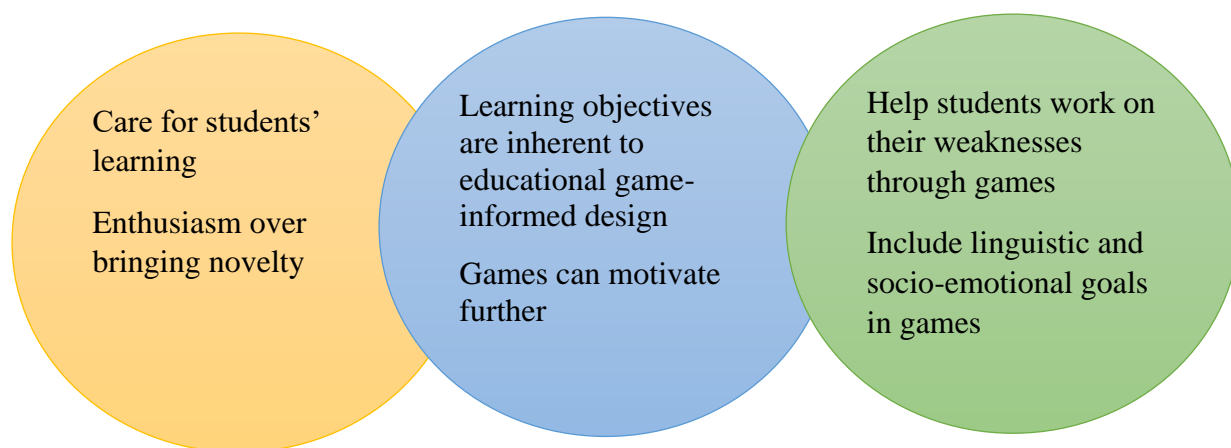
Having a good understanding of learning objectives before designing a game with teachers was a primary concern for myself, but also for teachers as they tried to integrate their games meaningfully. Teachers expressed this either explicitly or implicitly throughout the pre-interviews but also reflected on the success of the game itself based on whether their initial objectives were met during class.

While designing a Monopoly-style board game with Teacher 1 and elaborating on the elements to be included in the game, Teacher 1 mentioned "I would like to see how they (students) work with the time expressions" (T1, pre-interview 1). This was a strong statement by the teacher, therefore I had proposed that the students could decide which time

expressions are to be included in the game, before starting with gameplay. Indeed, students in

class, would come to the board and fill in time expressions of their choice on the board, after

having contemplated with their teams which time expressions to choose. This would enable

students to revise the time expressions that are suitable for each tense and afterwards

categorise them; the pictures below show the game before and after students' input of time

expressions:

Teacher 4 was also very clear and eloquently expressed her learning objectives before

having created her first game-informed lesson:

> The learning objectives of course would be many: […] listen for specific information
> because one player has to give directions; […] improve fluency in spoken interaction.
> I mean, this is the thing we want when we ask for directions to ask something
> immediately and then realize what the person has said. Also, to practice vocabulary
> for giving directions and for following directions and use this language effectively
> under real time constraints. […] And because it's a game they feel this need to say
> something immediately because they have to give a point or whatever we're going to
> do. (T4, pre-interview 1)

What is evident from this quote is the multiple language objectives, i.e., practicing

vocabulary on giving instructions, but also skills objectives, i.e., building up fluency and

listening for specific information and the connections Teacher 4 made on how these could be

inserted into game mechanics. Indeed, the designed game satisfied the objectives above, and

having clear goals helped both the teacher and myself co-construct a game from scratch by

embedding all aspects that the teacher wanted students to practice with.

After the teacher had delivered the game in class, she mentioned in the post-interview

that followed that she was disappointed as she "wanted a faster pace". It is likely that the

learning objective of fluency was not met that successfully by students, especially during the

first round where they appeared to be hesitant as a completely new activity was introduced

into the class with unknown structure. However, the teacher was also satisfied that the target

language was used, but the emotions of "disappointment" toppled emotions of satisfaction.

Apart from targeting language skills, teachers also embedded socio-emotional goals in their games. For example, Teacher 2 in the first instance designed a game where students would have to guess their peer's emotional reactions to a particular story. Teacher 2 reflects:

> one of the goals […] of this activity was to make them feel you know more empathy towards the characters or the situation and if we had time to extend it and create their own and **put themselves in someone else's shoes** to see how they feel, how they would react; so, I think that was one of the biggest outcomes. (T2, post-interview 1)

Even if during class, there was no time for students to create their own stories and then react to them, but instead only reacted to stories that the teacher had created, Teacher 2 was really satisfied by students' exhibiting empathy and achieving both the game goal (being able to infer others' emotions accurately) and strengthening emotional skills of empathy. Teacher 2 uses the game in a manner not only to reinforce language skills (e.g., strengthen vocabulary or fluency) but also to foster socio-emotional skills and involve students in meaningful discussions in the target language.

As was mentioned in Section 3.2, aligning the designed game with current curriculum goals or other desired (language) skills was the intention of both the participant teachers and myself. Exploiting game-informed language teaching without having a meaningful and purposeful scope would be a superficial approach. Embedding learning objectives is therefore crucial in the design process and could allow teachers to consider the impact of their designed activity. Given that summative assessment is harder to achieve through games, especially communicative ones, having clear goals from the beginning could foster a better understanding of whether the game "worked" or not.

4.5.3 Teacher Activity in Game-Informed Class Shaped by Teachers' Style and Values

Figure 4.5

Implementing Games Based on Teaching Style

Pride and Care for students

Frustration or disappointment for disruptions

Games as practicing L2

Games as exploration

Games as assessing

Games as connecting

Maximum use of L2

Inductive teaching style

Traditional teaching (with leeway)
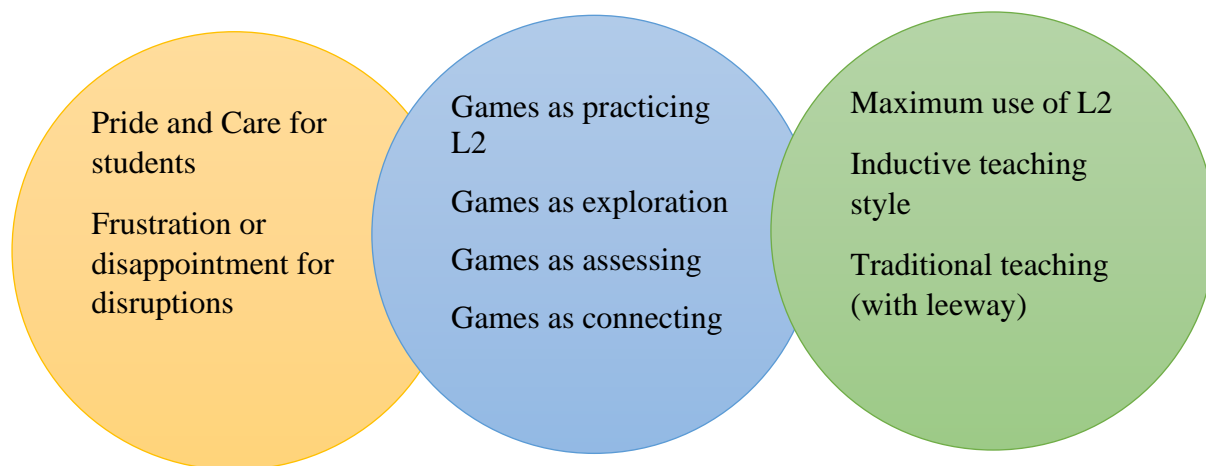
When teachers applied game-based or gamified activities in their classroom, they maintained their usual teaching styles and values and interpreted game-informed language teaching via their own lenses (as they were encouraged to do so). By teaching style, here, I refer to the way teaching is delivered, the expectations teachers have from students, and the implicit objectives set for each designed lesson. Teaching style does not refer to following a specific teaching methodology, as teachers follow their own approach being influenced by multiple pedagogical approaches, ranging from but not limited to grammar-translation approaches and communicative language teaching. As far as values are concerned, these would refer to social values, e.g., working to foster a positive class communication experience, but also personal and political values, when the latter were raised in the context of the class. Below teachers' style and pedagogical vales are mentioned from the 5 teachers for which we had 3 or more interviews with as this gives us a clearer picture to make inferences in regard to teachers' pedagogical activity, emotions, and cognition in and out of game-informed activities.

For example, Teacher 4 follows a rather inductive teaching style (mess is expected and wanted, as she frequently expressed). She is teaching young students and chooses to use only English in her class; therefore, it becomes a necessity to demonstrate tasks, offer examples, and repeat procedures by showing rather than telling. This style which is observed when delivering non-game tasks is also preserved even while the students play a game in class. Rules are explained in an inductive manner so as not to overwhelm students. I would often notice in class Teacher 4 being persistent in not switching to the mother tongue, even if students were confused or unsure of what they had to do. Teacher 4 would resort to miming or expressing herself in a different way, even when it would be easier to codeswitch.

Teacher 5 is persistent in students using the English language throughout the lesson as much as possible; even when students interact with her in Greek, she always responds in English. This expectation is harder to meet with certain students, but it is very well established in class so that some peers insist for their classmates to speak in English, following the teacher's paradigm, especially during the game. When this expectation is not met, the teacher would intervene, pause the game and reiterate her expectation to the students to use the target language. In post-interviews, the teacher reported feelings of frustration and disappointment when this was expectation was not satisfied.

Both Teacher 7 and Teacher 8, who work at the same school, adopt a more structured and traditional teaching style. Set procedures are always part of class and depending on the skills addressed in each lesson, a usual routine is followed. For instance, for reading tasks, students will always read the texts paragraph by paragraph taking turns, and unknown vocabulary will be explained in Greek. Students are then expected to take notes; and they follow suit easily as this is a well-established expectation in class. When it comes to playing games, a strict abidance to taking turns is also adopted and the game-informed task themselves have very clear and set goals for students to meet. Students seem to follow suit,

but the context of the game makes them even more participative and would often offer help to their peers when playing in teams. Teacher 7 and Teacher 8 would allow for such help-interventions and would even establish rules as to who can assist someone during the game and how, having seen students' positive reactions to helping others. Teacher 8 particularly enjoys the design process while Teacher 7 is primarily focused on how pedagogical value can each game have.

The main teaching style that is discerned in Teacher 9's lessons is that they are very clear in the expectations they have from students and follow a traditional teaching style but would allow for discussions to take place in class unplanned, as long as they were deep and meaningful. For all the game tasks that were designed for her classes, students had to do some preparation prior to the lesson. For instance, in the first game that was designed for Teacher 9's class, students had to prepare their own stories beforehand, and students already knew what was expected of them. During class, the teacher was very clear and expected from students to listen carefully to their classmates' stories, as she did as well. The teacher also participated in the game and offered her own story, after all students had shared their own stories. At certain points during the lesson, Teacher 9 frequently commented on students' opinions and ideas and asked students to elaborate further while showing genuine interest. It is difficult to discern whether the teacher's conversational manner during this class and rather invested manner is to be attributed to the game itself or to the content of the game and students' input. Speaking from a game-design perspective, the game as it was delivered in class was very game-mechanics light (e.g., absence of rewards/points, clear game goals, or deduction element etc). It was introduced in class mainly as a conversational activity where students would talk about how they would respond to emotionally charged situations. The teacher seemed passionate and genuinely curious in learning how her students think and was not reluctant at all to share their own personal values and world views when the students'

stories allowed for such. See for example the extract below; during the game one student has provided a scenario where she hypothetically trips and falls in the schoolyard in front of a lot of students. A peer was expected to respond to this scenario and mention how they would feel. The female peer responded and explained why they would feel embarrassed. Then, Teacher 9 asks whether anybody else from class would have anything to add as a reaction to the story. A dialogue follows between Teacher 9 and a male student:

> Student A: I wouldn't truly care about it because I would have fallen in the middle of the yard.
>
> Teacher 9: So, you wouldn't feel embarrassed at all?
>
> Student A: Yes, who cares? Because everyone is talking to their friends so who cares if someone fell?
>
> Teacher 9: So, would you guys all agree that girls at this age are more self-conscious than boys? Would you say that that's true?
>
> Student A: Yes, we don't care.
>
> Teacher 9: Why do you think that may be the case?
>
> (T9, classroom observation 1)

This dialogue is an example of how the teacher "diverges" from the game-informed task, which would only involve students sharing awkward hypothetical situations in class and one of the peers inferring the potential emotional reaction of the student and escalated this to a whole-class discussion. Teacher 9 who seems to be interested in how students think and would prolong discussions that would go outside the scope of the game but are meaningful and valuable to the teacher. Personal values, thus, seem to impact the progression of the task but this "diversion" is not incongruent with the teaching goals and goals of the game (i.e., meaningful and fluent communication); on the contrary, it is accommodating both teaching goals and personal values.

Overall, what we see from the above descriptions of teachers' teaching style, is that the way they handle a game in class is in perfect harmony with what they normally do. They

would tackle a game in class in a similar way to other tasks and would have the same standards and expectations from it.

4.5.4 Classroom and Individual Dynamics Affect Teachers' Lived Experience

Figure 4.6

Individual and Classroom Dynamics
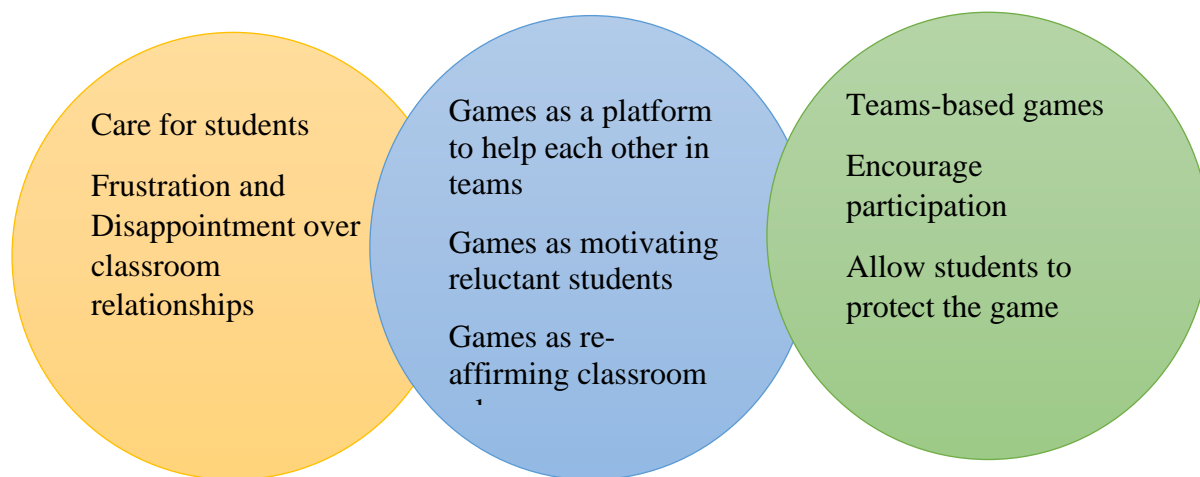
Another notable theme that was found across all data is the classroom dynamics and how they shape teachers' expectations or worries about the implementation of the designed game-informed lesson, its actual delivery, but also their emotions afterwards. With classroom dynamics, I refer to peer relationships, personal characteristics of students, and peer-teacher relationships.

4.5.4.1 Helping each other

Teachers seemed to be particularly satisfied when students helped each other and were in a cooperative mode. Teacher 4 reflects after delivering the "How do I get there?" game:

> It was good for me that they communicated well and they helped each other. Because you know if you get the **points** you get, you win. **I don't really think they cared about that**. (T4, post-interview 1)

Not only did the game facilitated cooperation amongst students as they had to lead their peer to a specific place using directions, but students seem to have forgotten about who will get the most points. Contrary to what was discussed earlier, in Section 4.4.3, even young students might not be oriented towards accumulating points if the game itself fosters cooperation and encourages completion of a communicative goal.

An interesting incident happened in Teacher 7's third game-informed class, where students tried to help their peers that were in the same or opposite team. Even though not previously established in the game rules, the teacher allowed students in the same team to help each other out and the teacher reflects that this worked very well for the ones that were not too competitive. However, she contemplates that next time she should think further about how she divides teams:

> I had on the same team two very competitive students and a very weak one and I think that this was not a good combination. Maybe next time **I should at least separate the two very competitive ones**. I thought they may not have allowed a lot of room for thinking to the weaker one or put too much pressure on them to get it right. […] Maybe someone wanted a different kind of arrangement because they didn't like their team [..] I thought, maybe they want their friends, which I didn't want again; **I didn't want groups of friends together and the rest strangers**. (T7, post-interview 3)

This extract illustrates how teachers think about peer relationships and try to build a positive classroom atmosphere for the whole class, without side-lining the shiest students or encouraging the formation of "cliques". Keeping that in mind, Teacher 7 decided not to allocate "friends" in the same team. As she reflected later, however, the way she formed the teams had an imbalanced dynamic which may have influenced the weak student negatively as his peers put disproportionate pressure on him. This reflection made the teacher reconsider for future lessons the allocation of teams and allow for "friends" to be grouped together.

4.5.4.2 Talkative vs Non-Talkative Students

In her first game-informed lesson, Teacher 9 reflects how she felt a bit frustrated with a couple of students who are more reluctant to talk by nature. She mentioned during the interview:

> I wish that there could have been a freer discussion between them, especially the second part, but some students just don't. So, I have to intervene and that was a little bit frustrating. (T9, pre-interview 1)

The game itself allowed free communication, but some students being more reserved by nature were less willing to respond to peers' stories. However, given that the majority of the class was very communicative, the fact that few students were more hesitant did not seem to have a detrimental impact on teacher's enjoyment of the lesson (see Section 3.2.1), albeit momentarily. Teacher 2, who used a similar version of the game to Teacher 9, reflects on how the character of the class as a whole influences a positive classroom experience:

> And this is a really easy class to trial things with. Because they are very enthusiastic and they are very fluent and **willing to you know put themselves out there** […] so, I do tend to try, whatever crazy idea I have with them. And then they don't want to do anything at all- just games. (T2, pre-interview 3)

Earlier in the interview, Teacher 2 had commented that two of the students are quite passive and do not turn their camera on during online class and are reluctant to talk, by character. She attributed this to their "teenage stage" and she mentioned that she had found it hard at the beginning of the year to connect with them, "so it's even harder now online". The teacher seemed to think about the potential disengagement of these two students, given the character of the game which would require students personal or emotional responses to awkward situations but overall, she was hopeful as "they're a nice group […] they're very cooperative".

Both Teacher 2 and Teacher 9 seem to enjoy deep and freer conversation with students; both their age, and level of language allows teachers and students to connect to one another on a deeper level and via a foreign language, which builds on teachers' emotions of pride for their students' accomplishment, but also enjoyment since relationships are developed further through the sharing of personal stories. Both teachers seem to be aware of the "reluctant" students in their classes and they wish to provide a positive classroom experience for them as well. Teacher 9 acknowledges this internal struggle "I felt the constant need to draw in a couple of the students so they wouldn't feel left out because just by nature" (T9, post-interview 1).

Given the unique character of language classes, that prioritise language communication, how students communicate with each other and participate in class is a factor that influences the lived experience of teachers and their emotions.

4.5.4.3 Disagreeable and Disruptive Students

Teacher 8 tried to do her first game-informed lesson with a rather "disagreeable group of kids" and had a rather disappointing experience, leading to not being able to play the game in that lesson. She mentions characteristically:

> So next, oh, I'm gonna choose communicative kids who might want to actually work on our English and play at the same time. Because imagine if they [the disagreeable group of kids] really don't learn why would they care about the game? But I tried to think positively and maybe say, oh, maybe with the game…they're going to be excited but okay, I had to try. (T8, post-interview 1)

Despite the teacher thinking positively, she still met students' resistance which was mainly caused by one student as she reports: "So I don't know. I think basically that whole refusal of that kid that brought everything towards the side" (T8, post-interview 1). Contrary to reluctant students, who do not seem to blemish the classroom experience, disruptive

students, even if it is one student only causing the disruption, can have a definitive impact on the classroom experience.

As Teacher 2 mentioned earlier for her own group of students being cooperative enough, allowed her both during the pre- and post-interviews to show an exciting attitude which could be attributed to this class's dynamics. Both students' enthusiasm and fluency in communicating in the target language makes the game much more facilitative and meaningful at the same time.

Teacher 7 had also mentioned how some lightly disruptive student behaviour impacted the fourth and last game-informed class. Teacher 7 had initially mentioned emotions of frustration and disappointment which she attributed to time management, and game mechanics which she had not elaborated enough during design and students had questions about them. However, when asked what did not go as planned, Teacher 7 mentions a classroom management issue, where a student was acting rather silly from the beginning of class. The language that the teacher uses "there was lack of concentration; it got crazy, it was a crazy Thursday" denote that the teacher was not feeling particularly happy in how students handled themselves in class; her tone when describing this event though is rather jubilant and does not directly attribute her frustration to students' silly behaviour. However, once again she contemplated "That was happening, which I could not foresee or prevent at that point" (see Section 3.2.2.1). Once again, the teacher does not attribute their frustration to students' disruptive behaviour but to her own inability to take control of the situation as successfully as she would like to.

Disruptive classroom incidents are part of everyday class, but they seem to cause worry or slight frustration to teachers. "Disruptive" behaviour as part of the game though was positively seen by other teachers, e.g., Teacher 4 who is very fond of "the positive mess"

taking place in class, and Teacher 2 also mentions for when playing the Spyfall game in class:

> I really like when we get in you know this fight that we have "it's not me it's him". I do enjoy that. You know they are (the students) trying to put the blame on someone else though they are they spy and they're trying to accuse the others […] I like that a lot like that a lot. Yeah- **the entire atmosphere**. (T2, post-interview 4)

As the schoolyear goes by, teachers and students bond further and form stronger relationships and become more associated with each other's ways; it is times that disruption is seen as positive engagement, while at others it might be inhibitory. The games themselves tended to do the former.

4.5.4.4 Playing referee

Teacher 5 mentions in her third game-informed lesson that her positive classroom experience was shadowed by a student who refused to speak in English:

> Student A is one of the boys who refuses to speak English, as you observed. And despite me telling him numerous times to use English and his classmates asking him to do the same, he just refuses to do so. I think that this contributed to creating a negative climate in the game. (T5, post-interview 3)

During this class, the teacher once paused the game to reprimand the student on his not using English at all and twice reminded him to use the second language. The other students sided with the teacher probably by realising teachers' expectations, which was repeated enough times "we play this game in English". Students also "played" teachers themselves and reprimand their peer as well when they were not meeting the expectation that the whole other class was conforming to.

There were other similar classroom incidents where students felt the need to take control and play the referee in order to "protect" the game. After students have been acquainted well with the game and recognised teachers' implicit or explicit expectations of

game etiquette, they would often protect the game by warning their peers. An illustrative instance comes from Teacher 4's reflection on a classroom incident during the "How do I get there?" game, when one student was trying to cheat by uncovering the location cards that were put face down around the classroom. Consider the below:

> at one point when Student A was looking at the cards and I felt you know they're thinking: "ah what is she doing? aren't there rules for that?" so there was a second that I thought: "oh should I tell her to stop that because that's a game". But no, they are b junior, 8 years old […] So, then I thought: **it's their game so I can let them be, let them have fun, let them protect the game** […] I also remember somebody, maybe Student B, said "hey don't look at the cards" (T4, post-interview 1).

Teacher 4 seems to be conflicted: should she intervene because she has caught a student cheating to ensure fairness and establish her power or let the students be because "it's just a game" and thus diminish the power of the game? It seems at first that Teacher 4 is willing to allow cheating since there were no clear rules for game etiquette in the game; though, during class she had discouraged students from turning the cards over, and therefore implicitly had set such a rule. Teacher 4 then proceeds and thinks "it's *their* game" projecting a different attitude which allows for student autonomy. When asked about what she would do if students had not intervened, she mentioned:

> I think I wouldn't do anything. Only when the students came and told me "come on what is she doing looking at the cards?" so this would mean they couldn't control […] only then I think, I could say […] "Please stop", This is a game; I'm laughing now yeah because I saw that the work was happening with the language and communication so that's it; it's a game. (T4, post-interview 1)

This incident demonstrates that the teacher will impose her power when she sees that students do not feel safe, happy or they complain about their peers' actions. Since the learning goals are being met, the teacher decides to cease control and allow students to assume power, as long as this is done with appropriacy, i.e., by respecting each other.

Overall, the established relationships amongst students is a factor that teachers take into consideration when designing a game, e.g. by pondering on how teams should be divided, or how to ensure that students have a positive game-informed lesson. How disruptive students are in class seems to cause frustration to teachers, not primarily because of the "rebelling" attitude towards the teacher, but because this will not allow the rest of the class a safe and positive experience. The next theme also extends on and further discusses the idea of teachers' struggling to ensure a safe but also fair environment by focusing not on the interrelationships of the class but on practical decisions teachers have to take during the game design phase.

4.5.5 It's all about Keeping Students Safe, Challenged and Happy

Figure 4.7

Safe, Challenged, and Happy Students

Pride for students' learning

Disappointment over disengagement

Anxiety over doing it right

Games as challenge

Games as fun

Games as positive and safe experiences

Scaffold difficulty and rewards

Thinking carefully on how to create teams

Cultivating fun
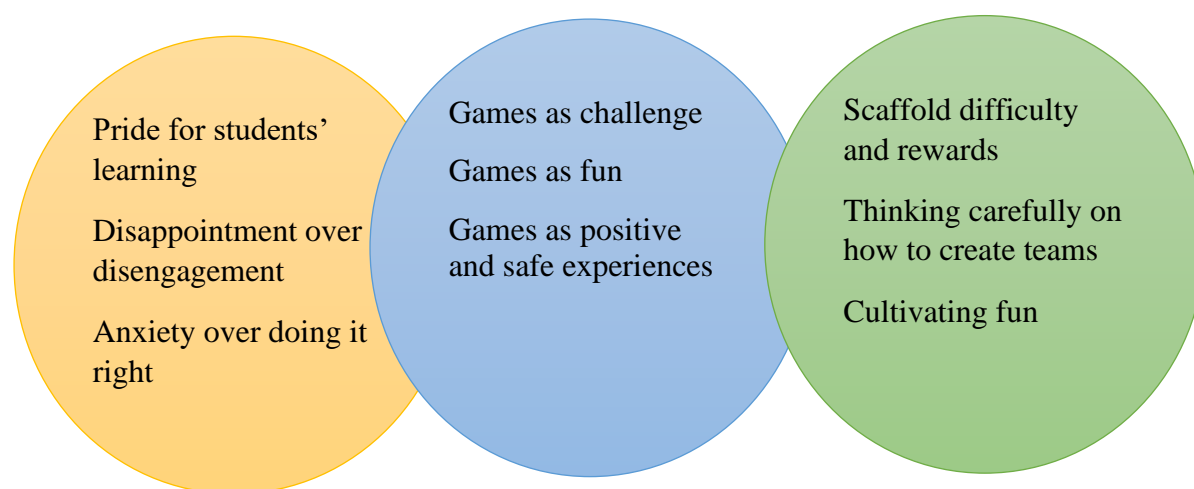
A common concern amongst teachers was not to integrate a game in the classroom for the sake of it, that is for the sake of making students happy and enable them to act playfully. Most of the teachers had very clear goals for embedding a game in their class and/or they adjusted the content of the game by incorporating the learning objectives they had set for students (Section 4.5.2). When thinking about game design, teachers would often ponder on

the game tasks, whether they are making them too difficult for students. Characteristically, Teacher 1 mentions in her second interview:

> So to tell you the truth I created the game in the morning and as I was teaching passive voice today, I was thinking that **"oh my God, I made a very, very difficult game for these kids"** that's why I told you at the beginning that I may need to help them a little bit because it was the first time that they saw passive voice. (T1, post-interview 2)

Teacher 1 worries that she may not have appropriately scaffolded the game, given that she has developed a game that would help students practice a concept they would only have encountered in this same class; allowing them little time to digest this new information. During my design interviews with teachers, they would often comment that they would like students to first digest newly established information and then practice and assess this knowledge through a game.

Teachers would also express were also prompted to discuss their own assumptions of how certain students would react or respond to game-informed activities. Teacher 5's response to my question as to what could potentially go wrong in her first game-informed lesson with her junior class (but the third game-informed lesson overall) is illustrative of this point:

> They could get upset easily; they don't handle their emotions as well as older more mature kids so they could get upset if they lose […]. So, part of this insight is to make sure that they understand all the rules and they don't make a fuss at the end; because some of the cards do say that you can move a player, you can put him back, and this will upset them […] **It needs management on my part** of otherwise everybody will be talking at the same time, so I need to reinforce turn taking and I have to keep an eye on whether or not they become upset by **keeping it playful- environmentally speaking** […] I want to make clear what happens with the points **so that they don't feel that it's unfair to them**. I'm trying to make them avoid complaining. (T5, pre-interview 3)

Teacher 5 is wary of potential emotional reactions of students and describes her beliefs of how younger and more mature students would react to points and rewards of the

game. On a side note, during classroom observations with junior classes and intermediate classes of Teacher 5, students were equally passionate about winning and were always invested in the game regardless of their age. However, I acknowledge Teacher 5's point of younger students being more justice-oriented rather than older students, where students from the junior class were not afraid to play referee when the rules of the game were not followed by their peers (see Section 4.5.4). Teacher 5, being aware of her classroom's dynamics, truly wants to avoid having students feeling disappointed or angry, and therefore as a solution she reminds herself to establish strong rules so that a positive classroom environment is maintained.

Teacher 3 is also mindful of students' potential disappointment. During the class, where her second game-informed task was played (Tic-Tac-Toe), one student gave an incorrect response (i.e., the student had not used the Comparative form correctly to describe two animals featured in the game). Each correct response would be rewarded by placing an X or an O corresponding to one of the compared animals. Teacher 3 explains that she will not put the X on the board as the student had given an incorrect response. When addressing the student, the teacher's tone is very caring and calls the student with a pet name, accompanied with "my", which again shows a caring tone from teacher's part in an effort not to discourage the student over one mistake.

While designing for or reflecting on their delivered classes, teachers frequently mentioned strategies that they used (either planned or done in an impromptu manner) in order to ensure a safe and positive climate for students while involved in gameplay.

Teacher 4 mentioned this almost explicitly for the first game that she designed: "and if they want to have a look at it [poster with useful vocabulary for the game], they can look at it and feel safe, you know" (pre-interview 1). Students were asked to tackle multiple tasks during gameplay, and one of them involved recalling key vocabulary for giving directions,

e.g., "go on straight, turn left/right". The teacher had covered this poster in class when assessing students' knowledge of the words prior to the game, but uncovered it during the game, so that students have a point of reference in case they got stuck as they had other tasks to tackle as well.

When pondering on the rewards system, teachers wanted to differentiate points to be fair and reward students who managed to tackle the challenge. For instance, both Teacher 1 and Teacher 7 that used the Bamboozle platform to create their games would assign higher points to questions that would involve sentence structure and fewer points to questions that would involve one-word answers.

Teacher 2 also tried to mediate game mechanics to ensure that students will not feel isolated. In the second instance, Teacher 2 would play a deductive game where students would have to make logical inferences and deduce who of their peers was the "thief" and responsible for the heist. Teacher 2 reflects "yeah maybe I can add like the thief and one accomplice […] yeah so that they don't feel singled out for whatever reason. yeah." Oh! The teacher made me thief Oh.". Teacher 2 tried not to "stigmatise" particular students by adding more roles with negative connotations, in this case the "accomplice". It is interesting in this case that the teacher predicts and role plays students' potential reactions and directs her practice towards alleviating potential negative reactions for students that would make them feel "stigmatised" or "isolated".

Teacher 10 had also very strong predictions of how students might react to the game he plans to introduce in class. Consider this quote:

> I know that some of them will be intimidated by the reading and the game requires this is what I think might go wrong […] Okay, they might start to feel a bit disappointed or anxious. […] And they might start saying that they're confused, I know that, **but I will be there to encourage them** so hopefully this will be okay […] what I think will go right is that this is a board game murder mystery that almost everybody loves so they'll get into it. (T10, pre-interview 1)

Teacher 10 is certain about students feeling apprehensive or discouraged during this game, as he already knows that the game is heavy language and gameplay-wise. As a strategy to counter the expected students' apprehension, he chooses not to modify this vernacular game, but rather offer emotional support and encouragement to students when needed.

Teachers also knew when students needed additional help in class and decided to "break the rules" of the game in order to help them progress and support the ones that were left behind. For instance, Teacher 6 admits giving extra hints to students for encouragement and to help them solve the mystery faster: "of course I do; that's the point. That's why I gave them extra hint to both teams. I told them "You were both very close, that's why you get one more"". (T6, post-interview 2). Teacher 6 realised that students struggled in uncovering the suspects for the murder mystery story and so decided to provide them with additional hints, even though this was not planned earlier. Deviating from the rules was a necessary decision by the teacher since students were very close to the solution, and Teacher 6 was also very mindful of the time elapsing.

Creating a positive climate in the classroom is key for the experiences of both the teacher and the students, given the reciprocity of emotions however momentary they might be. As soon as a teacher noticed hesitancy or disappointment from students, she would provide an incentive to keep students on task and motivated. Assigning points to shift imbalanced dynamics seems to be a quick and efficient way to address a dispirited group of students.

When asked about students' perceived emotions during class, Teacher 8 mentions:

I think they enjoyed it; I mean it seemed like it, and I think it was a nice break from lesson in. A different way to check our homework and as a as a teacher and **I don't think they had studied but they liked it anyway**. I think it's good. (T8, post-interview 2)

Despite students not having studied or performed well in the game, Teacher 8 still recognizes the positive aspects of including a game in class and to her bringing something new in class is positive given that she received positive feedback from students. Overall, teachers are not solely oriented to producing tasks that would definitely have an impact on students' learning or achievements. Creating a positive atmosphere and having happy students by bringing new in class can revitalize standardized classroom routines such as checking homework or assessment is equally important to having successful learners.

Teacher 4 highlights further the importance of having happy students and the impact this may have on successful learners. She mentions:

> I did give them five minutes to draw after an activity, because I wanted them to be happy, and I could see that they weren't happy they just wanted to draw "Please just give us some time to draw". **And of course, I mean you want happy students, because they won't learn anything.** So just trying to you know, to at least have some conversation or ask questions about what they draw or maybe sometimes of course me saying things and they draw things but, again, this is not something they do on their own. It depends; I'm trying to do my best I'm trying to do whatever I can. (T4, post-interview 3)

I have chosen to include this lengthy quote here for two reasons. First, it illustrates the dilemma of the teacher allowing an activity, drawing, which does not entail language use or production by students and keeping students happy or not including drawing at all. Teacher 4 tries to find the golden ratio and would ask students to talk about their drawings, so that the activity is linguistically exploited as well. Secondly, this quote is crucial and follows Teacher 8's comment on the importance of students being happy in an activity. Unless students are positively engaged emotionally, "they won't learn anything". This seems a strong belief which other teachers have highlighted also implicitly, though, when reflecting on the importance of students being happy. Teacher 9 also tends to agree with this belief and states:

> I had to think about the fact that there are so many cool ways to learn **and I am convinced that that children need to play to learn**. So, putting the two together, especially in English language learning is awesome; that thought is exciting. If it were

to be done by teachers, especially for younger students. I mean, I know that it's also good for older students, **but the pressure of the certificate stuff is just too much for me to be able to handle**. (T9, pre-interview 1)

Having implemented three game-informed lessons with her classes, Teacher 9 admitted in her last interview that she is not happy for following conventional teaching the previous years: "I have results, but I'd be happier with experiential learning" (T9, post-interview 4).

For the Greek context, getting a B2 level Certificate or higher in the English language is considered a top accomplishment and hence the popularity of private foreign language education (Kostoulas & Stelma, 2017). Both students and parents are happy when they see *results*, i.e., their children have acquired a certificate in the foreign language, and this is considered a success. Unavoidably, teachers strive to meet those expectations and extra pressure and stress is put on teachers as a school's success as well would depend on students' accomplishments. Given that international examinations for the foreign language are structured and demanding, teachers originally may see that the only possible solution to their students' academic development is to follow the examination requirements. Thus, they adopt a structured, formal, and conventional approach to teaching, while communicative and creative pedagogies are seen as delays the much-needed intensive learning experience (Kostoulas & Stelma, 2017). However, and quite paradoxically, what teachers value is communication, meaningful interactions, and keeping their students happy in their journey.

4.5.6 Points and Rewards: do we Need them?

Figure 4.8

On Rewards
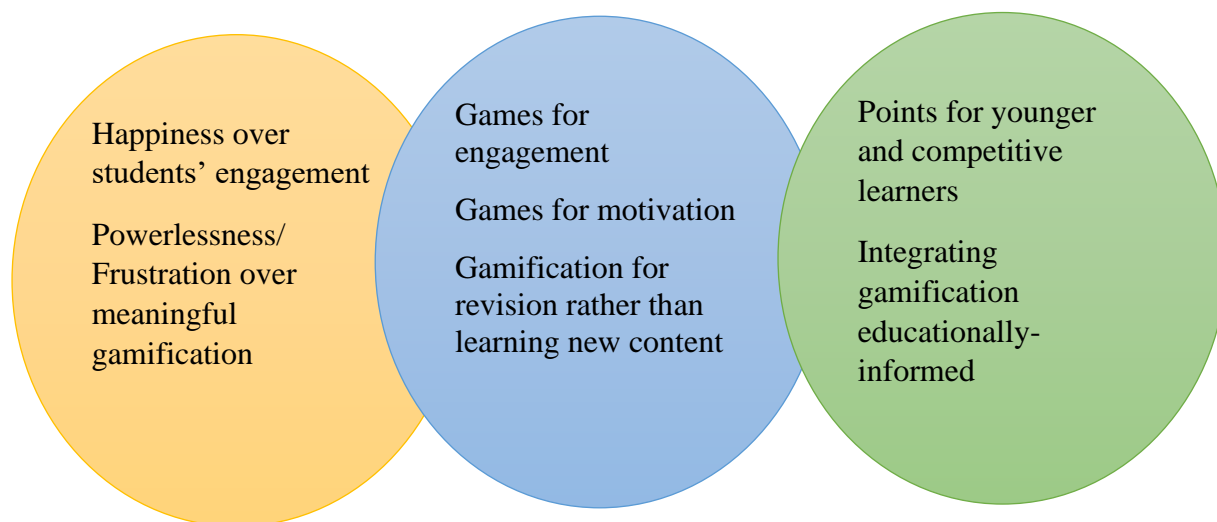
During the design interviews, teachers frequently reflected on the pedagogical use of points for their designed games and their impact on student engagement. For instance, Teacher 1, who used the Bamboozle game platform to create a game on practicing the passive voice of present and past simple tenses commented during the post-lesson interview: "I think the incentive of getting points and winning make them more careful in their answers" (pre-interview 2). She also commented that the fact that a student with learning difficulties answered correctly all the questions in the game "gave her a boost". It seems that gamification can have a significant impact on student motivation or encouragement in the learning process as this teacher reports.

During the same interview, when Teacher 1 was asked about creating a grammar game through which students would *learn* a new grammar concept rather than *practice* it, she reflected:

> I would probably need some help there to create, to use a game to teach a new grammar rule. Otherwise, for revision or, for digesting new rules, I think gaming is the perfect probably choice. Okay, **it is like an exercise**. But the fact that there are points and **there is a winner at the end makes them more engaged**, this is what I think. (T1, post-interview 2).

The admittance that the game is "like an exercise" is a rather bold and brave one, as the teacher implicitly recognises the boundaries of gamification, which is usually used to assess or practice already established concepts rather than acquire new knowledge. The teacher also comments on the complexity of designing games to teach rather than practice concepts and the need for assistance to try the first "I would probably need some help there". Indeed, designing games through which one can learn a language and not only assess its acquisition is a hard venture and that might be why gamification proliferates in foreign language classrooms: it is fast, fanciful, and fun.

Teacher 1 does value the engagement that gamification brings to students. In online environments, it is inherently harder for teachers to motivate students through body language or provide praise individually. Gamification in that respect through the fanciful sound effects and automated feedback (rewards through aggregating points) can cover for that aspect to some extent.

Teacher 4 works with young students and is convinced that collecting points and winning is crucial to them and as she mentioned in our first design interview when thinking whether to include points in the game she commented: "Yes, why not; you know they get excited about points at this age". Teacher 4's reflection on her own practice of using Tic-Tac-Toe as a gamified activity as part of the third game-informed lesson plan is also evidence to this previous point:

> I do this [using Tic-Tac-Toe] for pronunciation purposes of vocabulary because there's no interaction, so **I find this a very easy and playful way to check these things** where you don't really need that emphasis on interaction. I also use it for evaluation purposes for assessment with other classes. (T4, post-interview 3)

Through the reports of both teachers, the use of gamification as an implicit assessment practice became evident and they seem to view it rather positively, since it is playful and

engaging for students, while it allows the teacher to get vivid insight into students' progress or current understanding of the taught material.

At the same time, the limitations of gamification and the use of rewards are also acknowledged by Teacher 4. Students had mentioned in the questionnaire that they completed during the third game-informed class that they were surprised by the game and this was in turn surprising to the teacher to hear since she had used this game in class before with the same students. Teacher 4 assumes that students' surprise might be because "this was a long time ago, so long. So long ago that they don't really remember it; maybe.". This can suggest the temporary character of gamification as it is based on a rather behaviourist pedagogy and operant conditioning. Creating memorable experiences would require multiple and frequent instances of using the same teaching strategy in class but as Teacher 4 suggested, the limited "replayability" of gamification as it may cause the opposite reaction from students, that is disengagement rather than engagement: "Usually, when we play a game, when we have a second turn let's say or a third turn, they get very bored very easily". However, during this specific instance in class where Tic-Tac-Toe was used students wanted to play a third round and Teacher 4 assumes "that maybe this was because it was fast and because it was a tie? they didn't really get tired I don't know." (T4, post-interview 3). It might have been that the result of the tie motivated students to have a third round so that there is one winner; establishing a winner is a crucial aspect of students as observed during the observation of this lesson and also the teacher reminisces students' reactions from class: "Student A said "the point! we get the point!". And hence the teacher is convinced on the motivational power of "points".

On the contrary, Teacher 7, as seen in Section 4.3.3, is concerned on whether gamified activities are educational enough, apart from fun, and this had caused her feelings of powerlessness or frustration due to not knowing if the games are well and meaningfully

incorporated in her lessons, outside the fix students get on getting rewarded on their knowledge. Teacher 2, who works with late-elementary students, reflected on students' reactions and perceptions towards collecting points in the first instance of using a game in class, where the ultimate winner of the game was judged by the accumulation of points. The following extract during my first post-interview with this teacher is indicative of this:

> Interviewer: I also noticed one student mentioned "I'm not playing to get points. I'm playing because..."
>
> Teacher 2: just for fun. oh yeah.
>
> Interviewer: So, what do you think about that is this the case for students in general or?
>
> Teacher 2: Not all students for sure. For example, if I were a student, I would definitely be looking at the points. But even the students, you know who had zero or one point, it didn't seem to bother them so much because you know they just had a laugh, and they didn't mind the end so yeah, they kind of didn't care about the outcomes to be to be fair.
>
> (T2, post-interview 1)

How points are perceived by students can be multi-factored: a) younger students may find it more appealing, given the competitive spirit points foster, b) individual and personality characteristics could be also a reason for chasing points or not, c) but ultimately, how points are perceived might be attributed to the game itself and whether the points are the only game element in the task or acts as complementary to the learning and gaming experience. For instance, during Teacher 2's first game-informed class, students were presented with stories, and they would have to imagine and infer from their peers' reactions to said stories; upon guessing correctly they would acquire points. This deduction mechanic of the game engaged students in socio-emotional exchanges, and they seemed to be more interested in how others would react rather than whether they would get a point for their accurate guess. Similar observations were found also in Teacher 9's class, who also employed the same game in class (but in this case stories were created by the students). All participants in this class (T9,

classroom observation 1) were involved in long discussions; game elements such as points were completely ignored, due to the heavy investment of both the teacher and the student in sharing stories and commenting on potential reactions (see also Section 4.5.3).

Summary

This chapter has presented the main findings as drawn from interviews with teachers and corresponding classroom observations. The abundance of emotions in the classroom is noticeable, as well is their unpredictable nature, especially after the lessons were delivered, since a lot of different parameters shape the emotional experiences of teachers. To the core of it all, classroom dynamics and teachers' effort to provide a positive yet educational experience to students is what drove both their practice but also their emotional experiences. Pedagogical affordances were also discussed here, especially in terms of balancing the similarly two "opposites": the lesson, and the game. Establishing positive peer-to-peer and student-teacher relationships was another major factor that drove teachers' decisions. The next chapter further discusses the findings above through relevant literature, elaborates on implications for practice, drawing from lessons learned from participants, and analyses game-informed language teaching through the lens of Positive Psychology.

5. CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter will discuss the findings of this research by addressing the research questions of this study and juxtaposing them with relevant literature. The second section will discuss findings more holistically through the PERMA model, as this permeates all the research questions and interprets the design and use of game-informed pedagogy through a positive psychology perspective. Finally, implications for research, teacher education, and practice will be elaborated upon.

5.1 Revisiting Research Questions

RQ1: What are Teachers' Attitudes towards Game-Based Teaching?

This section discusses findings in light of relevant literature that sometimes goes beyond games as the technology (knowledge) necessary is also essential to the implementation and design of game-informed approaches. Language teacher attitudes have been investigated in specific teaching activities or innovation, e.g., regarding technology integration (Lawrence, 2018), storytelling (e.g., Bumgarner, 2012) and games (e.g., An & Cao, 2017). Research on language teacher attitudes around the use of (game) technologies shows that teachers recognise the positive potential of games to students' learning (Mifsud, Vella, & Camilleri, 2013) and student enjoyment (Sobhani & Bagheri, 2014). In particular, a plethora of studies on pre-service teachers indicate a positive inclination towards digital game-based teaching pedagogies even when the educational context is void of such approaches or the teachers do not engage in play themselves (e.g., the case of Germany, as reported by Blume, 2019). Similarly, in the context of Greece student teachers of general education, who rarely engaged in gameplay, valued the learning potential of games that they play, e.g., world exploration or role playing (Voulgari & Lavidas, 2020). In this current study, teachers such as Teachers 4, 5 and 10 were very inclined to use games that they had

played, and certain students would enjoy them but would also have educational benefits. In addition to that, teachers, who had not used certain gamified platforms, after exploring them once and applying them in their classrooms, they saw benefits in reapplying by adjusting them where needed. As York, deHaan and Hourdequin (2019) suggest, widening teachers' game literacy is crucial to applying game-informed or game-based practices. Further, Reinhardt (2019) suggests that game usage in the classroom that would only serve "fun" is not a meaningful educational practice. This was a frequently echoed concern by this study's participants and more vehemently by Teacher 7.

Exploring new technologies to mediate game-informed teaching was also necessary for this study, given the emergency remote teaching during the school year of 2020-2021. Teachers unavoidably used technology to create their game tasks, but this was not always necessary, as certain designed activities were more communicative. For instance, Teacher 2 and Teacher 9 designed storytelling games that involved students in heavy language production but teachers' preparation for the game was minimal since the stories were (co-)created in class and by students. Hearing teachers' needs and new modes of teaching, I looked for new tools that could support game-informed language teaching. These were platforms like Bamboozle and Flippity, where teachers can organise their own games or gamified activities. I was surprised to see how easily teachers adopt such technologies, which could be mostly due to these platforms' ease of use. Azzaro and Agudo (2018) contend that technology of adoption highly depends on three pillars: Performance Expectancy (how useful a tool is believed to be), Effort Expectancy (clarity, flexibility, and user-friendliness of the tool), and Social Influence (the opinion of others in regard to this tool). This was also in line with teachers' practices around technology. There were few instances during two classes, in Teacher 7 and Teacher 9's classes, where technology would not cooperate and teachers would express frustration, similar to Mei-jung, (2014), but these emotions were temporary

and did not shadow significantly teachers' emotional experiences overall, nor did those failures hinder them from using those tools again. Quite the opposite, participants would become very enthusiastic of certain possibilities of the new technological tools that were introduced to them during this study. The successful application of those in class also reinforced their motivation to use them again. Vitanova et al. (2022, p. 63) follow a Portuguese language teacher on the development of her own identity when using a game specifically designed for second language learning as she "saw herself transition from a traditional position of authority to the decentralised position of a guide and a facilitator", while the game allowed to cultivate social awareness in class. It could be argued that till language teachers are exposed to a game or a technology that can facilitate it, it is then that they will be able to evaluate the game or tool itself and consider whether it is worth applying it in their classrooms and *how*.

In Beavis et al.'s (2014) exploration of teachers' beliefs about games, participants voiced their doubts about "whether games were best used to introduce concepts or reinforce concepts" (p.577). In this study, questionnaire data shows teachers more inclined to use games for revising vocabulary or grammar structures, rather than use a game to teach those concepts. Teachers' designed games for the present study were mostly done with a purpose to reinforce known structures and some teachers, e.g., Teacher 1, also noted their apprehension about when introducing a game too early in new knowledge dissemination, or even caused other teachers to not employ their designed game yet, as was the case with Teacher 3. As reported through questionnaire data and corroborated through classroom observations, teachers also assumed different pedagogical practices when employing game-informed activities. Hanghøj (2014) identifies four main pedagogical approaches to the integration of games in the classroom, during game-based teaching, which are also relevant here, i.e., explorative, drill and skill, pragmatic (simulation), and playful. Most teachers used gamified

activities through a drill and skill lens in order to help students revise concepts, e.g., a grammar structure, or thematic vocabulary on a specific topic. Other teachers used games in a playful manner and thus reinforced student self-expression through the game, for example storytelling games that were broadly connected thematically to the current teaching unit that was taught. The focus was more on the content of the game, what was discussed and the meaningful discussion that followed the game rather than the game mechanics, the points awarded. Teachers' audience was also a factor that had teachers consider what kind of play they would introduce in the classrooms; with younger students employing drill and skill approaches, it seemed fair as it served as a boost to student engagement and revision of the language; however, with more advanced students, teachers were more likely to take "risks" and allow students to express themselves, challenge them not only language-wise, but skills-wise too. The common misconception that is found in practice that games are only for young students (but also in the literature given that games have been primarily investigated for young learners), which was also a belief repeated in participants' interviews as well, was debunked in this study. Games also worked for more advanced and older learners; the difference lied in the types of play these two different audiences were engaged in.

In a big-scale study in Taiwan, Hsu et al. (2020) examined general education teachers' attitudes and usage towards games, following the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK, henceforth) framework, by specifying it to (computer) games, i.e. TPACK-G. Results showed that junior teachers (categorised by years of teaching experience) had more knowledge around games (GK) than senior teachers, however this did not determine their actual usage of games in the classrooms. Safer predictors were teachers' games pedagogical knowledge for senior teachers (GPK: how games can be adequately implemented in a pedagogically sound manner with appropriate teaching methods), and teachers' game pedagogical content knowledge (GPCK: knowing how games and pedagogy

can be appropriately integrated with the content to form sound lessons for the teaching of the subject matter) for junior teachers. In the current study, teachers with game knowledge as reported by them during interviews, e.g., Teacher 2 and Teacher 10, were more inclined to use the content of commercial games instrumentally in their design of games, by aligning them with their current (language) teaching goals. Teachers with little gameplay experience, e.g., Teacher 9, resorted to apply central game mechanics in a standalone manner (e.g., storytelling) without bringing game (world) into their activity design. Other teachers, e.g., Teacher 7, would apply gamification to revise concepts and reiterate this for any language skill or content and with an aim to reinforce student engagement and motivation. Hence, language teachers' own knowledge determined what aspects of games they would integrate into their activities: game elements as stand-alone practices, or game content as well. It is important to note here that one approach is not more "masterful" than the other, as each teacher decided what was important to them and what games can do to satisfy them, varying their practice from game-informed to game-enhanced approaches.

RQ2: How and Why do Teachers' Emotions Fluctuate throughout a School Year Regarding the Design and Application of Game-Informed Teaching?

Language teachers' emotions is like a rollercoaster when it comes to their everyday practice (Gkonou, Dewaele, & King, 2020). Embedding games in the language practice is no different for participants in this study. Their relationships, interactions, and daily classroom exchanges in the classroom with the students seem to be the primary factor affecting teachers' emotions.

The most prevalent emotion for teachers throughout this study, and across all research stages, was happiness. According to the literature, there are two main conceptualisations of happiness: the hedonic and the eudaimonic view. The first regards happiness as the experience of positive emotions and absence of negative ones, and is also tightly linked with subjective wellbeing, life satisfaction by focusing more on the outcomes (Delle Fave, 2020).

The eudaimonic view, though, sees happiness as a process and through a broader lens, considering not only the end result but the activity towards meeting the goal (Huta & Ryan, 2010). Biswas-Diener, Kashdan, and King (2009) caution researchers against distinguishing two different types of happiness where actually there are two main traditions in interpreting and researching what happiness is (Kashdan, Biswas-Diener, & King, 2008). The post-structuralist view of emotions adopted in this study, the research objectives themselves (focusing on deep and contextual interpretation rather than accurate identification of emotions), but also participants' responses in regard to their emotions, do not allow but to view emotions, happiness, and wellbeing holistically, contextually situated, and beyond a eudaimonic perspective. Undeniably, for teacher participants, happiness is *also* related to life/work satisfaction (which may point to a hedonic view of happiness), especially when considering post-lesson interview findings, where teachers reflected on whether what they *hoped* to achieve *was* achieved and this made them feel happy or satisfied. According to Bullough and Pinnegar (2009), eudaimonic happiness is closely related to meeting expectations. The findings here suggest that happiness is both achieving the goal (hedonistic), the process and efforts towards meeting this goal (eudaimonic) but also beyond that. What made teachers happy and satisfied in this research was not only embodied in their *own* engagement in creative practice and their *own* efforts towards being a good teacher; it was also contextual and contagious, almost vicarious. Relationships and interactions with students played a major role to teachers' emotions. As discussed in literature, relationships can be either a debilitating (e.g., Chang & Davis, 2009) or facilitative factor (e.g., Chen, 2016) to teachers' positive emotional experiences.

Relationships with students was one of the primary factors affecting teachers' emotions in this study; this is possibly due to the daily exchanges and interactions with students (Gkonou, 2021), which are more frequent than relationships with colleagues,

especially when it comes to the general education literature. Teachers often mentioned emotions of "care and love" which they not only attributed to their role as teachers, but mostly towards the fact that they care about their students and their students' *learning*, and thus their care about going the extra mile in order to meet their personal or instructional goals (Chang & Davis, 2009). Care is conceptualised here as a process and it is something that teachers *do* rather than feel. Teachers in this study seemed to care about three major things: a) being a "good" teacher, b) ensuring students feel safe, challenged, and happy, and c) students' learning. This was evident in teachers' reflections on whether they had used the game appropriately and questioned their practice in terms of whether the game was implemented in both a fun and educational way. Similarly to Gkonou and Miller (2017), who investigated teachers' emotion labor, the word "try" came up a lot in teachers' interviews who were less confident in their integration of games. It was said in a manner of questioning again oneself whether they implemented the game in the *right* way, caring to be a good teacher. In this study, the word "try" does not seem to reflect teacher emotion work but rather a reflection to a teacher's own performance to which they were very critical at times.

It is not only the self-actualisation achieved through meeting one's personal or teaching goals that can lead to happiness and satisfaction as participants voiced during their interviews; the path to happiness is also shaped, grown, and influenced by in-situ interactions with the others in the classroom. That is a primary reason why I incorporated the PERMA model for the discussion of the findings through a wellbeing and pursuit of happiness perspective, as this model is not limited to the "emotional state associated with full engagement or optimal performance in meaningful activity" (Averill & More (2004, p. 664) as cited in Bullough & Pinnegar (2009)) but also brings light to the others and how establishing (positive) relationships can contribute to wellbeing. Teaching is other-focused;

hence, it is needed to contextualise the emotions, unearth the triggers and motivations which are also being received by others.

Appraisal theory contends that emotions result from people's interpretations and explanations of their circumstances (Lazarus, 1991). It takes an environmental view of emotions: a stimulus causes the person to evaluate the stressor as positive, dangerous, or irrelevant; in case the stimulus is classified as dangerous, then secondary appraisal evaluates whether the person has (in)sufficient resources to cope with the stimulus. The appraisal theory of emotions is relevant to language teaching as at the primary appraisal stage, the teacher evaluates whether the stimulus is relevant and/or congruent to their (language) teaching goals. Chang and Davis (2009) contend that the higher the disruption a student behaviour can cause to their instructional or management goals, it is more likely to the teacher to experience unpleasant emotions. In the current study, rarely did teachers report emotions of anxiety, frustration, and disappointment (which would be classified as unpleasant according to appraisal theory), because of external stimuli or student behaviour. Anxiety, reported prior to the implementation of games during the first instances of game design, and disappointment, reported in some instances after implementation of games in classroom, were both attributed to teachers' own perceived performance and failures. It seems that teachers would skip the primary appraisal phase (which refers to how something external is relevant or congruent to their goals) and enter the secondary appraisal phase for which they would have assumed full accountability for things that did not go as expected or in other words were *incongruent* to their goals. Teachers, apart from one occasion of extreme disruptive behaviour from a student, would feel fully responsible for any teaching goal when that was (allegedly) not achieved, and therefore feel disappointed. Explorations of students' foreign language classroom enjoyment show that this construct of enjoyment is mostly attributed to teachers' and peers' variables and dynamics; whereas learner classroom anxiety was mostly attributed

inwardly (e.g., Dewaele & Dewaele, 2020); similarly, in this study, teacher enjoyment was highly related to others, whereas for anxiety the teachers were held accountable themselves. I find that appraisal theory may not be applicable in examining teachers' emotions when designing games for their classrooms, as there was little external stimulus apart from interacting with the researcher. Appraisal theory seems to be more suited for when examining concurrent or retrospective emotions.

During the actual class, and when teachers explored their emotions in post-interviews, they would attribute their emotions of enthusiasm, pride, and excitement to student involvement, engagement, and progress in the tasks. Teachers were satisfied that their own goals, including the game and learning goals, were met and thus ignited emotions that are categorised as positive. Emotion contagion theory (Frenzel, 2014) is also relevant here given that teachers enthusiastically presented the game in class (even early in the lesson) and/or set very clear expectations for their game, which may have also instilled emotions of anticipation and excitement but also instilled behaviours that would be in alignment with teachers' expected goals. The vivid behavioural responses of students and emotive attitudes would then trigger teachers' own emotions of happiness, excitement, and enthusiasm in a reifying manner. It is like a chicken-egg issue; one cannot be sure who triggered first whom, but this is neither the main goal of the research as one is mostly interested in what emotions *do.*

According to broaden-build theory (Friedrickson, 2004), the experience of positive emotions creates the necessary space for broadening and welcoming change, experience of more positive emotions, and growth. What I noticed in the iterations with teachers of planning game-informed lessons, is that even when the lessons did not have the expected outcome to its entirety, even for the lessons for which teachers were somewhat disappointed, this would not influence their emotions when creating a new game-informed lesson, neither would it spark self-doubt. As Teacher 4 confessed, when she is between a positive and

negative emotion, she would cling to the latter, which brings into view the individualistic nature of emotions and how personal dispositions and traits can shape the way one talks about emotions. This is in line with MacIntyre et al. (2019), who found a negative correlation between emotional stability and stressful events for teachers and note that this can point to a "tendency for emotionally volatile persons to react more strongly to negative events and to perceive more of them as stressful" (p. 34). Certain participants in our study had more resilient profiles and would reflect on events more positively or constructively than others, and this could be attributed to their own personalities, which has been found to correlate with teachers' wellbeing (MacIntyre et al., 2019).

Research has also suggested that "teachers often report perceptions of the teaching environment more positively than learners" (MacIntyre & Ayers-Glassey, 2021, p. 68). However, in this study teachers seemed to be more critical and rather at times *pessimistic* when reflecting on the lesson they had delivered, compared to students' reports and their emotional exhibits during the classroom. They would hold themselves accountable for anything that did not go as expected in class, and this might have been reinforced due to the ownership they carried for their designed materials. This strong sense of ownership equipped teachers with power, emotions of satisfaction, and a sense of accomplishment as it would be further elaborated upon in Section 5.2.5, but also came with a strong sense of accountability.

RQ3: What Issues do Teachers Touch Upon When Designing and Delivering Game-Informed Teaching?

When designing games, teachers were thinking deeply on how to connect the game to their learning goals. This might have been a biased consequence of me enquiring teachers' current syllabus prior to the game design sessions. This decision on my part was anchored on two pillars: a) my own experience in using games in the classroom; I would rarely use games for their own sake if they were not aligned to my syllabus or teaching goals and b) research calling for meaningful and contextualised approaches to learning (Foster, Shah & Duvall,

2016; Nicholson, 2015). Teachers were also heavily invested in not only using games as a happy and joyful activity, but also as an educational one. They inserted vocabulary from previous lessons or grammar structures that they wanted their students to practice on or assess them further. Embedding game-informed language teaching with curriculum-based planning was also a core theme found in a study researching teachers' competence in employing game-mediated teaching (Nousiainen et al., 2018).

During the study, gamification was also encouraged from my part given the changed dynamics and affordances that online teaching had imposed. Post-reflection teachers would comment on and criticise the limits of gamification when it came to *learning* through such practices, yet they found it powerful from a motivation point of view. This deep reflection by teachers is in line with research that has established the motivational aspects of gamification but is rather inconsistent when it comes to students' learning improvement (Mathe et al., 2019). Teachers who had designed game-informed tasks that involved students in meaningful communication rather than just assessing their vocabulary (e.g., Teachers 2, 6, 9 and 10) were primarily proud of their students' handling of the language and commented on how surprised they were not only in terms of engagement but fluency as well. Especially when it came to mystery games or social deduction informed task, there was not a question on how many points students get, but rather how fluent and active students were.

Teachers' emotions have been found to be impacted by their interactions with students in either a facilitative (boosting their emotions of pride, satisfaction and enthusiasm) or debilitating factor (causing them frustration and anxiety) as mentioned earlier. Teachers would frequently consider the classroom's atmosphere and their relationships with their students but also relationships between students themselves at two stages of the research. First, they would choose classes for which they felt that games could be "easier" to apply but also sometimes took risks and decided to involve classes that were more reluctant, in order to

try to engage them through alternative ways. Secondly, they would consider peer-to-peer relationships when it came to game mechanics: how should they divide teams to make this learning experience safe for all members of the class and establish healthy competitiveness? The classroom dynamics and perceived responses of students had teachers think of how to involve all students, engage the most reluctant ones, and make the atmosphere positive, safe, and challenging for all.

As for the latter, in line with ZPD theory (Vygotsky, 1978), teachers would create game-informed tasks by taking into account students' knowledge on the topics to be practiced or assessed during gameplay and their competence towards tackling the designed game successfully. Would it be too complex or too easy? Challenging students positively rather than overwhelming them was a core practice to teachers' designing game-informed tasks. Sometimes, they took risks and were rewarded as they were surprised to see their students quickly catch up to the tasks' expectations but also when they saw students' fluency build up because of the motivating game concept. Mediating difficulty was done by giving students' extra hints, allowing peer-to-peer help, and or demonstrating through an example.

RQ4: How do Teachers (and Students) Reflect on the integration of Game-Informed Teaching? What do Teachers Change in their Practice?

> Reflection is the practice of periodically stepping back to ponder the meaning to self and to others in one's immediate environment about what has recently transpired (Raelin, 2001, p. 11 as cited in Vince & Reynolds, 2019).

According to Vince and Reynolds (2019) who investigated reflection in the management domain, in whatever way we choose to conceptualise reflections, emotions undeniably play a key role in it either as a catalyst, source or by-product of reflection and they can have a rather therapeutic role not only to self but other members of the work environment. In the present study, during the post-interviews, teachers were invited to reflect

on their own emotions and talk about not only their own emotions but perceived feelings of students, and also reflect pedagogically on their practice.

Teacher participants' emotions were definitely shaped by the classroom experience and students' reactions, e.g., they would experience enjoyment when students were actively participating in the designed games. Student engagement has been correlated before with teachers' emotions of enthusiasm and happiness (e.g., Frenzel, 2014). Creating a pleasant atmosphere for students is crucial to their learning experience. Pre-service teachers (PSTs) were asked in a study by Muñoz and Salinas (2021) to reflect on their emotional experiences during classrooms and when reflecting on enjoyment, they asserted that "thinking in action playfully" (p. 854) and integrating games, even in an impromptu manner, is definitely a path they would like to explore further. Acting playfully in class and introducing games is a practice that automatically assumes that this will create a positive classroom atmosphere for students as all students like to play, according to this study's participants. Hence, it seems that for this study as well the following quote holds true:

> providing high-quality instruction per se is likely emotionally satisfying and seeking (and finding) closeness and warmth with students can promote positive experiences. Conversely, delivering dry instruction is likely non-rewarding and boredom-inducing for teachers themselves and may further deplete their emotions and create a sense of distance between students and their teachers" (Frenzel et al., 2021, p. 254)

As Muñoz and Salinas (2021) affirm, "the relationship between reflection and emotions is critical to understanding PSTs' professional development" (p. 856) but this is also essential for in-service teachers. Having the opportunity to debrief and reflect not only on emotions but on classroom practices gave teachers a better understanding of how games would work more optimally in their *own* classrooms and what they could improve next. In two cases, teachers wanted to repeat similar games to the ones they had already designed, e.g., Teacher 7, Teacher 8, used the Bamboozle platform twice to teach different concepts, by taking a slightly different approach and acknowledging students' needs and feedback (e.g.

their willingness to help other students when playing in teams). Also, Teacher 5 created a board game using the Flippity platform twice and used the lessons from the first instance, revised certain game mechanics, and thus gave students an alternative game experience. Teachers in this study seemed to have found the design of games beneficial not only for their students but also for their professional role and sense of competence. Similar to findings of the present study, in a study by Schutz et al. (2009), a teacher expressed emotions of happiness and enthusiasm when she created a scavenger hunt for their students, because it also helped "alleviate her own tendency toward boredom with less active assignments" (p. 205).

Reflecting on the observations of students' and teachers' behaviour during classroom, the concept of the "Magic Circle" was evident.

> The magic circle represents the idea that games take place within limits of time and space, and are self-contained systems of meaning. A chess king, for example, is just a little figurine sitting on a coffee table. But when a game of chess starts, it suddenly acquires all kinds of very specific strategic, psychological, and even narrative meanings. […]. While many social and cultural meanings certainly do move in and out of any game (for instance, your in-game rivalry might ultimately affect your friendship outside the game), the magic circle emphasizes those meanings that are intrinsic and interior to games (Zimmerman, 2008, p. 156)

In short, the Magic Circle denotes that games inherently dictate social and other behaviours that are appropriate *in* the game, but may not be for the outside world, and vice versa. During gameplay in this study, the game itself was bound by rules that were to be respected by players. Students often enquired on or even negotiated the terms of winning conditions and were able to give feedback on how game mechanics could be changed. In other instances, students would defend the game and expose their peers when they were "cheating" and in other cases they would do their best to help their peers that were in the same team with them.

It is not only the integration of games that make teachers happy because they see their students enjoy playing games, but games serve as a nice break from delivering the same

structured and rather passive tasks. The few written collected feedback from students shows that they were positively surprised with some games, even when they had played them before. The slightly new format under which games were presented might be the reason why students were surprised. This creativity does not have to be all from scratch nor do teachers have to be adept in *high* creativity. What seems to be the power of game-informed approaches is that the teacher can be prompted to apply *little c creativity* (Craft, 2001), explore learning through a playful light, question or adapt the value and relevance of different game elements to their specific teaching goals. As mentioned in the Introduction chapter, language is cake, *how* the cake is served plays an important factor to its consumption.

Research has talked about how the fancy visual design of digital storytelling games (Liu, Tai, & Liu, 2018) can engage students. In this study, however, what truly engrossed students in the games was not the intricate design of the game but its content, e.g., the fact that they had to uncover the murderer, or the thief, or create a story. A low-interactive the game in its form does not equal low interactions or low student engagement in class. There was no pedagogical questioning from teachers when using game-informed tasks that fostered students' communication skills and maximised interactions, but there was criticism towards more gamified approaches: though they were fancy, colourful, and interactive technology-wise, where is the learning and practicing of language taking place?

It is also interesting to mention what teachers did not change in their practice when delivering game-informed tasks. Teachers who valued greatly the use of L2 by their students throughout the lesson, had the same expectation for the game as well. Teachers who follow more traditional approaches such as grammar-translation approaches would infuse their game-informed tasks with these, while participants who had a more inductive teaching style when presenting learning tasks would apply the same inductive strategies when presenting a game to their students. Overall, teachers seemed to explore both the limits and new horizons

that games bring into language education and value their significance in developing students' skills, motivation, and their own professional activity. However, participants would not relinquish their unique identities during this exploration, and this might be due to the emancipatory and non-prescriptive manner of this study.

5.2 A Positive Psychology Approach to Analysing Emotions in the Classroom

The PERMA model as mentioned in Chapter 2 discusses five elements that can contribute to wellbeing. In this section, these five elements will be discussed in terms of how they are embedded in the findings of this study. The scope is not to argue that integrating games in the classroom is the one and only approach that could directly contribute to teachers' wellbeing but rather look into practical implications of this pedagogy and its effect on teachers' psychology, by focusing on their personal and professional wellbeing. Psychology in the area of Applied Linguistics has focused on researching hindering emotions to language learning and teaching, e.g., anxiety, and Positive Psychology has come to view the research of emotions not as something to heal and repair, but rather examine and view emotions from a positive light. The flowering of positive psychology is here (Dewaele et al., 2019). However, it is often that Positive Psychology is misconstrued as the research of "happiology" (Huta, 2017), whereas it concerns "healthy workplaces and schools, constructive leadership, strengths of character, striving for excellence, and the ability to grow from the negative events of life (Huta, 2017, p. 176)".

The elements of PERMA model as identified through this journey of teachers applying their unique innovative creations into their practice are discussed here and seem to be at the core of teachers' emotional experiences and practices. Since elements of the PERMA model are satisfied and well situated in teachers' practices and reflections throughout the data and as will be discussed below, it could be argued that games can open

the path to wellbeing. I am not hinting that games and game-based language teaching is a panacea for fostering teachers' wellbeing nor should it be seen as such. It is the *elements* of games that provide fertile ground for the elements of wellbeing theory to emerge and develop.

It might not come down to the pedagogical innovation itself that it is the one that brings about a sense of accomplishment, positive emotions and other elements that can contribute to wellbeing. Quite the opposite, an innovation that comes from top-down and is rather imposed than voluntarily adopted, can actually cause overwhelming stress and role conflict in teachers (Zembylas, 2010). One-size fits all approaches are certainly not pedagogically sound (Gregory & Chapman, 2012) and arguing that there is one way of going about game-based language teaching would be destructive. What is different with the game-based language teaching approach, an innovation, taken in this study that can lead to teacher (work) enjoyment, (job) satisfaction, and (personal) happiness?

5.2.1 (Positive) Emotions

Undeniably throughout the interview data, an overflow of emotions is present, and primarily an overflow of positive emotions. I disagree with dichotomizing emotions into positive and negative ones (and that is why the word "positive" is in parentheses above) as this would lead to a superficial interpretation of emotions, ignoring their potential interconnectedness, but also because such an approach would inescapably deem "negative" emotions as something "evil" that requires treating and intervention. However, this dichotomy seems like a comprehensible approach to interpreting and defragmenting their elusive nature. Teacher participants during post-interviews also resorted to dichotomising implicitly or explicitly emotions to make sense of how they felt during the class. They would mention for example "I feel all the positive ones..." and then they would list emotions such as

enthusiasm, happiness, excitement and the lot. Research on teachers' emotions finds teachers reporting emotions of joy and satisfaction, stemming from their students' making progress, the relationships being built in the classroom, as well as the successes of individual students (e.g., Sutton & Wheattley, 2003); similar emotions and appraisals have been noted by language teachers as well (e.g., Richards, 2020). It seems that positive emotions are primarily provoked and elicited externally, meaning that teachers feel satisfaction and happiness after experiencing and seeing the impact of their work and effort on students. In this study, language teachers rather predictably attributed their emotions of enthusiasm, happiness, satisfaction and even pride to students' participation, language and skills-development while playing a game.

Emotions of happiness and enthusiasm were present also outside the classroom, while teachers were creating games and before they could experience the fruit of their work in class and students' reactions. Envisioning students' positive reactions and emotions generated similar emotions to the teachers as well, proving once again how externally influenced teachers' emotions are, even when the others are not present in a certain moment. In this study, however, positive emotions of happiness were also internally generated; in other words, teachers would feel happy for being creative and able to develop game-informed tasks just for the sake of it. Teachers would receive pleasure during the process of creating a game, and these emotions would be present continually, even after having delivered game-informed classes that for the teachers themselves did not go as planned and left them feel somewhat disappointed. Teachers' happiness for being involved in designing game-informed tasks seems to be an internally driven emotion, rather than outsourced by a reciprocity manner from students' own emotions, reactions, and progress.

On every occasion where teachers would create a game, positive emotions would be mentioned, sometimes paired with anxiety as across the data teachers mentioned "I feel a

little bit of anxiety" or "maybe anxiety". Anxiety was mentioned by teachers during their pre-interviews and can be seen through a positive lens as it stemmed from their love and care for their students to deliver the best result possible. It seems that this is connected to feeling active, and a positive kind of arousal while being engaged in a creative task (see section below) directly relating to Flow theory. Emotions of enjoyment and anxiety coexisting have been noted in language students' emotions research (e.g. Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014) to co-exist while studying a foreign language, anxiety being reported to a lower degree than enjoyment. Similarly, teachers in this study showed this same pattern while being engaged in their own task of learning how to apply games in their classes and acted upon that. Anxiety can have debilitative or facilitative outcomes, depending on the degree that it is present; it may stem from a drive to perform well and anticipation. Another reason why emotions should not be taken at face value is that the words used for each emotion are not universal nor there are equivalent words in all languages for the same emotion. In the current study, the interviews with teachers were conducted in the English language and the emotion words were also shown to teachers in the English form. Specifically, the word "anxiety" etymologically comes from the Greek word "αγχος" but the meaning of this Greek word is more closely related to the word "stress" rather than denoting apprehensive uneasiness/nervousness or a mentally distressing concern (Kantaridou, & Psaltou-Joycey, 2021). It might be the case that teachers opted for the word "anxiety" by considering the Greek counterpart of the word and its meaning that does not necessarily have as negative connotations as in the English language, where it can directly relate to a mental health disorder as well. Since teachers attributed their anxiety to them ensuring that they deliver an optimal game-informed learning experience to students, it could be argued that for these teachers, anxiety could be seen as a "strong desire sometimes mixed with doubt, fear, or uneasiness". This is one of the definitions provided for the word anxiety by Merriam-Webster dictionary, and it depicts the

participants' mindsets in that they were both looking forward to implementing their games in classrooms (strong desire) but would also question themselves in matters of their own performance and adequacy (doubt).

Other perceived "negative" emotions, such as frustration, disappointment, powerlessness, were also mentioned by teachers, although to a lesser extent. In the previous chapter, I analysed how a teacher mentions "frustration" as a positive emotion. According to Sutton and Weatley (2003), frustration may be triggered by students' misbehaviour, inattention or laziness. For Teacher 6 in particular who had painted frustration in positive colours, it stemmed from a student feeling reluctant to participate in the game task for which he had been given an important role. Teacher 6 admitted that this student is not very comfortable as he is both new in class and struggles slightly in his learning journey; therefore, the teacher could not be "angry" to the student as she recognised that his ill participation was not due to lack of interest or disrespect, but rather inability to respond to his role. However, in Teacher 8's case, where the students had explicitly shown disrespect and disregard for the class, the emotions of frustration were not seen under a positive light. Frustration, thus, seems to be another outsourced emotion, heavily dependent on its antecedent.

Powerlessness may sound as well as an extremely negative emotion; however, not all teachers perceived that in such a light. Teacher 10 called this emotion a positive one, as it was a drive for him to redo and to continue pursuing using games in class, informed by lessons learned. For Teacher 7, however, it was hard to see any silver lining in feeling powerless; this could be attributed to this teacher's personality traits as mentioned earlier.

Finally, disappointment was sometimes mentioned as an emotion after having delivered a task in class. Teachers had mentioned feeling disappointed as they expected the game-informed task to have worked better, or for their students to have participated more, but

always directing any perceived failures to their own teaching performance. However, again, this disappointment did not hinder teachers from trying again with designing other games, and teachers would be all excited and happy for developing new ones.

5.2.2 Engagement

As it was mentioned in Chapter 2, engagement is a rather fleeting concept as the people that are engaged in it are not always aware of it. In language learning and teaching research, engagement has focused primarily on students and different constructs of engagement have been noted ranging from emotional to behavioural. In this thesis, engagement is conceptualised at the task level; I use the following definition by Reinders and Nakamura (2021):

> Engagement at the task level can be understood as a state of heightened attention and involvement, in which participation is reflected not only in behaviour but also in manifestations of cognitive and social dimensions, as well as in affective dimensions of learners' emotions and responses to task. (p. 137)

As the authors argue, engagement is different from constructs such as motivation, as a person engaged in a language learning task does not necessarily guarantee that they are motivated in acquiring the language. Engagement is much more situated and rather temporary.

Considering both the observational and interview data, engagement was evident in both the teacher and students, at different periods. Engagement for teachers was noticed synchronously while we were co-designing games, with the overflow of ideas keeping both parties active and in deep thought, indicating cognitive engagement. Pauses were rather frequent later to be broken by epiphanies. Evaluation of ideas and feedback was taking place by both the teachers and myself; I would provide feedback mostly regarding game implementation logistics, whereas I would receive teachers' feedback on whether they

thought an idea would work in their specific class or not. Teachers responded frequently to my ideas for how to incorporate certain game mechanics: "I had never thought of that, that is a good idea" and seemed genuinely surprised. Emotional and social engagement was also noted by teachers for working collaboratively with me and for being given the opportunity to discuss their ideas, explore possibilities, and receive feedback. Emotional engagement must have taken place outside the observed research processes too, when teachers worked on their own and mentioned later during their interviews that they enjoyed exploring the platforms on which they created their tasks, or that they enjoy being engaged in crafting the necessary game-informed materials for their class.

Teachers' engagement in this study was high during the design interviews across all levels, as described above, emotional, social and cognitive. During class, engagement was evident from the students' part more. It was evident through voiced or unvoiced "Wow"s when they would see the visual of a game-informed activity that they had never played before or through their throwing up their hands in the air when the teacher would announce that they would play a game. Behavioural engagement was also evident from the students' part, as they would become more involved, asking more questions about gameplay, rules, language itself, compared to their behaviours in other non-game tasks. Students would be at the edge of their seats while waiting to listen to their peers' input and either demonstrate an annoying face when their peer "got it wrong" or smile and cheer when they got the answer correct or were heading in the right direction. As Reinders and Nakamura (2021) note, being engaged does not necessarily equal enjoying the activity. Engagement can trigger various emotions as a person is truly engrossed and dedicated to the task; this is why frustration from students when their peers provided a wrong answer in the game could be seen through this positive light of being active with heart and soul to the task. Nevertheless, teachers would not always condone

such demonstrations for the sake of establishing safety and positive classroom experiences for all. It is undoubtedly though an indication of high level of engagement.

Games also seemed to have provoked students' social engagement as they would often collaborate with their peers by offering advice, hints, and guidance to their fellow players or even the opposite team. It was social engagement that would be evident from both teachers and students while a game was being played in the classroom: students would often help their peers, play referee where it was needed, while the teacher would actively listen to students' responses, input and/or by actively participating in the game themselves.

Games do offer fertile ground for engagement for all classroom participants. It is the shared mission of game-informed tasks as well as the rewards that come with games, not limited to acquiring points and can go beyond initiating meaningful exchanges in the classroom, which spark engagement amongst students. For teachers, the design process itself, it being a creative task, does engage them professionally and emotionally. Given that teachers are going beyond their usual teaching routines and activities, by creating games it is actually job crafting (Falout & Murphey, 2018) that they are engaged which can contribute to their work feeling more meaningful to them. The concept of meaning will be further analysed in one of the following sections, as another key element of the PERMA model.

5.2.3 Relationships

Social engagement as discussed earlier was fostered through game-based language teaching, and this section would further elaborate on the importance of relationships and how integrating games in the class could contribute to cultivating positive relationships.

Schutz (2014) note that teachers often have to face role conflict: being disciplinarian or being a caring teacher; being friends or being friendly. As was evident through observational data, implementing a game in the classroom heightens the importance of both roles. Teacher 2 and Teacher 9, for example, would be very willing to self-disclose personal

information or talk about their own emotional experiences when playing adaptations of the "Feel me, feel me not game". Even before the class took place, both teachers had been very looking forward to this activity and had decided that they would participate in the game, as they view it as perfect way to understand their students better and connect with them. Both the level of the class and their age (teenagers) allowed everyone in the class to express themselves in the foreign language fluently, share their personal stories, and reflect on each other's reactions through storytelling. Being "friends" seems easier for teachers for when students are older, the teacher deciding to what extent they are willing to self-disclose information.

When it comes to younger students, teachers would assume a more disciplinarian role and ensure that their rules are followed, and expectations are met. Teachers' top priorities were for students to both feel safe, challenged, and happy. Therefore, establishing rules and gameplay etiquette was of utmost importance to them. Teachers would interfere when rules were not followed or attend to students' needs during the game. The content of the games itself would rarely allow for meaningful exchanges or sharing personal stories, given that the students were beginners in the English language. There were cases though where personal stories or interesting facts from students would arise and teachers would show interest in learning more about them. Ensuring that peers respect each other and allow space and time for each student to respond was at the core of the relationship boundaries set during the game, either implicitly or explicitly.

5.2.4 Meaning

Having a purpose in life, or a purpose that is greater than ourselves creates meaning. Does integrating games in the classroom create meaning for teachers? Trying new, creative activities, employing one's passion to help others are some ways that Madeson (2017) proposes as ways to create meaning in life. Job crafting is a way of being creative within

one's work and refers to when employees apply changes to the conventional tasks, relationships or roles in their work. Language teachers in this study were involved in job crafting as well, albeit temporarily. Designing games for their classroom was not labelled as job crafting explicitly, and it primarily affected task crafting rather than shifting or changing their own role or relationship with others within their institution. Language teachers approached a conventional teaching task, e.g., the delivery of a ready-made gap-filling grammar exercise in class, through a creative lens, and created a board game, which would actually meet the same learning goal as the exercise, as students would still have to use the grammar structure correctly while playing the game. In essence, the goal of the task does not change, but the gamified task is now constructed by the teacher and is not ready-made or found in the EFL textbook, allowing the teacher to adapt the task to the needs of their classroom, while at the same time offer students a more creative and fun way of practicing the language. This holds true for when teachers applied gamification in their classroom and created quizzes, board games, where essentially the students would be involved by responding to gap-filling tasks in order to receive points or progress through the board. Despite teachers taking this rather "superficial" approach to game-mediated teaching, even so meaning making was accomplished. Teachers would go out of their way, explore new online platforms, create their own materials, and use their skills to create something that would provide their students with an alternative language learning experience. In other words, they created games for a purpose greater than themselves. As teachers noted throughout their interviews, the scope is not just for them to develop professionally but be able to make their students happy, have fun, and learn through this process.

Meaning making was more pervasive when teachers adopted heavy game-based approaches in class or designed games that would call for more social interactions. The games that teachers designed, especially for their older learners, were not intended only to

help practice specific structures in class, but also help all the participants in the classroom strengthen their relationships, acquire new skills that go beyond language learning, and give opportunities for fostering socio-emotional skills. It was during these games, e.g. during Feel me/ Feel me not or Murder mystery board games, where points did not really matter, nor who finishes first. It was the interactions that were brought into spotlight, the challenge of uncovering the truth, and the pleasure of getting connected with others. In these cases, meaning making was not only found during the design process, but also during the classroom experience itself. Both teachers and students interacted at another level that goes beyond the textbook, using language meaningfully and purposefully to express ideas, share stories, and interact critically under a common mission.

Taking the above into account, meaning in integrating games in the classroom is found in both that the teachers go beyond the set work expectations, spend time and effort to bring something new in their classroom but also the artefact itself creates more meaningful experiences for the stakeholders involved. Stoloff et al. (2020), talk about meaning in the workplace as the congruence of personal values and work accomplished in everyday acts. According to them, meaning is created when involved in "identity building, social responsibility, roles played, and contribute to students' potential development" (Stoloff et. al., , 2020, p. 16). Teachers do grow through integrating games in the classroom and develop their own professional skills (and identities), but also through catering for students' learning through being creative themselves.

5.2.5 Accomplishment

Accomplishment in educational contexts is inevitably tied to students' academic achievement and progress. Language teachers in this study were particularly proud of their students and how they handled themselves both learning and socially wise when playing a game in the classroom. The integration of games in the class enabled students to use L2 talk

in a meaningful manner, hence achieving social accomplishment. Aside from students, is there accomplishment from teachers' part when embedding games in their classroom? The action of creating a game itself provided teachers with a sense of both ownership and achievement. In one case, given time limitations and immense workload from Teacher 7's part, I had assisted that teacher in developing her game, after we had discussed what she would like to do as a game. My own contribution was literally bureaucratic in that I input sentences and game questions on the Bamboozle platform based on what was discussed throughout the design interview with Teacher 7. Despite that Teacher 7 had made all the instructional decisions, game rules, and game objectives, during our post-interview she did emphasize without being prompted the fact that she was not the one who had created the actual game. This is a good indicator that teachers become "attached" to their own creations for their classrooms. Developing a game highlights teachers' sense of ownership. When the created artefact is used in the classroom, and the interactions are satisfying to the teacher and the learning goals are attended, this sense of ownership is then paired with a sense of achievement.

Creativity in both research and everyday life is often connected with happiness, and there is sometimes interconnectedness of these two terms as one can bring about the other and vice versa. Teachers seem to have developed a sense of ownership through game design and development. Teachers had hinted to this sense of ownership implicitly, and even too full responsibility on when game rules did not work as well. It was their creation. According to Dawkins et al. (2017, p. 164) psychological ownership "serves three fundamental human needs: (1) efficacy; (2) self-identity; and (3) belongingness (a sense of "place"). Possession of tangible or intangible objects can enhance feelings of efficacy as they provide a sense of power, control, or influence". Games are essentially objects, and artefacts, and the visual representation of teachers' creation. When this creation is received positively and with

enthusiasm from students, it can enhance those feelings of power (in the sense of *empowerment,* as Teacher 2, had vocally mentioned in her interview), but also further enhance their feelings of efficacy as language teachers. A strong sense of accountability was also seen from the teachers' part, it being self-directed more than object-oriented. Teachers would mention the things that they would have done differently, or how they should have made the game more accessible to students. It feels as if teachers held themselves fully responsible of their creation; even though this led teachers to being too critical towards their own practice, it does reinforce the fact that they had a strong sense of ownership for their creation, as they would not assign the fault to the game itself or the innovation but to their own handling of it (if there were any fault).

5.3 Implications for Research, Practice And Teacher Education

This section will discuss implications for research through lessons learned through the participatory Action-Research Methodology I followed throughout the course of the study. Below, I will talk about the explicit decisions I had made and implicit characteristics of the teacher training approach I had taken that may have impacted positively on teachers' experience and involvement in this action research project, discussing my decisions through Self Determination Theory, and the psychological needs for relatedness, competence, and autonomy. Further implications for practice will be introduced in terms of lessons learned on the widely misconstrued topic of game-mediated language teaching. Implications for teacher education will also be delineated as this action research project can be seen as a professional development opportunity for teachers and good practices will be suggested as well.

5.3.1 Fostering Emancipatory Action Research

Action Research needs to be emancipatory (Ledwith, 2007) and thus I would take decisions to foster a positive and mindful environment for teachers and engage in

participatory research design. These were decisions taken in mind to the contextual influences and le temps of the pandemic, which had added a huge workload to teachers, and would even affect their own identities and question their current practices. Being supportive, encouraging, and empathetic throughout the research process felt like an inevitable direction for me to take. The implications for teacher training and doing research *with* teachers are also discussed through the three pillars of self-determination theory: fostering autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

Self-determination theory is concerned with "human motivation, emotion, and development that takes interest in factors that either facilitate or forestall the assimilative and growth-oriented processes in people" (Niemiec & Ryan, 2009, p. 134). Therefore, I find essential that the decisions for my research, even though put forth rather implicitly or in an impromptu fashion, are discussed through the lens of cultivating relatedness, autonomy, and feelings of competence to teachers. Professional development practice, like any other learning process, should always consider the needs and psychology of the audience involved for it to be efficient, successful, and sustainable. Similarly to how a good teacher will cater to students' needs and consider their strengths and abilities, in a similar manner having one framework expecting to work for all teachers with different levels of experience, even if when they were sharing similar institutional environments, would not facilitate a positive environment for professional development. Further, "the more that teachers' satisfaction of autonomy is undermined, the less enthusiasm and creative energy they can bring to their teaching endeavors" (Niemiec & Ryan, 2009, p. 140). Given the nature of this action research, asking teachers to be creative in their practice, taking away from them the freedom in taking decisions essential for their own classes would be catastrophic for their engagement in the process. Below, I explain how each stage of the action research process considered teachers' own needs and values.

5.3.1.1 Non-Prescriptive Planning to Foster Autonomy

While I introduced the game-based language teaching workshop to teachers, I tried to instil to teachers the continuum of different approaches to game-mediated teaching, ranging from gamification to more *serious* game-based language teaching. I had advocated for the benefits of the latter especially in terms of fostering meaningful communication and moving away from pointification. The workshop itself was clearly political with strong affirmations as to why game-based language teaching is *truly transformative* and not just another way of packaging and sugar-coating gap-fill grammar exercises through gamified activities. Although it was clearly positioned, I still included materials and ideas for activities that would be more suited towards the gamification teaching spectrum, fostering diversity and choice.

My position was clear: we should move away from emphasising the points and work towards finding meaning. This was a sentiment that resonated with the teacher participants, but it was hard sometimes to implement in practice, especially since the classroom environment was transferred online and teachers had limited time available, since they had to change their work schedules mid-schoolyear in accordance with governmental guidelines. Despite being vocal for my views on game-based teaching, there was no structured framework as to how teachers should work or specific steps that they should follow for creating a game for their classes, but I rather introduced *ways of thinking* on going about game-based teaching. The main reason for that was that I viewed this workshop not as another prescriptive and limiting professional development opportunity or framework which teachers would have to follow to heart. I would provide teachers with ideas and practices that have worked through my previous teaching experience and allow them space to think of whether these could be usefully applied to their own settings. The non-prescriptive approach also instigated the emancipatory approach of action research and allowed teachers full control

and their own understanding of what game-based language teaching means to them or how they could exploit it and tailor it to their own teaching agenda. This approach reinforces teacher *autonomy* and explains why a variety of different approaches to game-mediated teaching were adopted by teachers, within and across participants, as discussed earlier in Chapter 4.

5.3.1.2 Co-Construction of Knowledge to Foster Relatedness

Acting involved both the one-to-one design sessions with teachers, and teachers' own delivery of the class itself. My role in this was more of a co-designer and guide and a constructivist approach was adopted. Both the teacher and I would work together; the teacher would inform me about their teaching goals and I would provide them with ideas or brainstorm together on how these goals could be attained through game-based activities. My role during these sessions was mainly supportive and guiding, offering guidance and ideas to teachers on how they could implement their game-informed tasks.

Teachers during interviews were encouraged to talk about elements they liked about the design sessions, and they all commented on having the opportunity to talk about their ideas and being guided by an experienced other in game-based language teaching. Having aligned goals reinforced the sense for *relatedness*. Both parties were interested in integrating games to facilitate language teaching goals, but each party held information and was an expert on different domains: the teachers as experts of their audience, curriculum, and personal teaching goals; myself as an expert of using games in foreign language classrooms. Positive collegial relationships were developed as a result, a factor which amounts for participants being engaged in the research itself and the pedagogical approach of applying games in the classroom.

5.3.1.3 Non-Participant Observations to Foster Autonomy

The sense of autonomy was further introduced during the teaching of the designed lessons. I had encouraged teachers to feel free to deviate from any plans that we had discussed in our design interviews, and not feel obliged to go through with their game in case they felt that this was not feasible due to circumstances beyond their control. Teachers were also free to decide how long their game-informed activities would last and whether they would make any last-minute changes. I reassured teachers that I wanted to be as less intrusive as possible during their classroom teaching, and that is why I would join the class on Zoom with my camera and microphone turned off. I would ask the teacher before the class whether they would like me to greet or introduce myself to students, whether they would like to do it, and respected their decision in their part. Acknowledging teachers' needs and finetuning with them as to the above logistics was essential to alleviate teachers from any felt pressure for being observed or their own perceived responsibility to the research project.

5.3.1.4 Reflecting Critically to Reinforce Competence

During the post-interviews with teachers, I noticed that participants would be rather critical of their own work and performance. Teachers would primarily put the blame on themselves for things that did not work as expected for their game-informed tasks. *As expected* is a key word here given that teachers were sometimes too self-critical that they viewed student hyper as disruption or negative behaviour, whereas to myself as an observer it was clear that students were engaged. As an outside observer, I had a "cold state" towards classroom events and would be rather objective, whereas the teacher would be in a rather "hot state" and process events through their own expectations lens.

Teachers were invited to do *reflecting on action* and discuss their reasons behind their emotions while teaching but were also *reflecting critically* as they were asked to also reflect on students' emotions, their actions, and the pedagogical practice itself. According to Farrell

(2010), critical reflections involve thinking about all the stakeholders involved as well as the institution and community. During post-interviews with participants, they mainly reflected on themselves and their students by discussing their behaviours, actions, and emotions. Reflecting at an institutional level was not explicitly produced, but teachers often mentioned institutional and parental expectations and how they influence their own practice. Most importantly, for the last post-interview with the teachers I invited them to think critically about the pedagogy of game-based language teaching, its feasibility and meaningfulness for their own teaching agenda. This critical reflection was done in an effort to help teachers reflect on the potential benefits of using games in their practice rather than having the approach of game-based language teaching dictate to them what they should do.

Apart from reflecting on their emotions, I would ask teachers to reflect on what went "right" or "wrong" while delivering their game-informed activities. I would often use air quotation marks when saying the word "wrong" or even substitute the word "wrong" with "not so well" to help teachers understand that I am not looking for mistakes or trying to underpin something wrong in their practice but rather have them consider what could be improved or reflect on the challenges that emerged during their lessons. Instilling a growth mindset to teachers' strategies in game-based language teaching was my intention and so was on cultivating appreciative inquiry (Mercer & Gregersen, 2020). When teachers had mentioned being disappointed because they think they failed to meet the standards they had set to themselves, I would often remind them to think of students' engagement that I observed during classes. This was not in a manner to invalidate feelings of disappointment, but rather a call for realising and appreciating the positive parts of the lesson as well, thus reinforcing feelings of competence to teachers, especially to those who were very new to game-mediated language teaching.

Overall, recognising teachers' context, needs, and personal values was essential not only to sustain participant engagement in the process, but also to help teachers uncover their possibilities of game-mediated instruction and tailor them according to their own teaching agendas.

5.3.2 Implications for Teacher Education

As highlighted in the previous section, being mindful of teachers' experience, their teaching agendas and context was crucial to avoid developing role or identity conflict when introducing an innovation to teachers. For less experienced teachers in using games in the classroom, I resorted to more gamification approaches. Gamification could be associated with lower levels of the Substitution-Augmentation-Modification-Redefinition (SAMR) model of technology integration for learning and teaching (Puentudura, 2013), denoting that gamification is just another packaging of well-known tasks in language teaching, such as quizzes or gap-fill exercises (Keegan, 2017). Thus, gamification is a way of substituting or augmenting already known practices, by merely introducing points and rewards throughout the learning tasks.

Gamification has been criticised by game-based language teaching scholars in having that superficial approach. However, I found that it was easier to *explain* and introduce game concepts through gamification to teachers who either had a very traditional approach to teaching or had little to no experience with using games in their classroom. Having observed teachers in their first game-informed lessons and the general teaching style, I realised which direction it would be safer to lead teachers move towards so that less identity conflict would be caused and help them reflect on which spectrum of the game-mediated continuum would best suit each teacher style and goals. Change may be received with resistance (Zembylas, 2010); this fact along with the emergency remote teaching that had already challenged teachers were arguments towards taking a softer and slower introduction to game-based

language teaching. Experimenting with gamification first provided teachers with an understanding of its benefits, helped them reflect on its pedagogy, and thus made it easier to move forward from that and explore more intricate approaches.

As mentioned earlier, many authors (e.g., York & Dehaan, 2018) have argued that building teachers' games literacy will drive a meaningful integration of game-based learning and similar approaches. Chen et al. (2020) propose a framework for promoting games literacy and teacher education, which consists of five main constructs: a) instructional design for game-based learning, b) evaluation of game-based learning, c) organisation and management of game-based learning, d) basic games literacy, e) high-level games literacy. The framework suggests that games literacy is not to be valued higher than game-based teaching literacy (for which the first three constructs of the framework are concerned) but are rather both needed and essential. For instance, Teacher 10 had opted for a rather game-enhanced approach with little mediation; during the actual class, instructional design challenges arose, and this caused a prolonged gameplay time. Being well acquainted with a game on its own, without pedagogically mediating it, can affect the successful integration of the game. It is hard to foresee all challenges that a game is about to bring in the classroom, and that is why the evaluation of a game task is needed not only prior to the teaching (in terms of realising the games and learning objectives) but also after the fact, in terms of reflecting on the challenges and rethinking how gameplay could be situated pedagogically wise and reinforce both learning outcomes and student engagement.

5.3.3 Implications for Practice

Having a good idea of how games work, the mechanics is essential for producing meaningful game-based or game-informed practices. For example, gamification thrives in (language) classrooms and in language learning through digital platforms, as it is one easy

way for teachers to implement to reinforce student or user engagement. The main concepts of gamification, founded in response-reinforcement theory (Skinner), are easy to comprehend and attain and self-explanatory embodied through leader boards, (tangible) rewards, and achievement badge. Technology has also made gamification much more appealing, using graphics, sounds, and colours, especially to younger audiences as teachers in this study asserted. The concept is not new, and teachers have used such techniques, especially to reinforce certain classroom behaviour from their students. Contrary to gamification, games are not such a ubiquitous practice, and their elements can be far more complicated to grasp or either embed in pedagogical tasks.

It is not that gamification is bad on its own, but I would argue that it is rather limited in scope, and/or serves very different goals from game-based/game-informed or game-enhanced approaches. The elements of games go beyond gamification, and that is why it is essential for teachers to be exposed or familiarised with them; exposing teachers to them can help them transform their practice. For instance, Teacher 9 adapted a storytelling game, and even though winning conditions were set prior to the teaching and the game mechanics of deduction were embedded in the game, during class, storytelling on its own became the goal itself. Both the teacher and the students ignored any winning conditions, as the storytelling itself had the whole class engaged, as well as the surprise element of what stories students had come up with. Game elements such as story-building and world exploration, and game mechanics such as deduction, auction and role-playing, are powerful and when incorporated in well-designed activities they cannot only reinforce language learning per se but also specific language skills (e.g., a storytelling game can reinforce fluency) and socio-emotional skills (e.g., patience, collaboration, empathy). Being aware of core game mechanics can help teachers identify those that can be applied in their tasks, borrow their elements, and inform their practice meaningfully.

Games do not have to have a quantitative outcome to be fun or meaningful. In the majority of the games played during this research project, even when the ultimate goal was getting more points than the opposing team, students were less focused on how many points they had acquired and more focused on how they could win, often offering help to their classmates or even the opposite team.

A good pedagogical adaptation of games does not require awareness of deep game mechanics or having a well-established background of game design or gameplay. The meaningfulness of a tool cannot be determined without the learning goals attached to it. Gamification or game-based language teaching are made meaningful when: a) they satisfy teachers' lesson objectives, i.e., the game goals and learning goals are aligned, and/or b) the tasks themselves provide meaning, e.g., a critical thinking discussion, evaluation of ideas etc. As long as both game and lesson aims are totally aligned, even when they address lower thinking skills, this would be an informed decision of gamified integration, and thus pedagogically sound. When gamification is used in the same manner to satisfy all levels of learning uncritically, that could be problematic if the gamification has not undergone the required adaptation.

5.4 Game-Based language Teaching in Greece: Attitudes, Trends, and New Directions

Game-based language teaching is still in its infancy in Greece and one important factor hindering the application of games is poor (technological) infrastructure, as discussed in Megagiani and Kakana (2021). This is true for public schools in Greece, but the situation in the private sector is very different as classes are smaller in terms of student numbers, and thus more manageable, and access to high-end equipment is almost expected. Despite the technological affordances, this study has proved how games can be integrated in the classroom with little or no technological use; actually, the less technology used, the more

meaningfully positioned the game would be in terms of communicative exchanges. Technology was there to assist and promote more gamified practices rather than game-informed or game-enhanced teaching.

Teachers in Greece, do value games, e.g., primary school teachers in Greece were found to be very positively positioned towards the use of serious games primarily because they believed in the motivational power of games (Megagiani & Kakana, 2021). It is the inherent affordances and qualities of games that make language learning different, and with specific prerequisites more engaging, and social; games are not a more efficient way to learn a language. For instance, in an experimental study that used Kahoot! as an assessment tool for vocabulary learning versus traditional pen-and-paper methods, Kapsalis, Galanis, and Tzafea (2020) found that there was no statistical difference between groups, even though both groups showed improvement in the post-tests. This indicates that gamified activities are not much different to traditional vocabulary teaching/evaluating methods; the difference lies in the motivational/engagement power. The packaging differs. The process is the same. The packaging can potentially reinforce motivation, which can improve the learning experience multi-factorially. The research aim, however, was not to define how efficient game-mediated instruction for students' learning is but rather explore the emotional affordances of such an approach.

Few studies that investigate language teacher attitudes or views on the use of games in the classroom define what a "game" is; the term is left undefined and awaits the individual interpretation of the participants. It is a consistent finding in this body of literature that teachers value games (whatever games might refer to, e.g. digital, gamified platforms, off-the-shelf games) but do not necessarily use them in their classroom. This uncritical use of the term almost ubiquitously in research reflects the misconceptions in practice as well. This confusion was also found in our interviews with participants; a participant was surprised to

hear that an auction simulation in class that she had facilitated in class years ago *is* game-mediated teaching. Educating teachers in what can constitute game-informed or other game-mediated practice is essential in uncovering the potential of games for their own classes.

Bringing awareness into a) what a game is and what is not, b) the difference between "game" and "play", and c) the various pedagogical approaches that can be adopted in a game-mediated learning environment is of utmost importance. Establishing teachers' literacy not only around games, but also to different pedagogical approaches to games, can help teachers make their informed decisions and apply games in a way that is *meaningful* and *purposeful* to them. A tool on its own has no value; its value will be determined by its use. To ensure teacher wellbeing under novel pedagogies, it is essential that games are not uniformly and uncritically introduced. Slow integration approaches and being mindful of teachers' goals, context, and needs is essential to the implementation of successful game-mediated pedagogies, which can then in turn offer fertile ground for positive classroom experiences for both teachers and students.

Summary

This chapter has discussed the findings of this study through relevant research. Frequently reported emotions in general and language education are happiness, joy, frustration, care, and pride. All these emotions have their main antecedents to teachers' relationships with students. Indeed, in this study as well, emotions of happiness, enthusiasm, and pride were attributed to students' accomplishment and engagement in class. However, in this study, it was found that negatively connotated emotions, such as frustration and disappointment were not attributed to students' behaviour but were rather a reflection of teachers' competence in game-informed practices. Appraisal theory, which has widely been used in education for teachers' emotions, was thus found as not a helpful approach as teachers directed most of their "negative" emotions inwards but as a response to (un)pleasant

external stimuli. Participants, in line with game scholars in language education, voiced their concerns for the educational impact of gamification practices, and seemed to value more communicative games; yet, they recognized the motivational benefits of it. The PERMA model was also discussed in terms of contextualizing teachers' emotions, and I find that all its elements were clearly positioned in teachers' game-informed practice. Implications for AR include embracing a Self-Determination approach to teachers' professional development, and aiming to make the proposed change relatable, while reinforcing teachers' autonomy and competence throughout. AR needs to be both guiding and liberating. Implications for Teacher Education include strengthening teachers' games literacy and content knowledge by providing a multiperspectivity in how games could be introduced in classrooms, rather than being prescriptive and pushing for one and only way; change is more likely to meet with less resistance as long as teachers can identify with it and if it resonates with their goals. Implications for practice also highlight the latter aspect of games resonating with teachers' agendas; as long as games are used in a (pedagogically) informed way, in congruence with teachers' goals, then all approaches to game-mediated teaching serve a purpose.

6. CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

Introduction

This section summarises the discussed findings in relation to the research questions, presents limitations of this study and discusses future directions for research in the fields of emotions, Action Research and novel pedagogies.

6.1 Learnings & Contributions

This section puts together the main contributions of this study to theory, research, and practice, which were made possible through a post-structuralist epistemology. Hence, below, I discuss how post-structuralism can guide conceptualisation, shape inquiry and impact practice.

On the theoretical sphere:

The theoretical learnings of this study lie in conceptualising both emotions and games in educational settings post-structurally. Categorising hard-to-define concepts into binary terms may seem intuitive, e.g., categorising emotions into positive and negative, and categorising games into something fun while learning as something serious. However, this simplification can render more danger than intended, as it can lead to pursuing one over the other, or considering one or the other better, disregarding all context, intentions, and happenings.

Calling an emotion positive or negative has little to offer to the subject experiencing said emotion. Wellbeing is not about disallowing all that is negative; wellbeing is emotions being accepted for what they are without any value attached to them, but rather seeing what emotions do or why certain emotions were there in the first place. This thinking could allow for reflection and both professional and personal development. Happy teachers do not mean teachers having positive emotions all the time or pursuing such an agenda; Happy teachers in

this study meant active teachers, empowered, supported and being considered of their context and teaching goals.

Similar to how emotions are categorised into binary terms, learning and games suffer from a similar dichotomy. Standardised exams and curricula have made learning inadvertently attached to something structured and serious. But if we look at a definition of games, they, too, are structured and serious. Learning is also often associated with play: "For humans, real learning is always associated with pleasure and is ultimately a form of play—a principle almost always dismissed by schools." (Gee, p. 65). Games when put into the classroom context they immediately become fun objects. Re-conceptualising games as serious objects and learning as a fun object can help drive pedagogical decisions beyond the current limits that gamification has laid upon. Post-structurally understanding the terms of what a game and a lesson can be associated with can foster a proper rhetoric ground for re-conceptualising what needs to be (viewed) as fun and or serious.

Analysing emotions and teachers' practices in game-informed teaching through the PERMA model proved relevant as all its elements have a direct impact on language teacher psychology. It was found that applications of games in the classroom can contribute to building relationships, fostering engagement, and providing meaning and a sense of accomplishment to both teachers and learners. The Positive Psychology perspective to discussing findings of this study does not focus on the "positive" emotions, as this would be in contradiction to the post-structuralist lens under which emotions were analysed. Positive Psychology tenets were introduced in this thesis to make a case for proactive research in language teaching. Rather than treating emotions as good or bad, or catering to the treatment of the latter, this research aimed to explore what emotions do and how a novel pedagogy such as game-mediated teaching could contribute to teachers' wellbeing.

On the methodological domain:

The methodological learnings lie on the roles and relationship of the researcher with the participant, being again post-structurally interpreted, which is essential when conducting research in industry or practice. Normally, AR is practitioner-led research i.e., an individual plans to conduct change and research within their own professional context. For this study, AR was interpreted as soft-AR, and was researcher-led; the researcher determined the change and *the how of the research process*. However, the determined change was not prescribed; the change considered a pedagogy, that of game-informed teaching; *the how of this pedagogy* was implemented and decided by the participants.

Who is carrying out the research does not determine who holds more power in this relationship. It is not that the researcher is in greater power than the participant, neither is one more knowledgeable than the other. It is that both sides are experts in their own fields and bring together their own experiences and knowledge bases towards a common goal, which for AR, would be: promoting and implementing good practice.

The research participant will need to see how they can benefit from a research project in order to stay engaged and dedicate time and effort to it. To sustain such a level of engagement it is needed that learning takes place in some shape or form, through training or knowledge sharing. The researcher, acting post-structurally, should thus ideally provide as much ground for guidance as for freedom. The rationale behind AR is to bring about change that is meaningful to the individuals of a context. Hence, the change proposed should be constructed from the bottom-up, with the individual participants, and or in a co-constructed manner with the researcher if the latter bears knowledge and experience of the topic and area of change.

On practice: pedagogy and materials writing

The contributions to pedagogy of this study go beyond language education, as they generalise to general education as well. It was an undeniable fact throughout this study that language teachers found the game design and implementation process beneficial for them as practitioners but mostly and predominantly beneficial for their students. The challenges were there as well. The challenges were not due to what was being taught, i.e., English as a foreign language; the challenges were around how the subject was taught. Thinking of how a lesson could be made more fun or HOW a game could be serious enough so that it is in alignment with teachers' goals and current setting were the cornerstones of participants' pedagogical planning process. Questions that were raised from participants were: "was the game both educational and fun?"

It is high time for pedagogy to post-structurally define itself; is playful learning a non-serious pedagogy? Quizzes, tests, and other such standardised practices already bear that role of serious and monotonous practice and gamification has attached a rather fun identity to assessment to counter the originally serious roles of quizzes. It may seem easier to introduce play and fun during the assessment process, but what about the learning process? Learning is inherently fun and could be further made playful. Introducing playfulness in the curriculum meaningfully does not mean making a rigid and serious process, fun. Playful learning comes from redefining learning and realising that this is also made possible through games and play. Introducing thus games or playfulness into the curriculum should not be seen necessarily as bringing a box of cards into the classroom, but rather re-conceptualising how learning takes place and nurturing its characteristics, which similar to games, includes: exploration, immersion, teamwork, challenge, accomplishing goals.

Equally, it is high time for ELT publishers and materials writers to post-structurally embed playfulness in their resources. Instead of developing software with more gamified exercises in ELT textbooks, it is necessary to show how playfulness could be embedded. For

instance, Teachers' books already include ideas as to how certain tasks of the book could be presented to students; why not include ideas as to how a task could be done playfully? It is high time that games are seen for their true potential that spans from fun to serious and dedicated learning. One important step forward to re-conceptualising games and learning would be to normalise both game and play throughout the textbook and rather avoid placing a gamified exercise by the end of each unit as another reminiscent of a dated pedagogy: "Oh! You reached the end of the chapter, now, you have earned the right to play".

6.2 Reviewing Research Questions

Addressing RQ1, teacher participants seemed to view games in the most positive light, as vehicles of fun, engagement, and student motivation. The positive orientation teachers had towards games is inescapably a result of their volunteering for this study, an orientation which was also evident during pre-interviews with teachers highlighting that they were enthusiastic and happy for designing and applying games in their lessons. In their majority, teachers recognised games as happy objects for learning and as tools for building up students' involvement in learning as they introduce(d) gamification as a way to revise concepts in an intriguing and fun way. During the course of the study and after my workshop on meaningful gamification and game-based learning, teachers started to seek ways through which the integration of games principles would go beyond gamification and provide ground for meaningful communication and interaction in the target language. Teachers also saw games as creative practice not only as a way to entertain students but how their integration could push them to explore new modes of teaching.

Addressing RQ2, three fun rides were discussed which show how teachers' emotions fluctuate during the design of games and after their implementation in class. The most common one was the "Carousel", where teachers would experience primarily positively connotated emotions, such as happiness and enthusiasm for being involved in creative

practice, often paired with creative anxiety, and followed by emotions of pride and satisfaction due to students' engagement and accomplishment. The second is the "Pendulum" fun ride, the difference with the first being that during post-lesson reflections teachers showed an ambivalence between emotions of satisfaction and disappointment, and chose the latter, attributing it predominantly to their own perceived "failures" during delivery. What needs to be noted is that this pendulum was not found across all iterations with each participant and it was highly dependent on teachers' own resilience and reflection of practice. We would expect over time for teachers to build stronger knowledge and confidence over implementing games in the classroom, but unexpected events in classroom had certain teachers feel disappointed at some points and questioning their own practice. The post-structuralist approach tore down the walls of categorising emotions in positive and negative; even positive emotions such as initial enthusiasm prior to delivering a game in class escalated to feeling disappointed post-lesson, as the overconfidence of teachers was shattered by unexpected situations. The third ride was the "Extreme Rollercoaster" where teachers mainly reported emotions of frustration, guilt, disappointment, or powerlessness even though they were pretty enthusiastic when planning their game-informed activities. The reasons for these rather extreme emotions were attributed to teachers' own perceived failures during the implementation and a critical orientation as to whether the game-informed activity had both a motivational and educational impact on students. Overall, what made teachers happy was their involvement in creative practice, which stemmed from care for their students and their learning. Emotions of anxiety were reported to a low degree primarily attributed to teachers questioning themselves whether they were doing game-informed language teaching *the right way.* Post-lesson emotions were mixed; pride and satisfaction over students' learning and their own effort for making the game-informed activity work. Teachers' relationships with peers and the whole classroom atmosphere were factors that both boosted their enthusiasm,

happiness, and satisfaction when students were actively engaged and enjoying the designed activities. How students acted in class also contributed to teachers' frustration or disappointment, because of student disengagement or other disruptive behaviour, which was rare and most of the times not manifesting during the game-informed part of the lesson.

Addressing RQ3, one main issue that arose when teachers were designing the games concerned setting game goals that were concordant with their current syllabus and expectations. Teachers designed game-informed activities on two main anchors: a) have students practice a specific skill or language structure or b) assess students' knowledge on said skill or structure. When involved in the former practice, teachers were enthusiastic and proud over student engagement. When involved in the latter, participants seemed more critical towards it; they did recognise the benefits of motivating students and assessing students through more intriguing activities but at the same time were questioning how educational this was. Considering classroom dynamics, individual student characteristics, and peer-to-peer relationships, teachers had to think how to best scaffold certain activities, making them not too intimidating for students but challenging enough. When dividing students in teams during gameplay, teachers would also consider the power relationships between peers as they wanted to create a safe and positive environment for all. Finally, how much time should be dedicated to the "game" and how much time should be dedicated to the lesson was another theme; teachers seemed to have varying responses on this aspect too. They are aware of all the things that need to be covered in the book, and this causes pressure and stress. At the same time, participants do realise the educational value of games, especially when reflecting on their practice having witnessed students' achievements in the language in terms of competence and fluency.

Addressing RQ4, teachers during post-interviews realised that not only does preparing a game-informed activity requires time and effort, but also the implementation takes longer

than expected most of the time, especially because of the unstructured nature of game tasks. However, in all instances they would allow the game to take as much time as needed, and even when it was not finished during one class, they would continue it in the next.

Participants (teachers and students) treated games seriously in class. Teachers had mentioned in the pre-interviews that they would like students to have fun but also *learn.* So, games were followed by teachers' pedagogical expectations, e.g., using L2, taking turns (and being serious about it), awarding points. Teachers' individual style does not seem to change when handling a game-informed activity, as their values remain the same for making the activity inclusive, engaging all the students in class and highlighting the use of the second language. What was mainly different was that the game allowed for a more relaxed atmosphere and a fine equilibrium of power relationships as all participants were not following the rules of the teacher but the rules of the game, in line with the Magic Circle concept, as discussed in Section 5.1.

While implementing game-informed tasks in class, teachers found that they had not always considered thoroughly all game mechanics: e.g., what happens when two students land on the same square? Students during class were not shy to express themselves on how a game could be played, in terms of mechanics and winning conditions rather than content, e.g., they would propose how they could help their peers that were in the same team, they would interfere when they thought that someone was cheating, and they would follow teachers' example as to what conduct is good gameplay conduct (i.e. using L2). Students were particularly enthusiastic when a new game was presented in class and they would make positive exclamations, also giving positive feedback to the teacher when she asked whether they liked the game or would be interested in playing this again. Students' enthusiasm during gameplay was evident when asking questions on what happens next in the game, offering help to their peers, even interrupting others to voice their enthusiasm, complain over

perceived injustice, or offer a suggestion. Teachers would take into account students' responses in class and their interests and would modify game mechanics accordingly (either on the spot or in future lessons). Teachers were very eager to replay, or to redesign games that students seemed to enjoy. As far as I am aware through discussions after the data collection study was over, teachers continue using the games they have designed during the study, and I was very happy to hear that one of the participants has joined a board game creation group for teachers.

6.3 Limitations

Small sample size is the most frequently mentioned limitation for qualitative studies. However, I challenge that this is not the case for this research, firstly because there were at least two iterations with each participant given the longitudinal character of the study. Second of all, having more participants would bring an overwhelming amount of data, given that there were multiple instruments through which participants were researched. The COVID-19 epidemic also had a significant impact on retaining participants (given the accumulated workload). The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic was also evident when participants started dropping out in November when the governmental guidelines forced for emergency remote teaching. Hence, I do not see that the sample size is small for this study, given the historical context that had participants withdraw or engage inconsistently with research. This study had a specific context in mind, and both the schools and the teachers shared the idiosyncrasy of private language education in Greece but also had their own diverse experience and overall institutional philosophy. However, such Action-Research or other exploratory approaches need to be applied to other settings (high or low in game literacies) to be able to juxtapose differences in contexts, or uncover similarities, and thus be able to propose appropriate professional development opportunities and guidelines for embedding games in language teaching responsibly and sustainably.

Regarding the students' sample size, I do recognise that there were limited data from students; hence, it was impossible to juxtapose teachers' perceptions of students' emotions and the reflections of students themselves. Further, during the study, I noticed that the CIQ was hard for the younger learners to interpret and required teachers to explain the questions. Most questionnaires from younger learners received one-word responses; more data, however, were acquired during whole class conversations about the game.

This study would benefit if stimulated-recall interviews were also conducted (Gkonou, Dewaele, & King, 2020; Gkonou & Mercer, 2017), as this would maximise both the objectivity of classroom observation data but also involve teachers in deeper reflection and touch upon issues that they had not considered (aiding them to further professional development). The limited time of participants and their already engaging participation in design interviews and post-interviews, had me dismiss this research instrument as it would also make post-interviews longer as well. After doing the cost-benefit analysis, I decided that instead of showing teachers parts of their class, I would refer to incidents in class that I would like them to comment on. However, I recognise that stimulated recall interviews would allow for a deeper and more systematic view and reflection over critical classroom incidents.

Lastly, I recognise that this study focused on interpreting emotions mainly through subjective understandings, i.e., participants' own understanding and self-report of emotions and researchers' own understanding of emotions through classroom observation data. To add further rigour to the process, complementary measures would add to a more objective interpretation of the data and cover for inconsistencies of self-report measures. Such measures could be heart rate or facial expression analysis, as also suggested in Frenzel et al. (2021). However, care should be taken not to cross analyse behavioural data with self-report measures to ensure validity. As it was reiterated throughout different sections of this thesis, emotions are both "universal" and subjective, both individual and interpersonal. This thesis

focused primarily on the subjective expression of emotions as the aim was to explore emotions and analyse how this impacts practice, and vice versa. Subjective understanding of emotions should not be seen as inferior practice, as it is teachers' personal reflections on their own emotions that are defining what their personal truth is.

6.4 Future Research

Involving teachers actively in research is essential when proposing change in an educational context, both because teachers need to have a say in the change as they will be the agents that will be adopting this later. When it comes to introducing change in (language) education, I see no other way rather than involving constituents actively in research practice, be it teachers, students, parents, school heads and owners. For change to take place in the long-term, relevant stakeholders should see *how* change impacts their practice. Emancipatory Action Research and creative practice in language education research is needed to avoid seeing academia and practice as two unrelated domains. Future (AR) research needs to embrace more ecological understandings by involving all relevant stakeholders and voicing their perspectives. Juxtaposing positions of teachers versus students and parents in regard to the application of games in language education is needed to healthily establish games as a teaching tool.

This study focused on the idiosyncratic Greek ELT context and involved teachers and students from primary and secondary education level. Researching game-informed practices in other contexts, e.g., languages other than English, the teaching of other subjects, as well as higher education, is also needed. From a socio-political perspective, there would be value in comparing contexts where teachers vary in game literacies, or where games are more or less established in the curriculum.

Researching emotions has heavily relied on self-report measures and subjective understandings or solely on monitoring behavioural reactions. As mentioned earlier, bringing

together measures that produce both subjective and objective data is essential in establishing rigour in emotion research. What is most important, however, is for research to underline the epistemological theories encompassing each study and choose measures that correspond to the chosen underpinnings. A clear position of epistemological directions can justify and appropriately dictate the research measures to be taken and how emotions can (or cannot) be interpreted. A variety of epistemological stances is needed in emotion research, given that the field is highly nuanced, complex, and contextualised. Future research, for instance, could be positioned on a multiperspectivity in theorising and researching teachers and students' emotions and bring in both cognitive and interpretive measures of research.

Finally, apart from adopting different directions in emotion research, so should research in the game scholar community pivot. The overemphasis on research on gamification, which is often sold as researching game-based practices, misrepresents and misguides both future research and practice. It is not that game-based practices should be considered as superior to gamification processes (Sykes & Reindhardt, 2012), but definitions should be provided for each study. At this point I would also like to call for more research on game-informed and game-enhanced language teaching, as these are less represented in research. As this thesis has demonstrated, game-informed approaches can prove valuable for pedagogical practice.

Conclusion

Research has shown that emotions are better understood in positive and negative. Participants explained that reality is much more nuanced. Teachers themselves would refer to emotions of frustration and powerlessness as positive ones. Teachers would see their own anxiety as a manifestation of care towards their students' learning and because of them being engaged in creative practice.

Some researchers view emotions as private constructs while others view emotions as social constructs. This distinction was rejected by participants' responses. Teachers would speak of how their own cognition and beliefs influenced their positive emotionality towards designing games: "games make everyone happy; I am enthusiastic for designing one". Teachers would also speak of how their exchanges in the classroom context triggered emotions of enthusiasm within: "I see my students excited, I am excited".

Games are not always seen as serious practice; a belief that was shattered by participants. Teachers saw the difficulty of creating a game, reconsidered their practice for using tests as assessment and not games: "But wait! Students play seriously". Teachers also reconsidered the impact of games on communication skills during the study: "I was surprised that they were so fluent".

I believed that gamification is the devil; game-based teaching is the way forward. This was shattered by my own reflections after the first iterations with teachers and due to the emergency online teaching context. Categorising things in good or bad is the way backwards. Introducing change is not a linear nor a one-size-fits-all process. Gamification has its own merits, game-enhanced and game-informed practices have other merits. Recognising contextual needs is essential and sometimes taking small steps is safer than introducing radical change.

I will finish off this long piece of work and co-constructed knowledge with one of my participant's quotes, as a desperate plea for bringing more attention to language teacher psychology and truly emancipatory research approaches:

> *It's weird; it's always teachers, though. I mean you rarely go to the dentist and say you know, "last time that I came and you fixed my teeth, I think you didn't do that right". You will go to your teacher and say "Uhm you know my kids didn't understand the way you said it and I had to explain it". I mean, why do we do that? (T8, post-interview 4)*

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Recruitment Letter

Dear Sir/Madam,

I would like to invite you to participate in the research project I am undertaking for my PhD studies. I am Stamatia Savvani and I study Applied Linguistics at the University of Essex. The research project is titled: Language teachers' emotions on game-based learning instruction: reflections throughout a schoolyear.

The aim of this study is to investigate language teacher emotions and attitudes to game-based learning instruction. This study will be an intervention study that will take place throughout a school year in your (child's) institution. Through an Action Research cycle, language teachers will reflect on the method used, the classes will be observed; teachers and students will be interviewed and or asked to complete short questionnaires. Your participation in the research is completely voluntary and does not entail any risks to the participants. On the contrary, this study can be an ideal continuous professional development opportunity for teachers, as they will be trained and work together with the researcher (myself). Anonymity and confidentiality are guaranteed by the researcher, and participants may withdraw at any point during the research.

If you are interested in participating in this research or have additional questions for this project, feel free to contact me or my Supervisor (see contact info below).

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Stamatia Savvani PhD student, Department of Language and Linguistics, University of Essex e-mail: stamatia.savvani@essex.ac.uk

Supervisor: Dr Christina Gkonou, Department of Language and Linguistics, University of Essex; e-mail: c.gkono@essex.ac.uk

Appendix B: Interview Guide

<u>**Semi-structured Interview Guideline with EFL teachers**</u>

Pre-interview questions: Emotions before delivering a game-informed class

- Of the twenty emotions listed below choose the ones that reflect how you feel about delivering a game-based learning class?

Happiness	Frustration
Sadness	Disappointment
Irritation	Disillusion
Anxiety	Guilt
Disgust	Despair
Fascination	Caring
Pride	Love
Enthusiasm	Powerlessness
Awe	Satisfaction
Loss	Boredom

- Why do you feel that way?

- What do you think will go right or wrong in a game-based learning class?

- How do you think your students will feel about game-based learning class?

- What aspects did you enjoy most or least about training you received on game-based learning?

Post-interview questions: Emotions after delivering a game-based learning class

- Of the twenty emotions listed below choose the ones that reflect how you feel about today's class? (see same list of emotions as above)

- What were the strongest emotions and why did you feel that way?

- What went right or wrong in today's class?

- What did you enjoy most and least about this class?

- What would you do differently next time?

- How do you think your students feel about today's class?

Appendix C:Teachers' Questionnaire

Teachers' attitudes to Game-based language teaching

Q24 CONSENT FORM   Project: **Teachers' attitudes to Game-based language teaching**
Researcher: Stamatia Savvani (Department of Language and Linguistics) The participant Information Sheet can be found here: Information_Sheet   Please put your initials in every box, if you agree to participate. Thank you :)

☐   1. I confirm that I have read and understand the Information Sheet dated 20/11/2019 for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these questions answered satisfactorily. (13)
_____

☐   2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without giving any reason and without penalty. (9)
_____

☐   3.   I understand that the identifiable data provided will be securely stored and accessible only to the members of the research team directly involved in the project, and that confidentiality will be maintained. (10)
_____

☐   4.   I understand that my fully anonymised data will be used in a report or a webpage, which will summarise the findings of the project. (11)
_____

☐   5. I agree to take part in the above study. (12)
_____

Q1 Gender

○ Male (1)

○ Female (2)

○ Other: (3) _____

○ Prefer not to say (4)

Q3 What classes do you teach? Please check all that apply.

☐　　Junior (up to pre-A1) (1)

☐　　Elementary (A1-A2) (2)

☐　　Intermediate (B1-B2) (3)

☐　　Advanced (C1-C2) (4)

☐　　Other: (5) _____

Q22 What age are your learners? (Please provide a number or a range)

_____

Q4 How many years have you been teaching English?

○ 0-5 years (1)

○ 6-10 years (2)

○ 11-19 years (3)

○ 20+ years (4)

Q5 Do you use games in your English language classroom?

○ Yes (1)

○ Maybe (2)

○ No (3)

End of Block: About you

Start of Block: Using Games in ELT

Q7 What are the reasons that hinder your from employing games in the language classroom? Please check all that apply.

☐   I do not like games (1)

☐   I do not feel games have pedagogical value (2)

☐   I do not have the necessary resources or equipment to use games (3)

☐   Games are not appropriate for my students' level (4)

☐   My school/institution does not support the use of games in the classroom (5)

☐   I do not know how to use games for the language classroom (6)

☐   I do not think that there are good games for language learning (7)

☐   Other (Please specify): (8)

_____

Q20 Would you like to receive further training on how to use/ create games for the language classroom?

○ Yes (1)

○ Maybe (2)

○ No (3)

End of Block: Using Games in ELT

Start of Block: Participating in Action Research

Q18 If you would like to participate in a training intervention and an action research project about games for language learning, please write your email below and I will contact you with

further information. Otherwise, press submit.
Thank you for completing the questionnaire! :)

_____

Q25 If you would like to discuss anything related to this research project, feel free to contact me at: stamatia.savvani@essex.ac.uk

End of Block: Participating in Action Research

Start of Block: Using Games in ELT

Q9 What kind of games do you use in your English language class? Please check all that apply.

☐ Online/ digital games (1)

☐ Commercial board/card games (2)

☐ Physical games (3)

☐ Games I have created (4)

☐ Games available on e-books (5)

☐ Other (please specify): (6)

_____

Q10 How often do you use games in your English language class?

○ On a daily basis (1)

○ Sometimes (2)

○ Rarely (3)

○ Never (4)

Q11 Why do you choose to use games in your class, and for what purposes? (Please explain briefly; maximum: 30 words)

_____

Q12 How do your students react to games in the classroom? (Please explain briefly; maximum: 30 words)

_____

Q13 What is your interaction with students when employing games in the classroom?

☐ I explain the rules to students, and let them play. (1)

☐ I supervise the students and offer feedback while they are playing. (2)

☐ I am an active player in the game we are playing in class. (3)

☐ I observe my students play. I interfere when absolutely necessary. (4)

☐ I let students take control. I simply stand on the side. (5)

☐ Other (please specify): (6)

_____

Q14 How do you feel about using games in the classroom? (Please explain briefly; maximum: 30 words)

_____

Q15 Have you ever created your own games/gameful activities for the language classroom?

○ Yes (1)

○ Maybe (2)

○ No (3)

Q16 Please provide an example of a game/gameful activity you have created. (Please explain briefly; maximum: 60 words)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q17 Would you like to receive further training on how to use/ create games for the language classroom?

◯ Yes (1)

◯ Maybe (2)

◯ No (3)

End of Block: Using Games in ELT

Appendix D: Students CIQ Questionnaire

A Greek translation of the CIQ questionnaire, as developed by Stephen Brookfield (see questionnaire and full reference below) will be handed out to students ten minutes before the end of a game-based learning class.

Critical Incident Questionnaire (CIQ)

This is a classroom evaluation tool that may be used to find out what and how students are learning. The CIQ focuses on critical moments or actions in a class, as judged by the learners. Beneath each question, a space is provided for learners to write down whatever they wish. The CIQ is handed out about ten minutes before the end of the last class of the week. The five questions are always the same and students are asked to respond anonymously.

1. At what moment in class this week were you most engaged as a learner? (Explain in about 30 words).

2. At what moment in class this week were you most distanced as a learner?

(Explain in about 30 words).

3. What action that anyone in the room took this week did you find the most affirming or

helpful (Explain in about 30 words)?

4. What action that anyone in the room took this week did you find most puzzling or confusing? (Explain in about 30 words).

5. What surprised you most about class this week? (Explain in about 30 words).

References:

Brookfield, S. D. (2017). Becoming a critically reflective teacher. John Wiley & Sons.

Appendix E: Teachers' Participant Information Sheet & Consent Form

Teachers' Participant Information Sheet

Language teachers' emotions on game-based learning instruction: reflections throughout a schoolyear

07/01/2021

My name is Stamatia Savvani and I am a PhD student, studying Applied Linguistics at the University of Essex. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why this research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

What is the purpose of this study?

The aim of this study is to investigate language teacher emotions and attitudes to game-based learning instruction. This study will be an intervention study that will take place throughout a school year in the school/institution you are currently working. Through an action-research cycle, language teachers will apply game-based language teaching methodologies and reflect on the method, the classes will be observed; teachers will be interviewed, and students will be asked to complete short questionnaires.

Why have I been invited to participate?

You are being invited to participate in this study because research into language teacher emotions and practice is much needed on the field. Your knowledge and experiences are invaluable to me. As this is primarily an action-research study, and close contact with the researcher is required, it can also be viewed as a Continuous Professional Development opportunity.

Do I have to take part?

Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. If you do decide to take part, you will be asked to provide written consent. You are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason. Withdrawal with have no impact at all. If you choose to withdraw, your data will be destroyed immediately. If you have a question about the ethical nature of this study, please contact the researcher, Stamatia Savvani (stamatia.savvani@essex.ac.uk).

What will happen to me if I take part?

This study requires participants to attend training provided by the researcher and complete a short questionnaire. Participants will also be asked to plan gameful activities with the guidance of the researcher and apply them in their language classrooms. The classes will be observed (online or on-site) by the researcher and will be audio/video recorded. Teacher participants will also be interviewed, which will be audio/video recorded. The data collected will be anonymised, kept in a safe place, and destroyed after the research has been completed.

Your words may be quoted or summarised in the findings of the study. You will not be identifiable as your real names and any personal data will not appear in this study.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

By participating in this study, the utmost care will be taken that no harm to your psychological wellbeing, physical health values or dignity will be affected. Taking part also means that participants must give up some of their free time. Interviews will last about 30 minutes each, while designing gameful lessons may take up to 1hour.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

The benefit of this study is that it will further our understanding of teachers' emotions and application of innovative pedagogies, i.e. game-based language teaching. Given the reflective and action-research character of this study, participation can also be seen as a Continuous Professional Development opportunity.

Will my information be kept confidential?

Only the researcher and the researcher's supervisor (see name and contact details below) will have access to the data. Your privacy will be respected at all times and all information collected will be anonymous and remain completely confidential. Numbers will be used to anonymise participants. All data will be treated as personal under the 1998 Data Protection Act, and they will be secured electronically in my own laptop which contains a secure password.

What is the legal basis for using the data and who is the Data Controller?

Should you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to sign a consent form before the study commences. The GDPR states that consent must be freely-given, specific, informed and unambiguous – given by a statement or a clear affirmative action.

The Data Controller will be the University of Essex and the contact will be Sara Stock, University Information Assurance Manager (dpo@essex.ac.uk).

Ethical approval

This project has been reviewed on behalf of the University of Essex Social Sciences Ethics Sub-Committee and has been given approval.

What will happen to the results of this study?

The results of this study will form part of my PhD study at the University of Essex. Please remember that the results are anonymised and therefore participants will not be identifiable. If you choose to participate, a copy of this study can be sent to you upon request.

What should I do if I want to take part?

If you wish to take part in this study, please let me know via email Stamatia Savvani at stamatia.savvani@essex.ac.uk.

Concerns and complaints

If you have any concerns about any aspect of the study or you have a complaint, in the first instance please contact the researcher (see contact details below). If are still concerned or you think your complaint has not been addressed to your satisfaction, please contact the Departmental Ethics Officer (Dr Ella Jeffries, e.jeffries@essex.ac.uk). If you are still not satisfied, please contact the University's Research Governance and Planning Manager, Sarah Manning-Press (sarahm@essex.ac.uk).

Contact details

Researcher
Stamatia Savvani, Department of Language and Linguistics, stamatia.savvani@essex.ac.uk

Supervisor
Christina Gkonou, Department of Language and Linguistics, cgkono@essex.ac.uk

Teachers' Consent Form

Title of the Project: **Language teachers' emotions on game-based learning instruction: reflections throughout a schoolyear**

Researcher: Stamatia Savvani (Department of Language and Linguistics)

Please initial box

1. **I confirm that I** have read and understand the Information Sheet dated 07/01/2021 for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these questions answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without giving any reason and without penalty.

3. Participating involves participating in a workshop/seminar delivered by the researcher; taking part in online interviews, which will be audio/video recorded. Also, participants' online or on-site classes will be observed by the researcher and will be audio/video recorded.

4. I understand that the identifiable data provided will be securely stored and accessible only to the researcher and supervisor, and that confidentiality will be maintained.

5. I understand that my fully anonymised data will be used in a report, which will summarise the findings of the project. The report will be submitted to the University of Essex as part of my coursework.

6. I agree to take part in the above study.

Participant Name   Date   Participant Signature

_____ _____ _____

Researcher Name   Date   Researcher Signature

_____ _____ _____

Appendix F: Students' Participant Information Sheet and Parental Consent Form

Students' Participant Information Sheet

Language teachers' emotions on game-based learning instruction: reflections throughout a schoolyear

07/01/2021

My name is Stamatia Savvani and I am a PhD student, studying Applied Linguistics at the University of Essex. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why this research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

What is the purpose of this study?

The aim of this study is to investigate language teacher emotions and attitudes to game-based learning instruction. This study will be an intervention study that will take place throughout a school year in your child(ren)'s school/institution. Through an action-research cycle, language teachers will apply game-based language teaching methodologies and reflect on the method, the classes will be observed; teachers will be interviewed, and students will be asked to complete short questionnaires.

Why have I been invited to participate?

Your child(ren) is/are being invited to participate in this study because research into language teacher emotions and practice is much needed on the field. Their classroom experiences are invaluable to me.

Do I have to take part?

Participation in this study is strictly voluntary. If you do decide your child(ren) to take part, you will be asked to provide written consent. You are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason. Withdrawal with have no impact at all on your child(ren)'s marks/progress. If you choose to withdraw, your data will be destroyed immediately. If you have a question about the ethical nature of this study, please contact the researcher, Stamatia Savvani (stamatia.savvani@essex.ac.uk).

What will happen to me if I take part?

This study requires student participants to complete a short questionnaire by the end of a class, on which game-based language teaching has been applied. The classes will also be observed (online or on-site) by the researcher and will be audio/video recorded. The data collected will be anonymised, kept in a safe place, and destroyed after the research has been completed. Your child/children's words may be quoted or summarised in the findings of the

study. You will not be identifiable as your child's/children's real names and any personal data will not appear in this study.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

By participating in this study, the utmost care will be taken that no harm to your child(ren) psychological wellbeing, physical health values or dignity will be affected.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

The benefit of this study is that it will further our understanding of teachers' emotions and offer insight as to the optimal application of innovative pedagogies, i.e. game-based language teaching.

Will my information be kept confidential?

Only the researcher and the researcher's supervisor (see name and contact details below) will have access to the data. Your child's/children's privacy will be respected at all times and all information collected will be anonymous and remain completely confidential. Numbers will be used to anonymise participants. All data will be treated as personal under the 1998 Data Protection Act, and they will be secured electronically in my own laptop which contains a secure password.

What is the legal basis for using the data and who is the Data Controller?

Should you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to sign a consent form before the study commences. The GDPR states that consent must be freely-given, specific, informed and unambiguous – given by a statement or a clear affirmative action.

The Data Controller will be the University of Essex and the contact will be Sara Stock, University Information Assurance Manager (dpo@essex.ac.uk).

Ethical approval

This project has been reviewed on behalf of the University of Essex Social Sciences Ethics Sub-Committee and has been given approval.

What will happen to the results of this study?

The results of this study will form part of my PhD study at the University of Essex. Please remember that the results are anonymised and therefore participants will not be identifiable. If you choose to participate, a copy of this study can be sent to you upon request.

What should I do if I want to take part?

If you wish your child(ren) to take part in this study, the teacher participant will provide you with a Parental Consent form for you to complete. You can also let me know of any concerns or questions via email Stamatia Savvani at stamatia.savvani@essex.ac.uk.

Concerns and complaints

If you have any concerns about any aspect of the study or you have a complaint, in the first instance please contact the researcher (see contact details below). If are still concerned or you think your complaint has not been addressed to your satisfaction, please contact the Departmental Ethics Officer (Dr Ella Jeffries, e.jeffries@essex.ac.uk). If you are still not satisfied, please contact the University's Research Governance and Planning Manager, Sarah Manning-Press (sarahm@essex.ac.uk).

Contact details

<u>Researcher</u>
Stamatia Savvani, Department of Language and Linguistics, stamatia.savvani@essex.ac.uk

<u>Supervisor</u>
Christina Gkonou, Department of Language and Linguistics, cgkono@essex.ac.uk

Parental Consent Form

Title of the Project: **Language teachers' emotions on game-based learning instruction: reflections throughout a schoolyear**

Researcher: Stamatia Savvani (Department of Language and Linguistics)

Please initial box

1. **I confirm that I** have read and understand the Information Sheet dated 07/01/2021 for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these questions answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my child's/children's participation is voluntary and that they are free to withdraw from the project at any time without giving any reason and without penalty.

3. Participating will involve my child(ren) completing short questionnaires. Also, my child's/children's online or on-site classes will be observed by the researcher and will be audio/video recorded.

4. I understand that the identifiable data provided will be securely stored and accessible only to the researcher and supervisor, and that confidentiality will be maintained.

5. I understand that my child's/children's fully anonymised data will be used in a report, which will summarise the findings of the project. The report will be submitted to the University of Essex as part of my coursework.

6. I agree for my child/children to take part in the above study.

Participant Name   Date   Participant Signature

_____   _____ _____

Researcher Name   Date   Researcher Signature

_____   _____ _____

Appendix G: Example of Interview Transcript

Timespan	Content	Speaker
0:01.0 - 0:12.0	Recording has started. So first, I'd like us to go through what you'll be doing. And the next lesson, appertaining to the gameful activity.	Stamatia Savvani
0:13.0 - 5:52.6	Okay. So on Friday during our last lesson, I explained the situation, the scenario I told the kids to imagine the hypothetical situation a dilemma which would make them feel unsure about how to react so perhaps it would be an awkward event or an embarrassing one or one that confuses them. I told them to explain the situation in two sentences and then to make a list of possible reactions immediate action reactions to that situation. Then another list of emotional reactions. Because we had discussed what emotions are, you know, in a previous lesson to that. Namely, that they would be deeply felt bodily felt reactions, such as fear, for example. And then a third column. That would be a list of feelings as opposed to emotions. And again, we had previously discussed that feelings as opposed to emotions are what happens when you add thoughts to emotions. So you have any emotion, then you start thinking and your brain tells you how or your brain dictates how you now feel. So anyway, that was the assignment and before we I explained that each student would choose another in the class to role play to act this out. But before they did that in class, I wanted them each to write down how they themselves would react and explain how they themselves would react both bodily emotionally and in terms of feelings. So that they would be ready for the class and then during the class when the other person responded, we could follow up with a conversation between the two a discussion between the two as to how the same or different their responses would be. Now, having thought about this a little bit after the class and just imagining a situation. I see that I had asked them to come up with a long list, like, you know, just, just because I was interested in vocabulary words and stuff but now, in retrospect, I'm thinking because I was doing it that 15 words in each list is way, way too long, considering the fact that the basic emotions are very few five or six essentially from the list that I see. And although feelings could be many, I guess I could adjust my, my, the assignment, a little bit to say that they could have a possible a possible five or six emotions and they could have up to 15 feelings and I would also do another thing, which is to sort of make even more clear. What I mean by action reactions versus emotions. So I'm not sure that I made that very, very clear. You know, they might have understood but I'm not convinced that everyone did so I probably before the we actually run the thing. I'll explain that. What I meant by the bodily reaction is how what they would actually do physically. Why would they choose to do what they choose to you know, laugh out loud, would they choose to run away, would they choose to get into a fight, would they immediately. How would they not choose that wrong word, I guess, what would they, what would their immediate reaction be physically Okay, so that's basically it. And one situation. I don't know	T9

	how you what you would think about this one hypothetical situation that I that I thought about was, was this: So I see my friend's boyfriend kissing another girl, and he sees that I saw. A few days later I see him and my friend together as usual. And I wonder whether I should tell her about what I saw.	
5:55.6 - 5:56.8	That's a nice example.	Stamatia Savvani
5:58.2 - 6:25.4	Well, Right. The thing is, I'm wondering now though. Because I'm giving two time occasions here. When I first And when I see them again. So it's like a double up on this. So I'm not sure if that's allowed	T9
6:27.7 - 6:32.4	Feel free to experiment. You can stop it. When you say, and he sees me	Stamatia Savvani
6:33.9 - 7:20.3	Right, and he sees that I saw right I Thought I would do that now. And that would be simple, but then I but then I thought, um, oftentimes we don't do anything for a few days. And times we sit on something for a few days and then something happens. Right and it becomes more real like this was more real to me. But you're right. I might I'm wondering now whether it would be appropriate for me to ask each student before the class tomorrow is Monday and we're going to do this on Tuesday. And I have them on Monday. I'm wondering whether I would ask them to privately, send me the scenario so that I could see that it was appropriate. I don't. What do you think	T9
7:20.8 - 7:22.3	I think that's a good idea.	Stamatia Savvani
7:23.6 - 7:24.0	Okay.	T9
7:24.1 - 7:39.2	And if there are also to ensure like that, that everything they've written can be understood that there are not- that there is no wording that could be confusing to other students.	Stamatia Savvani
7:39.8 - 7:43.7	Okay, so I'll do that then Okay.	T9
7:46.1 - 8:45.1	And as far as the words are concerned, the list of words and one idea could be that when-before you begin with the stories you could have on the board, for example, or on your screen. And here's a PowerPoint presentation three slides it will be the list and everyone mentions what they've put on the list and then you can evaluate together how much goes into each list and what so that they have a common point of reference and that results can be consistent if they want to do this with the same story with another student or whatever. Maybe they would like to play it on their own as well. I would like to.	Stamatia Savvani
8:46.1 - 9:00.0	Um, okay. So you're saying, um, how to do that. I'm not sure out I'm technologically capable of doing that. I'm	T9
9:00.3 - 9:12.2	or maybe using the zoom chat as well, like, have them type in their answers and then come up with a final list or have another student of the PowerPoint	Stamatia Savvani

	and share screen with	
9:13.6 - 9:26.6	Oh, that's a good idea. Yeah, yeah, yeah. That's an excellent idea. I'm sure one of the students could do that. So we could all- should we do this on the previous day or on the actual day?	T9
9:27.7 - 9:48.3	It could be on the actual day as well. Yeah, depending on how much time you want to allow for this activity in your lesson. If you have other things to do or you'd like to keep it to 20 minutes. For example, maybe you want to do the words in the previous lesson. Depends.	Stamatia Savvani
9:51.4 - 10:23.9	Yeah okay I'll see tomorrow, okay, I'll see you tomorrow. All right. Okay. That's a good idea. Yeah. I did, to some extent, discuss some of these you know possibilities of things that could go on the list on Friday. But you're right. I think it should be made more clear and visible.	T9
10:25.0 - 10:34.7	Up to 10 items would be 10-15 items would be okay. Even if for emotions there are fewer. That's okay. Doesn't have to be	Stamatia Savvani
10:35.2 - 10:35.7	Yeah.	T9
10:37.9 - 10:41.2	consistent across the list.	Stamatia Savvani
10:42.2 - 10:45.8	Yeah, that's true. Okay. Okay.	T9
10:50.0 - 11:01.2	I think you were clear in your instructions about the physical reaction you give very explicit examples. So I think they understood	Stamatia Savvani
11:02.0 - 11:07.0	Yeah, we'll See, we'll see. Okay.	T9
11:08.0 - 11:10.6	And I'm very curious with the stories that they will come up	Stamatia Savvani
11:10.7 - 11:41.7	Yeah. Me too. Me too. I can't wait me too; Me too. because it's a challenge, actually. Because I was thinking of any number of things. And I thought, You know, it has to be the even the example that I that I would come up with has to be something they could relate to. So	T9
11:46.3 - 11:51.3	It's a very good idea that they come up with a story so that they will feel more comfortable.	Stamatia Savvani
11:52.7 - 12:05.9	I'll give an example on Friday. Because I know they would have been influenced Yeah. Yeah, well, we'll see. Okay.	T9
12:07.1 - 12:43.1	Great. So next up, I have some interview questions for you. Yep. So as a first question, I'll send you in the zoom chat a list of 20 emotions. And I would like you to tell me which ones reflect how you feel about delivering this game for task.	Stamatia Savvani
12:43.5 -	Okay.	T9

12:44.3		
12:53.5 - 13:05.0	There it is. Some, some words look like they are connected like anxiety and guilt, but they are separate words	Stamatia Savvani
13:05.8 - 13:33.9	You know Tia. I'm going to try to do this. I don't do it on the tablet. I'm going to try to do a tablet, because I was doing something else. So let me see if I can I join the meeting here where I can see everything on a bigger screen.	T9
13:52.2 - 14:08.8	The audio is echoing.	Stamatia Savvani
14:08.8 - 14:09.5	Hold on.	T9
14:17.0 - 14:17.9	Okay, okay.	T9
14:29.6 - 14:37.7	Would you like me to send this over on Viber- the list of emotions?	Stamatia Savvani
14:45.7 - 14:53.3	Okay. Can you see me? Can you hear me?	T9
14:53.4 - 14:54.8	Yes. Everything is clear now.	Stamatia Savvani
15:00.7 - 15:03.5	Is it is a reverberation or anything?	T9
15:03.8 - 15:09.1	No, nothing. Okay.Alright.	Stamatia Savvani
15:10.3 - 15:14.4	So let me see the chat. Where is the chat?	T9
15:15.5 - 15:20.7	if you hover your mouse over the top or bottom of your screen.	Stamatia Savvani
15:20.8 - 15:28.2	I see the chat. They see that I open the chat window, but I don't see any words.	T9
15:29.1 - 15:32.8	Maybe, maybe I'll resend it again because	Stamatia Savvani
15:53.3 - 15:58.1	Yes. Okay. So what do you want me to do?	T9
15:59.1 - 16:09.8	And from this list of emotions. I want you to tell me to choose the ones that reflect how you feel about delivering a take this game full task, you've designed	Stamatia Savvani
16:12.5 - 18:16.9	Okay, I think I'm I think that I admit that I have a little bit of anxiety. Not too much, but a little bit because I want the students to enjoy this. And I'm hopeful. I don't see hope here. But anyway, let's say I'm hopeful. Excuse me (caughing), that I'll be proud of their work. I don't expect to be irritated. I don't expect to feel irritation, but it's likely that I will (laughs) because sometimes people won't be speaking When they should be well because there'll be embarrassed or for whatever reason. And then I'll be irritated. And it's, it's likely that I might feel powerless uhm because I won't be able to get out of them what I want to be getting out of them. And let's see. I	T9

	guess my ultimate goal will be for me and them to feel enthusiastic. I hope that this will happen. Yeah. I yeah well okay I guess I better say that I Frustration is also a possibility (laughs). If things don't go smoothly. That's also possible. Yeah.	
18:20.1 - 18:31.4	Is there a particular emotion word from the ones from the list or in another one that you may feel a that is particularly strong or dominant?	Stamatia Savvani
18:32.6 - 19:34.0	Huh. Eager, you don't have that here, but I think that's what I am. I'm eager to see what happens, what they come up with the reactions. Of, you know, because of the content, actually the understand what I mean, because I think the stories have interest for me what they come up with. Not, not you know the all the negative emotions, feelings, all the negative feelings are results of technicality failures, possibly, but the actual content of it is, it is interesting to me. And I'm eager to see what happens.	T9
19:38.7 - 19:40.1	I'm curious about that.	Stamatia Savvani
19:40.9 - 19:45.8	Yeah, yeah, yeah. It is a good one. Curiosity is a good word. Yes.	T9
19:48.2 - 20:08.8	And so you mentioned about The technicalities that might go wrong. For example, could you offer an example of things of such things that can go wrong either that that you refer to technicalities or anything else.	Stamatia Savvani
20:17.0 - 21:32.8	So you're asking me to describe what how we might go wrong. Is that what you're saying. Yeah. So since we discussed that I'll edit what they say first not edit. But make sure that it's clear what they say is clear. I'm worried that the other person might have my still not understand. I'm worried that they might not get it. And might, you know, just not engage in a meaningful conversation and meaningful discussion. Again, because they're too embarrassed because they don't want to put themselves out there because they don't find it interesting or whatnot, for whatever reason, if they don't engage. I will be you know, as I said, frustrated and disappointed and everything else. So the technical part is I guess. Not fully understanding that that the purpose is to engage and to have a discussion. Yeah.	T9
21:34.4 - 21:43.3	Okay, and what about things that will possibly go wrong. Right. What do you think, what do you think is going to go right?	Stamatia Savvani
21:44.6 - 22:43.9	Yeah, I'm I would be very happy if they used Vocabulary in in the correct way if they expressed feelings in in a meaningful way if they if they constructed sentences and you know thoughts in such a way as to communicate what they actually feel what they; you know, how that their reaction to it all is similar or different to from the other person. You know, just a whole a whole discussion I I'm hopeful that this will go well. And that's what I'm eager to see	T9
22:48.9 - 23:11.1	Earlier you mentioned that students may be hesitant to talk or embarrassed to put their selves out I, how do you think that apart from that, how else do you think your students are going to feel?	Stamatia Savvani

23:11.6 - 23:27.0	Oh yeah, yeah, that'll be I think they'll be very pleased that we're not doing regular exercises or taking a quiz or doing dictation or testing or any of the normal crap that we do. I think that'd be happy about that.	T9
23:33.5 - 23:49.5	And is there anything else you'd like to comment on the on the lesson that's coming up or any general comments/predictions?	Stamatia Savvani
23:51.9 - 25:17.2	Well because it's so limited in scope. I think you know it's fairly easy to just See the whole thing, you know, the parameters are pretty clear. It's not an open-ended kind of situation so I'm thinking that even if it goes not as well as it could during the first round. Let's say you know the first two students but because there are five students altogether, like the fifth time it happens by the fifth time or whatever. I mean, I think it will be It will be done correctly, I used to do simulations and all kinds of other things which at the time, you know, 20-25, 30 years ago, I didn't think they're games, but I used to do a lot of simulations in another world, and they were very complicated now in retrospect. So, compared to those this this is tiny. I feel like, you know, okay. We're gonna be able to do this. Easy peasy.	T9
25:19.1 - 25:40.3	Thanks, and something you mentioned; so, You're planning to have students talk to take turns talking about their story to as a specific other, right? it's not going to be one student at a time talking, right?	Stamatia Savvani
25:42.8 - 25:43.3	Pair	T9
25:43.9 - 26:29.3	Mm hmm. And what I was thinking. If you'd like to consider this a Maybe they could all if they if you come up with a list of reactions that's common for everyone. Maybe you ask from all of them tourists, how they would respond or Maybe Listen, first, first the parent. That's comparing and then also have a brief very brief 30 sort of discussion with everyone else to compare or yeah	Stamatia Savvani
26:29.9 - 26:32.2	That's, that's, that's a very good idea.	T9
26:34.6 - 26:40.0	So I'm because I'm thinking for everyone to be involved. At the same time, maybe	Stamatia Savvani
26:40.0 - 26:40.4	They have	T9
26:41.1 - 26:48.6	Some guessing and maybe they send their guesses only privately to you. Yeah, chat box.	Stamatia Savvani
26:50.4 - 26:57.3	Yeah, no, no, no, no, though, if somebody has something to say. They'll say, So, yeah.	T9
26:57.8 - 26:58.7	Just a thought.	Stamatia Savvani
26:59.3 -	Yeah.	T9

26:59.7		
27:00.9 - 27:06.2	But feel free to experiment, however you like about this. I'm just throwing in ideas.	Stamatia Savvani
27:06.4 - 27:25.0	And I know we generally we do that anyway. I mean, but the reason why I like the idea of picking a student to respond, is because often when you when you open it up it's the same one or two students who takes the initiative and the same have a couple of students who are just laid back so	T9
27:25.1 - 27:25.6	Yeah.	T9
27:26.6 - 27:26.8	I	Stamatia Savvani
27:28.1 - 27:28.4	Yeah.	T9
27:29.6 - 27:33.4	It would be also interesting to see who they choose.	Stamatia Savvani
27:34.1 - 27:59.9	Yes, precisely right Right. So I'm wondering whether I should limit that-their choice. Like, what if everyone chooses you know-it's not- It is possible that the same person may respond more than once or twice. And that wouldn't be good. So maybe I should say at the beginning like choose a person who hasn't spoken yet.	Maria
28:01.9 - 28:12.0	Yeah. I think they'll go like the two boys together and then they the girls will go together.	Stamatia Savvani
28:12.3 - 28:13.3	Yeah, we'll see.	T9
28:15.3 - 28:17.3	You can also play if you like,	Stamatia Savvani
28:19.3 - 28:19.7	Yeah.	T9
28:20.0 - 28:20.3	Sure.	T9
28:21.9 - 28:22.3	Or you	Stamatia Savvani
28:23.5 - 28:24.4	Yeah yeah I have my scenario.	T9
28:25.8 - 28:32.2	If a student hasn't spoken and everyone I don't remember, it's an even number?	Stamatia Savvani
28:33.2 - 28:33.9	No, it's five.	T9
28:34.7 - 28:41.2	Five. So maybe you can Have the last one with the person who hasn't spoken.	Stamatia Savvani
28:41.6 - 28:45.4	We'll see. We'll see. We'll see if necessary. I'm I'm prepared to do it, why not	T9

28:48.8 - 29:17.8	Okay, so I have a final question that goes a little bit outside this and I would like you to tell me: What aspects did you enjoy most or least while we were talking about the activity while you were thinking about it on your own, when we discussed it again today?	Stamatia Savvani
29:20.5 - 30:51.5	What I enjoy is doing something outside the book- obviously, it's always interesting to do real life situations. I mean I frequently share with the students my experiences. But this is this is a better way of getting them to, to, to engage because it's a situation of their choice. So Yeah i i'm enjoying the opportunity to be allowed to go outside the book because then I don't allow myself to go outside the book until I finished the whole everything I'm supposed to do and then near the end of the year, I can do stuff except in so much as I throw in whatever that's related to the book, but from from my own life and my own experiences so this is;the source of this is the students themselves and and that's a really good thing. So, yeah.	T9
30:53.3 - 31:02.6	Are there any aspects that you didn't that you least enjoyed or that you didn't enjoy it while planning for this?	Stamatia Savvani
31:09.0 - 32:55.3	I don't think so. No, as I said, I am; It's been a long, long time since I've done this stuff, but I remember how much work I used to put into the preparation. Yeah, this is nothing comparatively speaking. So yeah, I mean if if I had to plan the types of stuff that I used to do, I know that a negative side of it would be all the work that I would have to put in And I know that teachers of English here in Greece, from what I hear anyway, in the pages and posts that people say that they put in a lot of work to create lessons and everything else. But being an old teacher and doing certificate classes, mostly all these years. Recently, you know, these past 15 years whatever I've gotten away from the, from this type of lesson for the most part, you know, the type of lesson that is structured. I mean, because yes we have discussions outside the book and so forth and using the media and all that stuff but not a structured lesson outside the book that I haven't done that in a while so If I had to do it all the time, I might I might realize how much effort it takes and I would say "ugh I don't have time for this".	T9
33:00.7 - 33:39.3	Great. And one final, final question appertaining to- I'm gonna go a little back in time- appertaining to the presentation. I had given on gameful language teaching and back in time. How did you feel about that, how again, what did you enjoy most or less about it or any comments regarding that?	Stamatia Savvani
33:39.5 - 33:42.4	Wait wait I'm confused. What are you referring to now?	T9
33:42.8 - 33:48.9	The, the workshop, the training seminar that you attended...	Stamatia Savvani
33:49.0 - 35:54.0	oh what you did with me and the other teachers. Yeah. I, definitely and enjoyed the possibility. That you were putting out there the possibility of gaming to learn, you know, playing games to learn. I definitely appreciate and had because you made me think about it. I had to think about the fact that there are so many cool ways to learn and I am convinced that that	T9

	children need to play to learn. So putting the two together, especially in English language learning is awesome. And it you know that the thought is exciting. If it were to be done by teachers, especially for younger students. I mean, I know that it's also good for older students, but the pressure of the certificate staff is just too much for me to be able to handle so That was exciting. I mean I hearing you talk and thinking about this stuff. The possibilities that that are out there was. It was really cool. I was very frustrated and disappointed and angry with the fact that my teacher that the one teacher that was listening at the time was putting out such negative vibes, and was not interested in doing it. And I knew it. And that really was just making me very upset So yeah, that was the negative part	
35:55.8 - 35:56.3	Okay.	T9
35:59.9 - 36:18.5	All right. Unless you have any other comments or suggestions on how I could offer better guidance or support for employing gameful tasks.	Stamatia Savvani
36:18.5 - 37:04.5	Or, well you know what i do have many questions on what you're going to do with this or how you will write it up or what the conclusions will be based on I have very many questions about that, but I don't wanna I don't want to know right now because I don't want that to influence how it'll go since I'll be a part of it. So obviously I want to know afterwards. I mean, I'd be curious to know. Not that you have to tell me, but I'd be curious to know how you'll use the data. Whatever you whatever you gather from it. So hopefully you'll tell me after it's all done.	T9
37:04.7 - 37:33.4	Yeah, of course. Of course. Anyone interested, will have a very thorough analysis. Alright, I think I am going to pause the recording now. Thank you!	Stamatia Savvani

Appendix H: Example of Classroom Observation Fieldnotes

October 27 2021

Teacher 1

6:30-8:00 pm GR time, b junior class

Onsite classroom, online observation

3 students: 1 male, 2 female

Welcoming students to the lesson

The class starts at 6:40 with a hello song; the teacher and the two female students are dancing. The teacher starts jumping more vividly and encourages the students to follow. The two female students follow very eagerly; the boy seems alienated from this activity, but he is watching and he does not seem unhappy; the teacher is trying to engage the distant boy with her body language.

Vocabulary activities and short test

5 minutes later the teacher gives a listening task to students and demonstrates the example and checks for students' understanding. The teacher plays and pauses the recording after each time and makes sure the students are ready for the next item before the go on. The students use Greek, but the teacher responds English and offers additional instructions through mining. The teacher is often nodding when students understand and is looking at them to check for progress. The teacher is giving out a short test to students and gives explicit instructions and they are asked to draw directions; the teacher assists students along the way in a whole-class and eliciting manner and praises students for their completed work. The teacher frequently asks students to check their work, and whenever a student has made a mistake the teacher asks **"Are you sure?"**

Game Preparation: "How do I get there?"

At 7:00 o'clock the teacher informs students that they are going to play a game and one of the female students says, **"It would be better if we had a test"**. *This might be because earlier in class, the test was easy for students as the teacher guided them throughout and did each item on the test along with the students.* The teacher asks students to pack their bags and one of the students comment **"it's definitely not gonna be a test"** but another student insists **"I wish it were a test"**. The students ask teacher's age and the teacher laughs. One student says, **"I want to start".** The students are acting naughty as the teacher is placing stuff around the class for the game and the teacher is asking them to stop in a calm manner. She then asks if they're ready to play; there is no answer from the students, so the teacher asks the question again. *As with the earlier task the teacher it seems that she wants to make sure that students are in the proper atmosphere to begin a task and wants students full attention before proceeding.*

Game Round 1

At 7.10 the teacher starts giving the game instructions and placing students in the right place. Student A is placed at a place in the classroom which features a specific location, i.e.

restaurant, and they need to ask their peer, Student B, to guide them to another place, i.e. library. Student A is not aware of how the locations are spread out in the class; student B has access to this knowledge through a map. The teacher wants students to ask the question "How do I get to the…?" and the peer will need to give directions with vocabulary such as: turn right, go straight etc. After the rules have been explained, one girl exclaims **"I know how it's going to go; it's very easy"**. The students follow teacher's instructions and ask the questions that they would need in order to get to a specific location; students ask questions regarding vocabulary they need to use for the game. After they have successfully located the destination, the teacher explains that they would need to ask and answer "Is there/Are there" questions for items that have been put under the desks in specific locations. The teacher insists on giving instructions in English, even when there is confusion over the game tasks.

Game Round 2 & 3

After these questions are answered, the teacher reorganises the maps for the next student to find their destination; the students become impatient and they say, **"I've been waiting for an hour!"**. The students are very excited when they find the things that are hidden in its place and they're asking if they can take them home. Students become very engaged because they start telling each other **"Don't look"** in order not to spoil the game. The game goes on for another round and at the end of the game, 15 minutes before the class ends, the teacher asks students if they liked the game and they responded positively; the students complete the research questionnaire at the end of class. *This is the only time the teacher is using Greek in the lesson.*

NOTE:

Bold is used to denote words spoken in class, verbatim.

Italics is used to denote researcher's reflections in situ.

Appendix I: Teachers' Designed Games

Teacher 1

Game 1: Monopoly Game: Present & Past

Students first complete the Monopoly board by inputting time expressions in the allocated boxes (which are color-coded based on the grammatical tense). Each team assigns time expressions for the other team's area of control.

Next, students take a turn and pick a card which features a pronoun, verb, and type of sentence (interrogative, affirmative, negative), see stack of cards on the board. Then they will have to use the information on the card and also choose a time expression from the board that corresponds to the color of the card. For example, if Team A picks the "(They ? go [in green]), then they have the option of forming an interrogative sentence using the assigned pronoun and verb and the time expression "then" or "a few minutes ago" as indicated in their area of control. If they say a correct sentence, they win a point. Each team can consult their teammates before giving a final answer. The game is complete when all cards have been played. The winner is the team with the highest score.
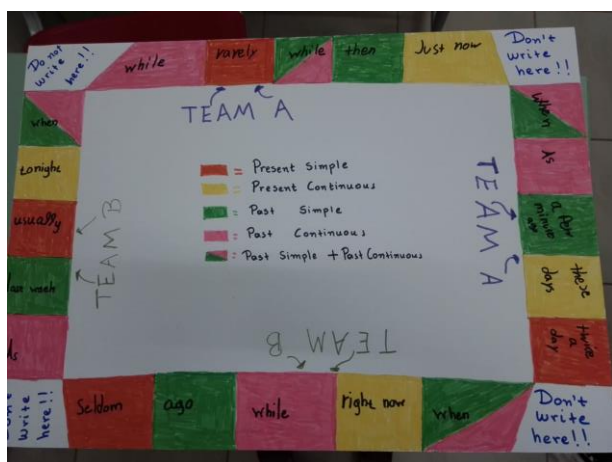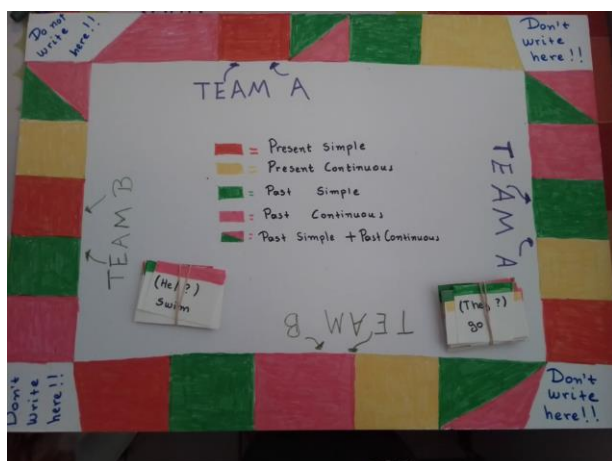
Teacher 1

Game 2: Bamboozle game on Passive Voice (Present Simple tense)

Each question has a different score depending on the difficulty/open-end-ness of the question.

The team with the highest score wins.

GAME PREVIEW

The house _____ (clean) every week. ✔ 5	Bikes _____ (not sell) in this shop. ✔ 5	Name 3 things that can _____ (drink). ✔ 10
Turn the following sentence into passive: Do they paint the house every year? ✔ 15	Turn the following sentence into passive: John feeds the dog before noon. ✔ 15	Suzie buys a pair of shoes every year. ✔ 15
The cake _____ (make) by my mum every week. ✔ 5	Put the words into the correct order: be/washed/the car/can/ by my brother. ✔ 5	put the words into the correct order: by Julie/are/the flowers/planted ✔ 5

Teacher 2

Game 1: Feel me/Feel me not, Wimpy Kid edition

Each person is going to read aloud one scenario from the 'Wimpy kid'. The narrator has to write down their immediate reaction to the story from the given list. All other players have 30'' to think and write on a piece of paper how they would react in the same situation. One the count of 3, everyone shows their reaction. If you had the exact reaction as the narrator you win 2 points. If you were in the same category of reactions (positive or negative), you get one point.

SITUATION 1

Your mum forces you to audition for the school play, 'The wizard of Oz'.

How do you react?

Positive Reactions	Negative Reactions
enthusiactic	ashamed
satisfied	humiliated
I've got the giggles!	I would be yellet at!
I feel lucky!	I would get worked up over it!
confident	insecure
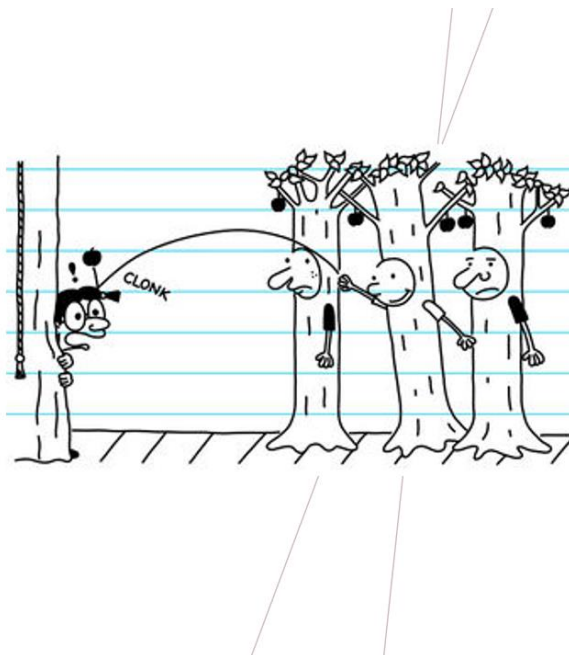
Game 2: Art Theft

Students need to use the information below and come up with a plausible story cooperatively (using the modal perferct) on who must/could/might be responsible for the art theft and who could not be.

WHAT we KNOW:

A very expensive, famous painting WAS STOLEN from an art gallery, 'GLOW'.

In the gallery a SECURITY CAMERA was OFF- TWO TIMES! There was a GLITCH of the CAMERA at 7.00-7.12PM and again at 9.00-9.20PM.

The THEFT was reported the NEXT DAY at 7.00 AM

CHARACTERS:

A: Security Guard, Aaron, working from 6.00PM to 9.00PM

B and C: Visitors, Anna and Florian, 6.17PM-6.50PM

D: Security Guard, Noah, NOT working, 7.00PM-7.15PM

E: Curator, Roman, 7.00PM-9.11PM

F: Sponsor, Mikhail, 6.30PM-8.00PM, AGAIN at 9.10PM-9.12PM

G: Visitor, Roberto, 7.10PM- 8.15PM

WHO:

Must be a THIEF?

Could be INVOLVED?

Might be helping the THIEF?

Couldn't be a THIEF?

Teacher 2

Game 3: Spyfall
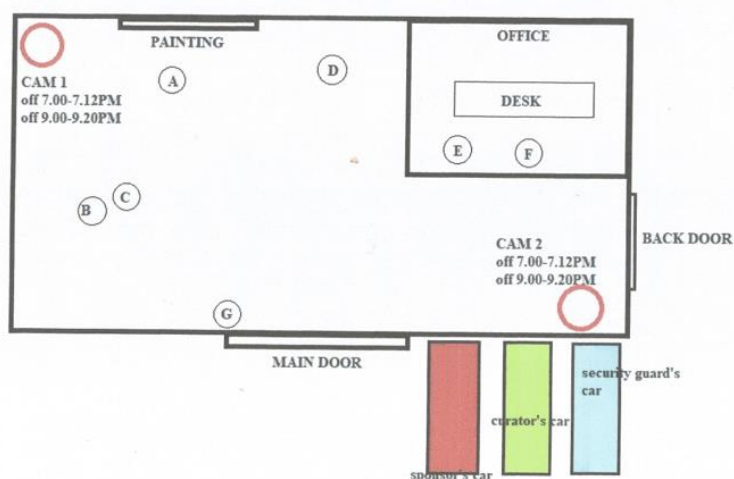
Rules: A game of Spyfall is made up of several short rounds. In each round the players find themselves in a certain location with a specific role assigned to each player. One player is always a spy who doesn't know where they are (Picture 1a and 1b show players their role).

The spy's mission is to listen carefully, identify the location (from the list of locations below, Picture 2) and keep from blowing his cover. Each non-spy must give an oblique hint to the other non-spies suggesting that he knows the location's identity, thus proving he's not the spy.

The spy's objective is to avoid exposure until the end of a given round or identify the current location. The non-spies' objective is to establish consensus on the identity of the spy and expose him or her.

7:54	7:24
Round location ⓘ	Round location ⓘ
tap to hide	*tap to hide*
Embassy	Spy
♾: Tourist	**LEAVE ROUND**
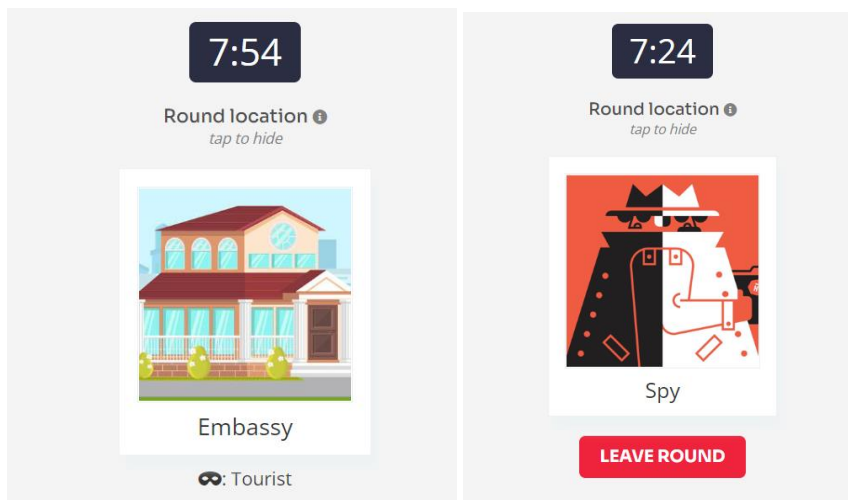
Game Locations (27)

Airplane	Movie Studio
Bank	Ocean Liner
Beach	Passenger Train
Broadway Theater	Pirate Ship
Casino	Polar Station
Cathedral	Police Station
Circus Tent	Restaurant
Corporate Party	School
Crusader Army	Service Station
Day Spa	Space Station
Embassy	Submarine
Hospital	Supermarket

Teacher 3

Game 1: Find your way

Set Up

-There's a board with 10 different locations

-Each location has 1-2 item(s)

-Player A knows about the items in 3 locations

-Player B has to guess objects for these locations, by asking them Are/Is there? questions

-Players can also see items of all locations on the board

-If Player B guesses correctly, they get a point/card

Alternative:

Player A has access to an incomplete map and knows about the different items in the game (which are common to everyone)

Player B knows about where each location on the map is and they know about items in only 3(-5) locations.

Player A asks Player B about items. If the item is one of the three locations, Players A+B get a point, and Player B guides Player A to that location. If they reach the place appropriately, they keep the location card.

Players take turns asking questions. When they get a positive answer for an item, they can ask the additional question of " how do i get there?"

Online alternative (just a random map image- you can use the map from the book, ofc)

-Project a map of a town. Tell Student A that they're in Dan's house, for example and that the need to go to the pizza place.

-Ask another student B to direct student A to that location.

-Student B gives directions, while student A uses zoom annotation tools to draw where he's going
-Other students may also be prompted Using private zoom chat, to ask about items in the locations. Teacher types "books". Student asks "Are there any books in the pizza house"?

Teacher 3

Game 2: Comparative Tic-Tac-Toe

Rules: In order for students to claim a place on the grid, they should first make a sentence (using the comparative) regarding the animal featured on that spot. The students can be given a sample sentence if they have just learnt this grammar rule. For example: "An elephant is bigger than a zebra". Then they are expected to create their own grammatically correct sentence. With every correct sentence, the students are allowed to draw an X or O on the corresponding place on the grid. Just like in the tic tac toe game, the team that first has three Xs or Os in a row wins. The game can be played in multiple rounds and one point is assigned to the winner of every round.

Teacher 4

Game 1: How do I get there?

Each desk in the classroom represents a specific location which is hidden; only one student at a time knows the locations featured in the desk, as they will have the map of the whole class (see picture below). Their classmates ask for directions to a specific location and they have to be guided to that location. Realia are also placed under each desk, and after students reach their desired location, they can go through the realia and ask questions "Are there books in the museum?" and the other students have to answer this question by employing logic in whether those realia can be found in the specific location. Students alternate roles between asking for and giving directions.

Game 2: Pronunciation Game

Teachers says one of the words found in the picture below, e.g. "town" and student have to answer left or right based on whether they heard "town" or "down". Upon answering the teacher draws a line of journey starting from point 1 in the picture below and directs it either left or right based on students' responses. The aim is to arrive to the correct country after having answered "left/right" for all the pairs of words listed. Feedback is given by the teacher on whether they arrived on the correct country.
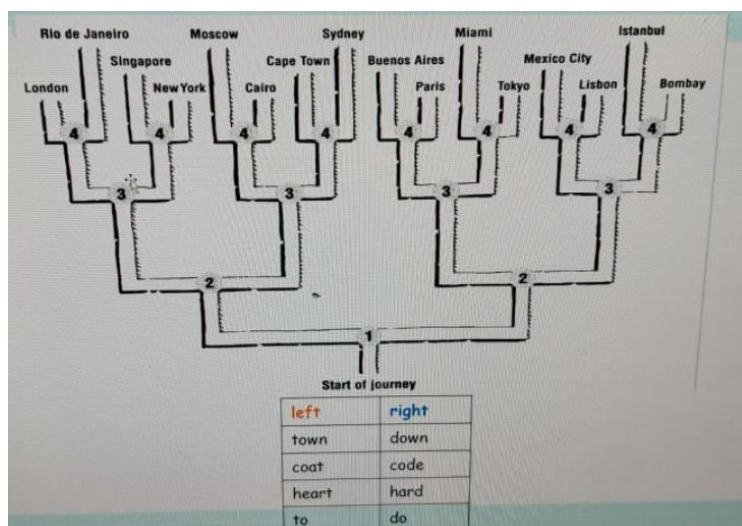
Teacher 4

Game 3: Pronunciation Tic-Tac-Toe

Students are separated in teams, and in order to place an X or an O in their spot of choice in the grid below, they have to listen to which word the teacher is saying, e.g. for square 3, is the teacher saying "along" or "alone"? If they answer correctly, they can place X or O on this spot on the grid. The winner is the team who manages to have 3Xs or 3Os in a straight line.

Game 4: Taboo & Hangman

Taboo: The teacher shares a word or a phrase with one student in secret; the student has then to either draw or mime the word to the whole class. The winner is the student who guesses most words; each student receives one point for each correct guess.

Hangman: An alternative to the classic hangman: The students have to guess the word by saying letters; they have as many chances to say incorrect letters as the pieces of the pizza (see picture below). The winner is the one who guesses the most words; each student receives one point for each correct guess.
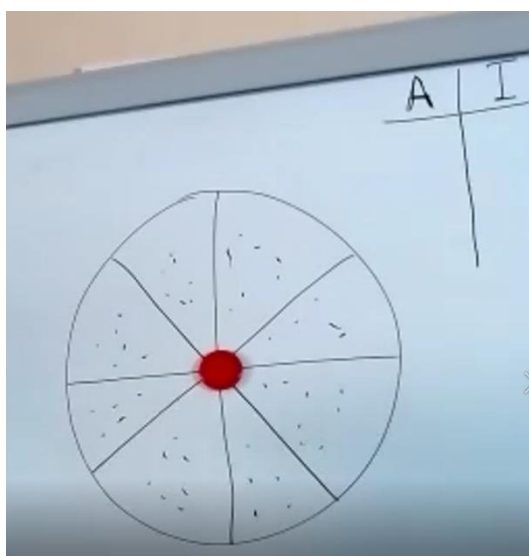
Teacher 5

Game 1: Card game on conditionals (A2 level)

The students are given a pile of cards each, with incomplete sentence prompts and pictures. The goal is to use the pictures and incomplete sentences to create a full, logical conditional sentence. For each correct conditional sentence, each student wins a point. The student with the most points wins.

**Game 2: Boardgame on Grammar (articles: a, an, the) (A2 level)**

Each player moves around the board with their pawn after rolling two dice and they have to answer the question that is found on the square they land on (see pictures below). The winner is the one who finishes first the race. Questions for this game were also taken from: articles-board-game.pdf .
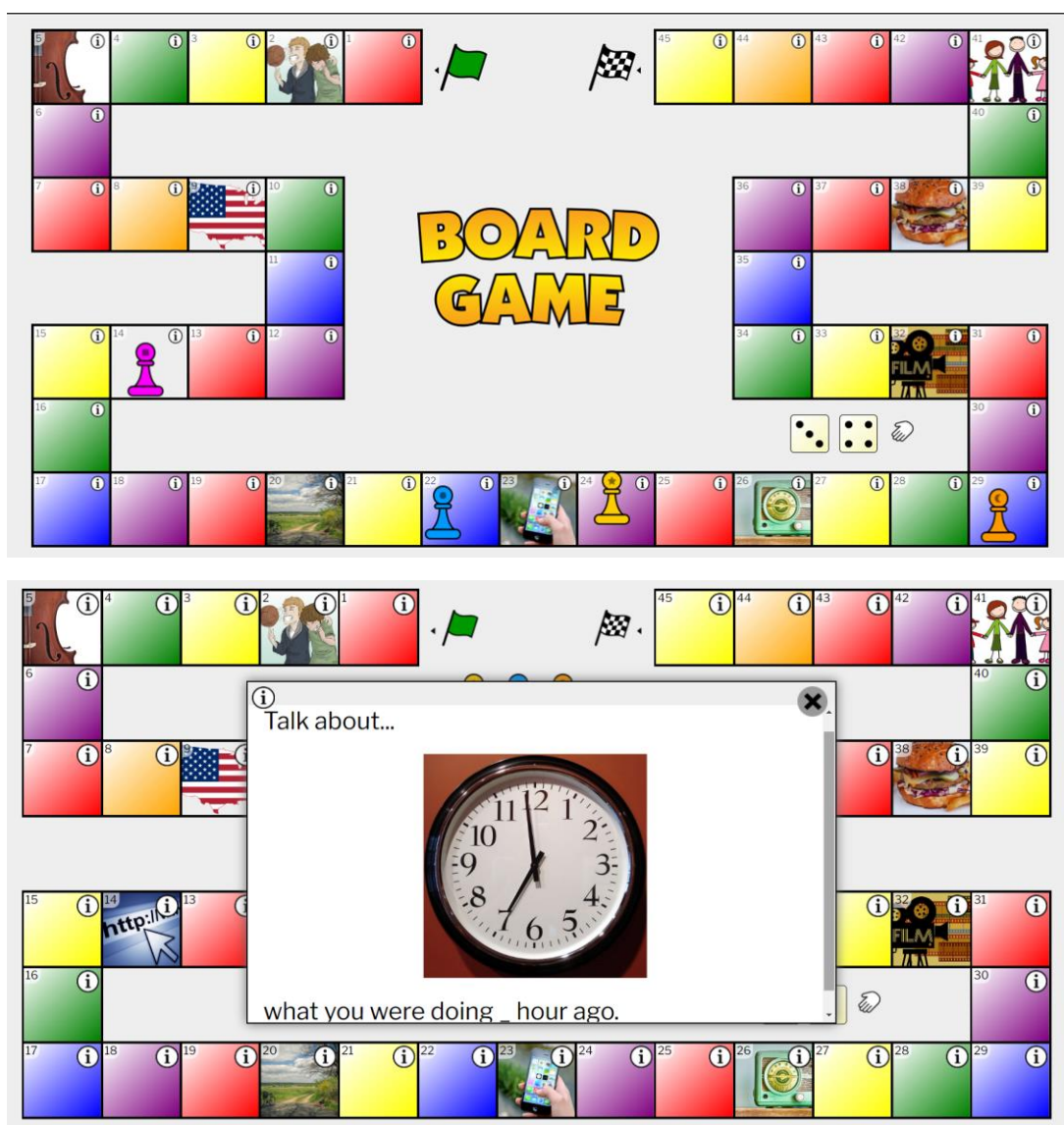
Teacher 5

Game 3: Boardgame on Vocabulary (revision) (pre-A1 level)

Same as the game above. This one was to revise pre-A1 vocabulary from different units of the textbook.
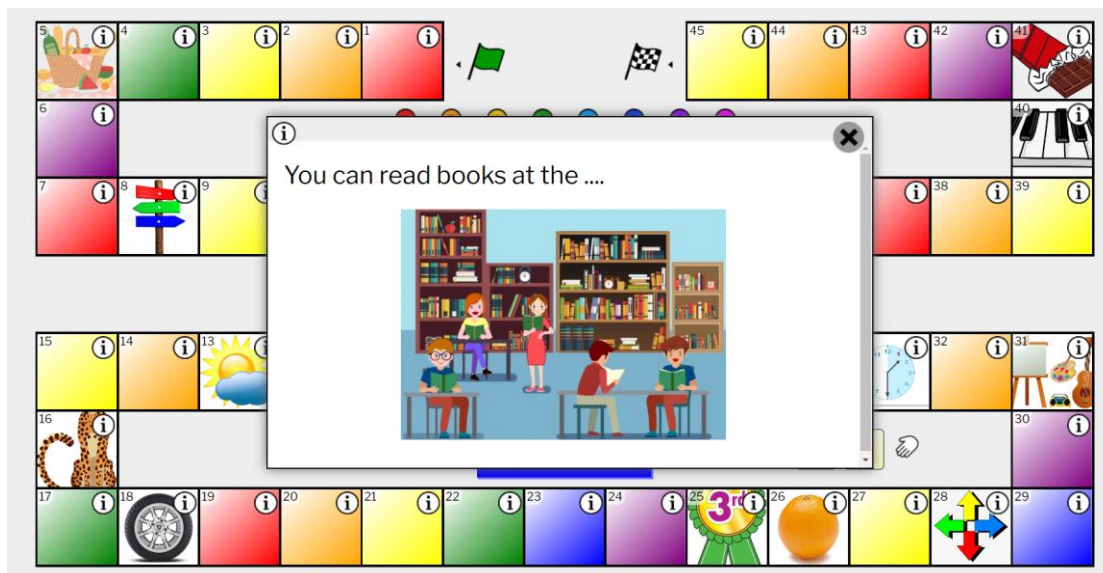
Game 4: Mysterium (A2 level)

Each student is assigned a character, a location and a weapon but the students do not know which character, location, or weapon is assigned to them. All student-characters are suspects of a murder. The teacher is giving students picture prompts (DiXit cards) and from this information the students try to deduce which character they are, what their location and weapon is. Students can discuss openly while inferring and can give suggestions to others. After this information is correctly inferred from students, for the second round of the game, the teacher gives out again three DiXit cards that would point to the culprit and thus students have to infer to which character, location, and weapon the cards are pointing to. Students have to collectively come up with the correct inference in order to win.

In the first picture we can see each student's character, weapon, and location. This information is set by the teacher prior to the game. Then students infer what the character is by analysing the DiXit cards, see the second picture; the DiXit cards may offer hints as to the color, atmosphere, or abstract meaning of the information that needs to be inferred.
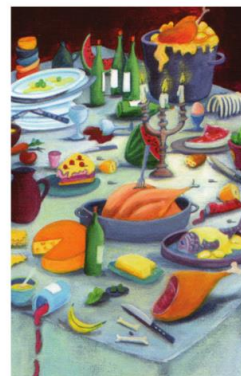

Three student sets

Student A

Student B

Student C

Solution

Teacher 6

Game 1: Black Stories

Students are divided into groups and each group has one storyteller; the rest students are the detectives. The storyteller knows the full murder story but is only able to give to the detectives a clue (see card below). Next, the detectives are allowed to ask Yes/No questions so that they uncover the story, specifically: who was murdered, how, and why. The storyteller can only answer the questions with Yes or No and the game is won when the detectives uncover the full story.

Game 2: Murder Mystery- Cluedo

Students have a list of 5 suspects, 5 locations, and 5 weapons for a committed murder. Sudents have to jointly discuss and reach a conclusion on who the culprit, where the murder happened, and what weapon was used. Teacher is giving students hints so that they can cross out suspects, locations, and weapons and arrive to the solution of the murder. This game is very similar to Mysterium, which is described above; however oral hints are given instead of picture hints.
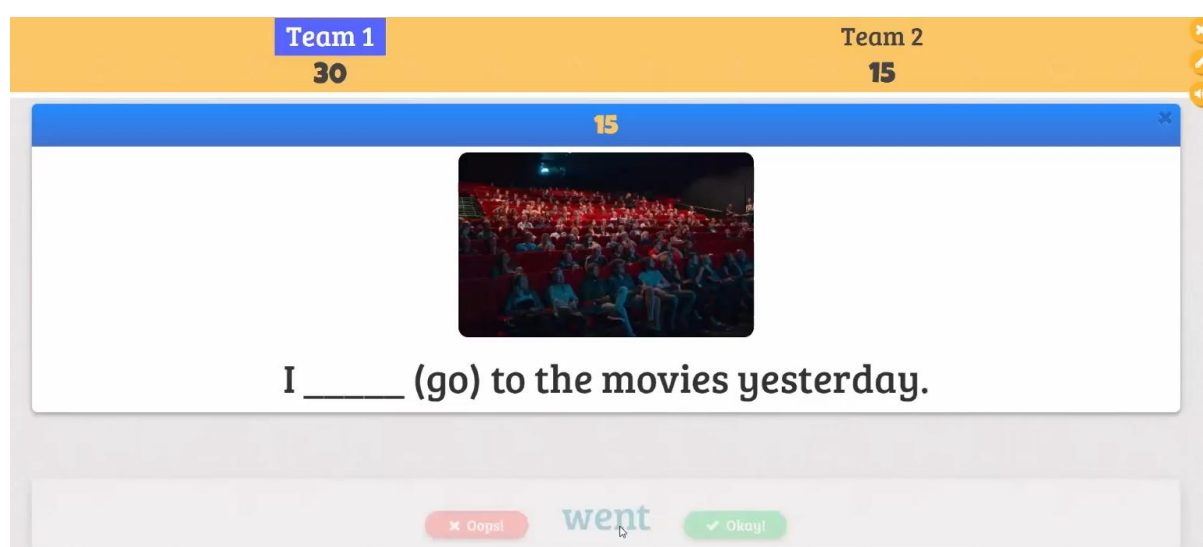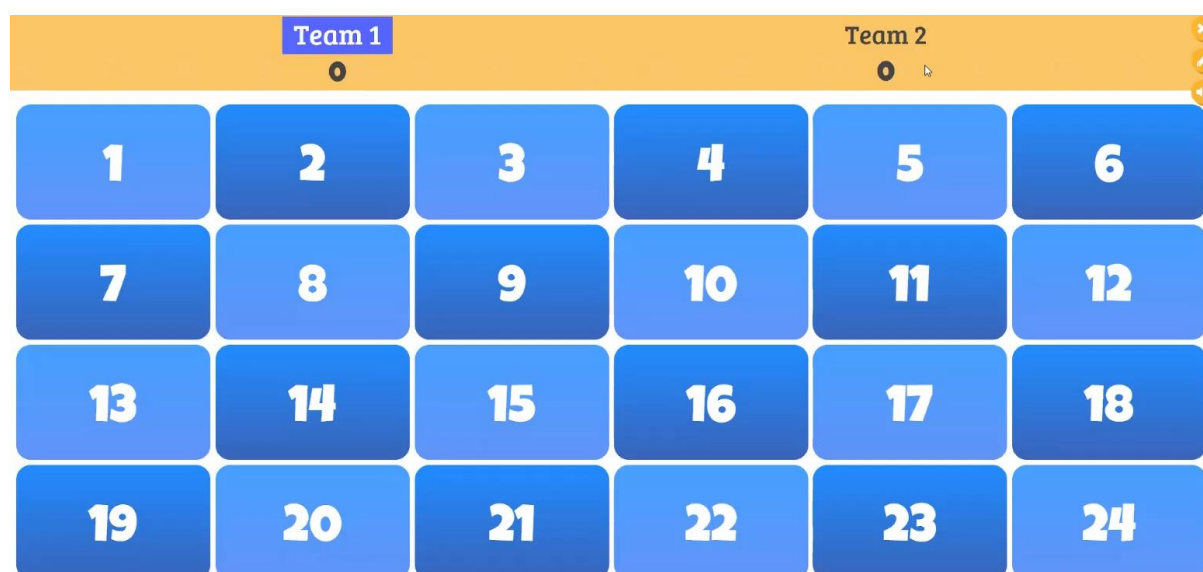
Teacher 7

Game 1: Storytelling game (Past Simple)

The teacher is guiding students in co-creating a modern-day fairytale by giving out sentence prompts. The students have to come up with their own characters and create a story using the Past Simple tense.

Game 2: Bamboozle (Irregular Past)

Students are divided into teams and taking turns select a number, and then answer the questions. For this game, students had to use the correct Irregular Past form to answer the questions (see example question below)

Teacher 7

Game 3: Board game on Past Simple

Each student has their own pawn and they have to race towards to reach the end of the board, by answering correctly the questions. This is a revision game on past simple.
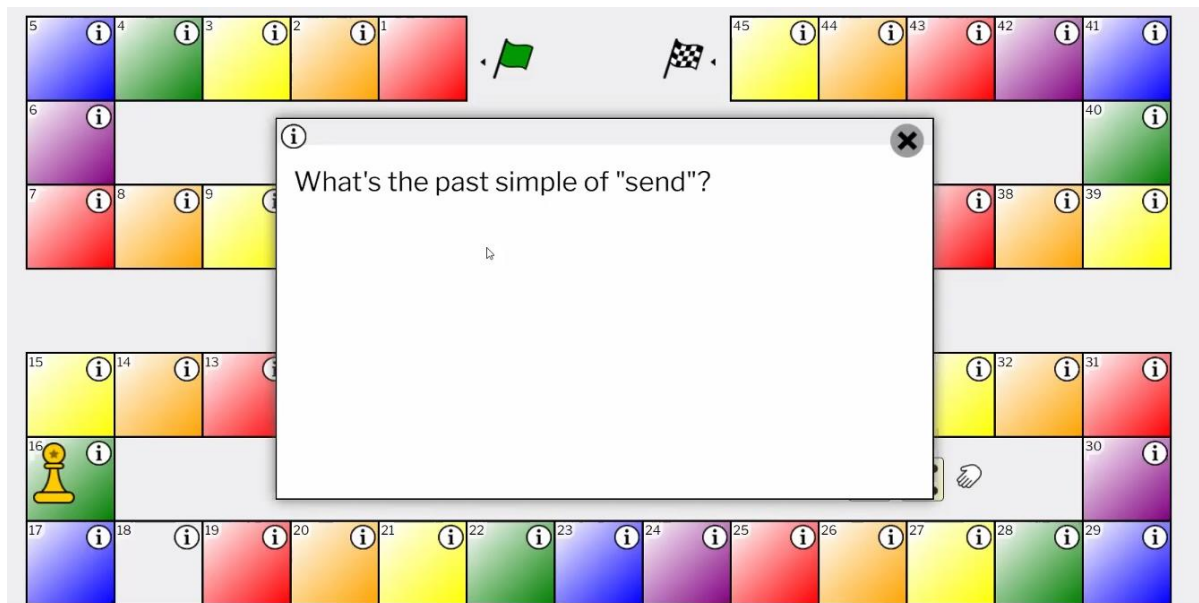
Game 4: Board game on Past Simple (Revision)

This time the game was revised to also include open-ended questions and allow for more spoken language from students.
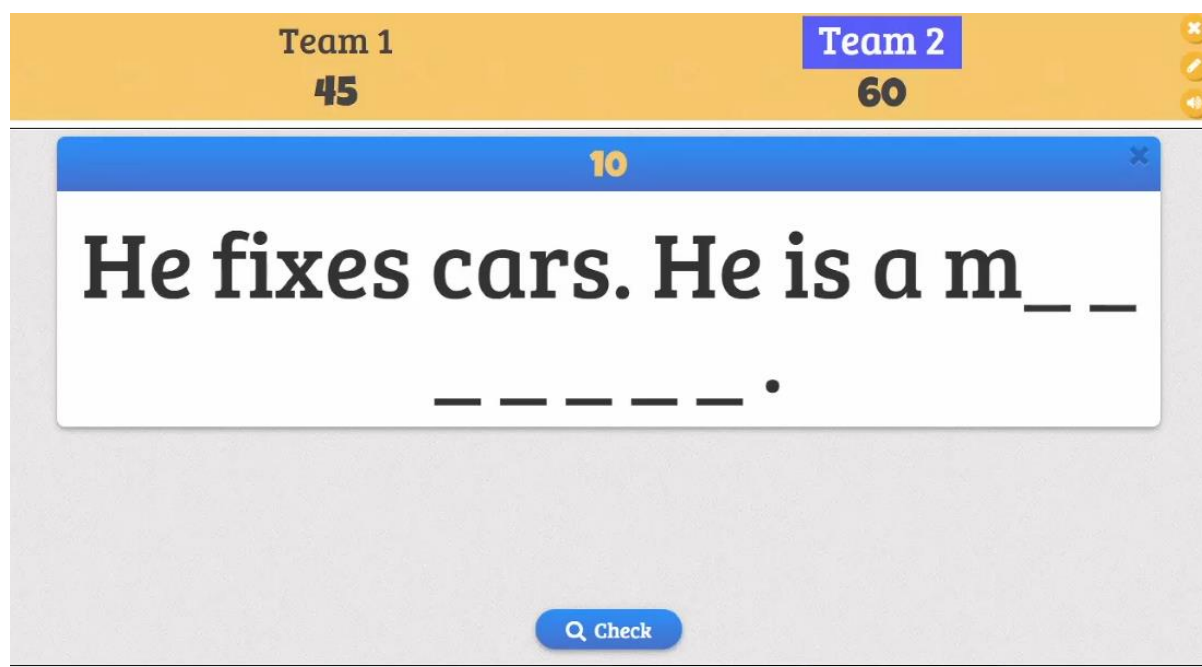
Teacher 8

Game 1: Taboo on musical instruments

The class is split into two teams. One student per team is given a picture of a musical instrument (see below), and their team has to ask yes/no questions in order to guess the musical instrument. Each team has a set amount of musical instrument cards that they have to guess. The team that guesses all the musical instruments first is the winner.

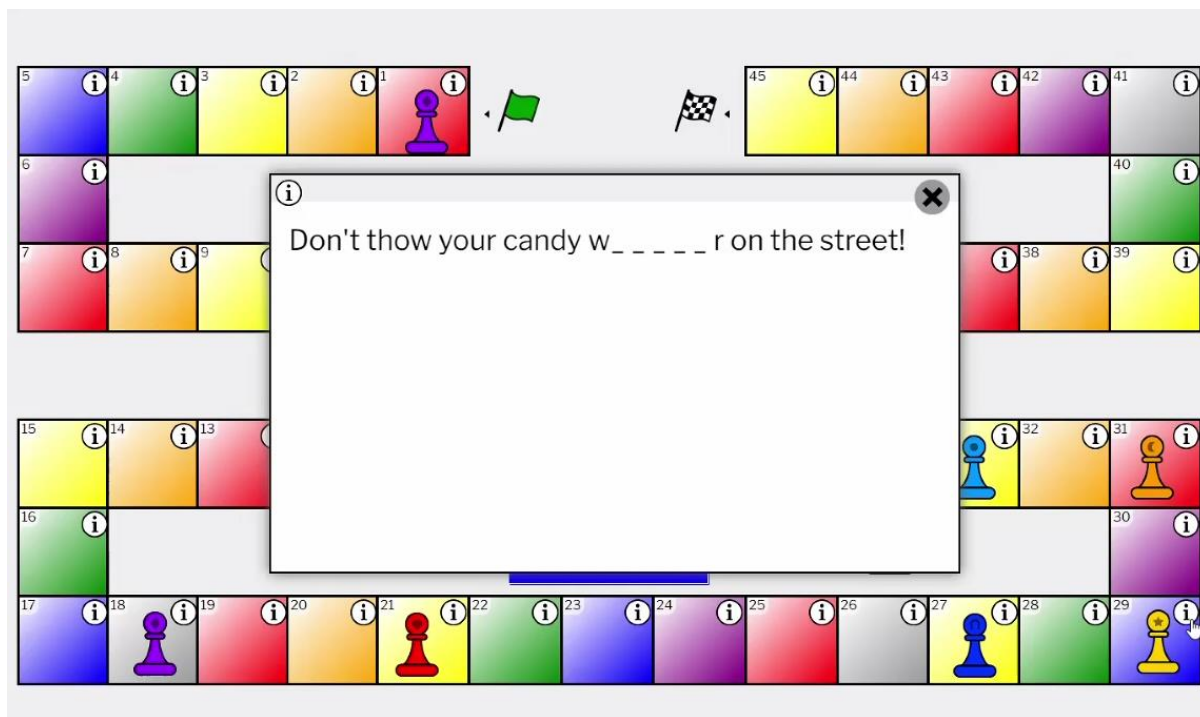**Game 2: Bamboozle game on Vocabulary**

See previous Bamboozle games for rules. This version was created to revise vocabulary and assess spelling of previously taught words.
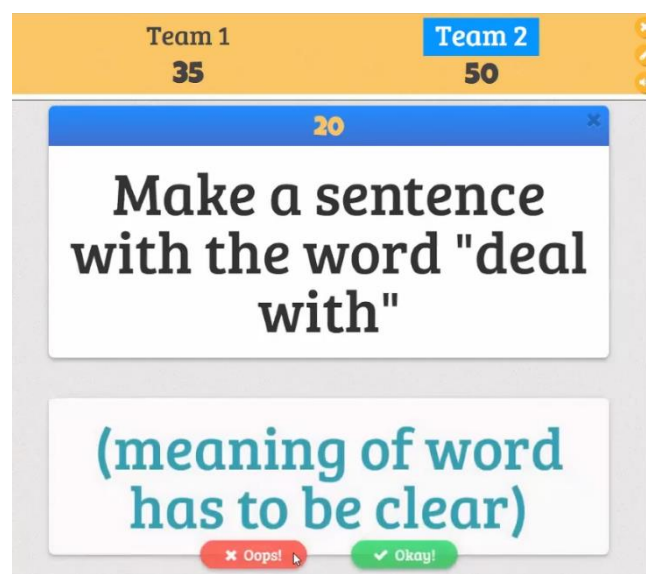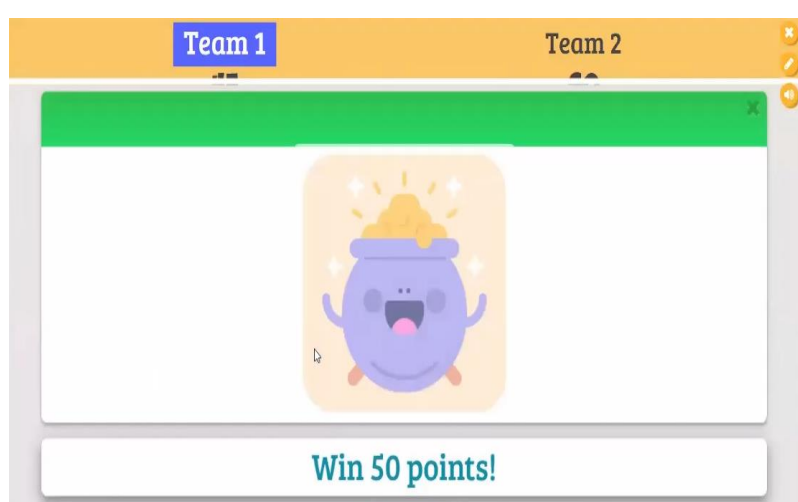
Teacher 8

Game 3: Board game on Vocabulary

See previous Board Games for rules; the questions for this game included vocabulary and spelling questions.

Game 4: Bamboozle Game on Vocabulary

Another Bamboozle game for revising vocabulary. The teacher also included the cards in the game that would give/remove/transfer points from a player randomly.

Teacher 9

Game 1: Feel me Feel me not

Students have prepared short awkward stories, which they later share with the classroom. After each story is presented, students say how they would react to each story (emotionally and physically) if it were to happen to them. The aim of the game is to try to empathise with the person telling the story and try to accurately infer the storyteller's reaction. Similarities and differences in reactions are then discussed as a whole class. Prior to the game a list of physical and a list of emotional reactions were co-created by the students, which they later use to react to the stories.

Game 2: Debate on censorship

The teacher facilitates a debate in the classroom and splits the class in two groups: affirmative and negative teams. The topic of the debate is introduced; for this debate, the topic was on censorship (taken from a textbook writing task, see picture below) and students had also done research on the topic prior to the class. Each team present their position, then convene in their teams for 5 minutes to come up with their two main arguments, which they argue later. The next phase is that of the rebuttal, where teams convene again and discuss how to tackle the opponent's argument, and then present those counterarguments. The debate is concluding by each team presenting their closing remarks and the teacher giving feedback and judging the winner of the debate.
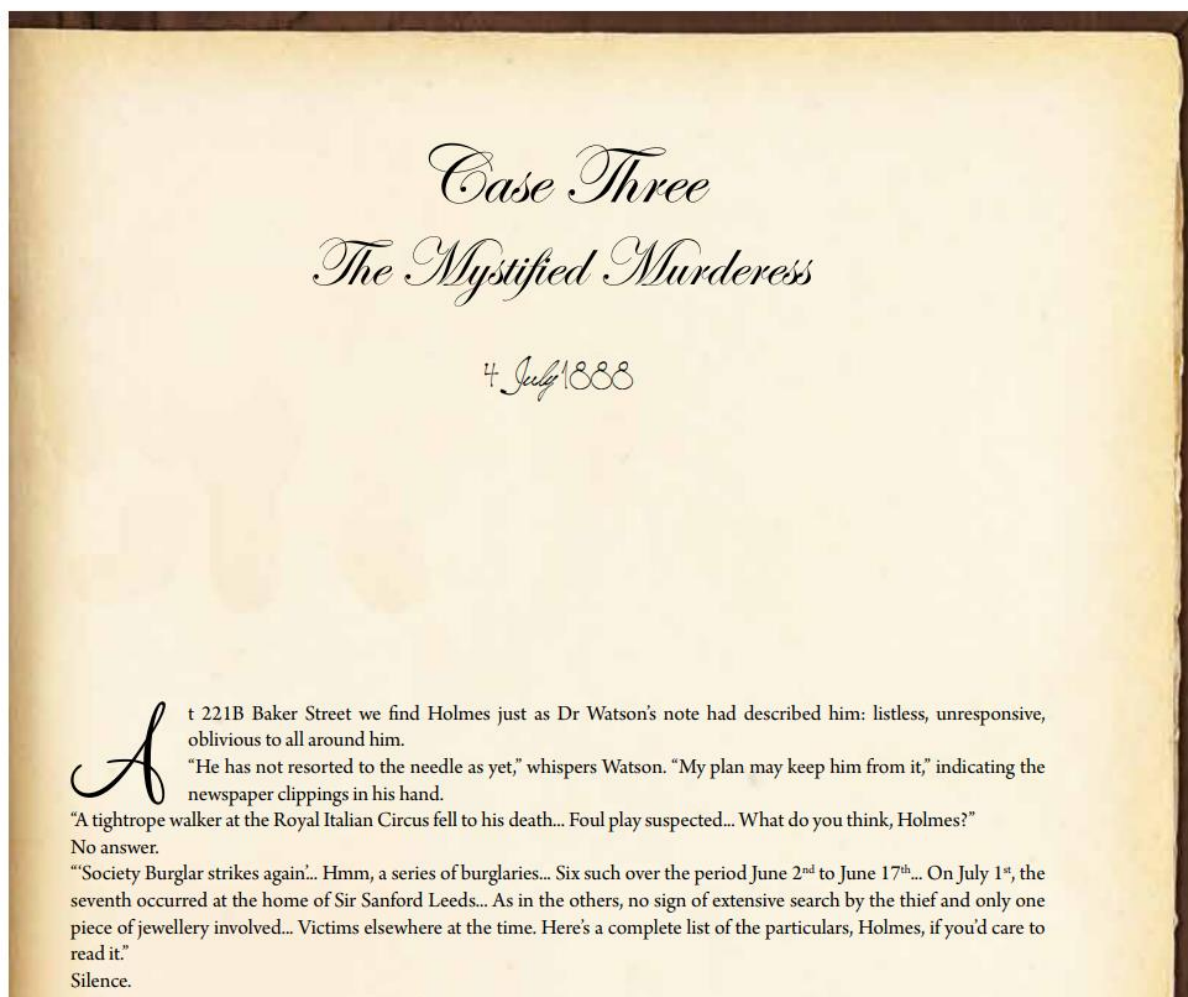

Game 3: Taboo

The teacher has created a list of words, for each word there are three cannot-say words. The teacher shares a word with a student and the aim is for the student to describe this word to the whole class without using the cannot-say words. Each person that finds the word first gets a point.

Teacher 10

Game 1: Sherlock Holmes Consulting Detective

This commercial game (https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/2511/sherlock-holmes-consulting-detective-thames-murder) was played in classroom following the original rules. In short, students read a mystery story and they get to use their mental and deductive skills, by enquiring and reading interviews from suspects and bystanders to reach the solution to the mystery. The picture below shows the beginning of the story that students played in class.

Case Three

The Mystified Murderess

4 July 1888

A t 221B Baker Street we find Holmes just as Dr Watson's note had described him: listless, unresponsive, oblivious to all around him.

"He has not resorted to the needle as yet," whispers Watson. "My plan may keep him from it," indicating the newspaper clippings in his hand.

"A tightrope walker at the Royal Italian Circus fell to his death... Foul play suspected... What do you think, Holmes?"

No answer.

"'Society Burglar strikes again'... Hmm, a series of burglaries... Six such over the period June 2nd to June 17th... On July 1st, the seventh occurred at the home of Sir Sanford Leeds... As in the others, no sign of extensive search by the thief and only one piece of jewellery involved... Victims elsewhere at the time. Here's a complete list of the particulars, Holmes, if you'd care to read it."

Silence.

Game 2: Mysterium

(see previous Mysterium game by Teacher 5)

Appendix J: Ethics Application (original and revised version)

First Ethics Application

Ethics ETH1920-0489: Ms Stamatia Savvani

Date Created	19 Nov 2019
Date Submitted	24 Nov 2019
Date of last resubmission	17 Jan 2020
Academic Staff	Ms Stamatia Savvani
Category	Professional Services Staff
Supervisor	Dr Christina Gkonou
Project	Language teachers' emotions on game-based learning instruction: reflections throughout a schoolyear
Faculty	Social Sciences
Department	Language and Linguistics
Current status	Signed off under Annex B

Ethics application

Project overview

Title of project

Language teachers' emotions on game-based learning instruction: reflections throughout a schoolyear

Do you object to the title of your project being published?

No

Applicant(s)

Ms Stamatia Savvani

How would you like to submit your application?

Supervisor(s)

Dr Christina Gkonou

Proposed start date of research

01 Feb 2020

Expected end date

30 Jun 2021

Will this project be externally funded?

Yes

Will the research involve human participants?

Yes

Will the research use collected or generated personal data?
Yes

Will the research involve the use of animals?
No

Will any of the research take place outside the UK?
Yes

Project details

Summary of the project

The research project will investigate language teacher emotions and attitudes to game-based learning instruction. Games are found to be engaging, motivating and powerful learning activities for the learners. However, researching teachers' affective reactions to learner-centered pedagogies is equally important, as it is the educators who make the final decisions for classroom activities, and their own motivation should also be considered in the equation. Research into teacher emotions is much needed on the field, as the focus has always been primarily on the learners. This study will be an intervention study that will take place throughout a school year in private language institutions in Greece. Teacher participants will be guided and trained on how to employ game-based language learning in their classrooms, and then plan their own gameful activities for the classroom. Through an action-research cycle, language teachers will reflect on the method used, and will be observed and interviewed. Questions will focus primarily on their emotions, while designing and employing games in the classroom.

Research project proposal

Funding

Funder

Fanourakis Foundation and Self

Grant type

Other

Funder's award/grant reference or ID

N/A

RCP project ID

Participant details

Who are the potential participants?

English language teachers to Speakers of Other languages (ESOL)

Students studying English as a Foreign/Second Language (EFL/ESL)

Attendees of the TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) Greece Conference and other conferences in TESOL/Applied Linguistics

Attendees of Global Game Jam (https://globalgamejam.org/)

How will they be recruited?

letter of invitation

voluntary participation

snowball sampling

Recruiting materials
Will participants be paid or reimbursed?
No

If yes, please provide details and justification for this payment.

How much will the participants be paid?

Could potential participants be considered vulnerable?
Yes

If yes, please explain how the participants could be considered vulnerable and why vulnerable participants are necessary for the research.
The participants could be considered vulnerable as they are minors. However, they are necessary for the research as they wil be attending the classes to be observed by the researcher and may be invited to comment on the teaching interventions (e.g. by filling questionnaires)

Could potential participants be considered to feel obliged to take part in the research?
No

If yes, please explain how the participants could feel obliged and how any possibility for coercion will be addressed.

Will the research involve individuals below the age of 18 or individuals of 18 years and over with a limited capacity to give informed consent?
Yes

Is a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check required?
No

If yes, has the DBS check been completed?

If your project involves children or vulnerable adults but does not require a DBS check, please explain why.
The researcher will not interact directly with the students-minors. Their teacher will be at all times present, and the researcher will only observe the classroom.

Informed consent

How will consent be obtained?
Written

If consent will be obtained in writing, please upload the written consent form for review and approval.
If consent will be obtained orally, please explain why.

Please upload a copy of the script that will be used to obtain oral consent.

If no script is available to upload please explain why.

Who will be obtaining and recording consent?
the named researcher

Please indicate at what stage in the data collection process consent will be obtained.
Before the data collection process begins, and as soon as the all the persons involved confirm that they wish to participate in the research

If informed consent will not be obtained, explain why.

Please upload a participant information sheet.
Have you reviewed the information provided by the REO on participant information and consent?
Yes

Confidentiality and anonymity

Will you be maintaining the confidentiality and anonymity of participants whose personal data will be used in your research?
Yes

If yes, describe the arrangements for maintaining anonymity and confidentiality.
Codes will be given to partipants to anonymise them. Other personal data that could make the participants identifiable will be kept confidential to the researcher and excluded/deducted from participant completed forms.

If you are not maintaining anonymity and confidentially, please explain your reasons for not doing so.

Data access, storage and security

Describe the arrangements for storing and maintaining the security of any personal data collected as part of the project.

Any consent forms, or other identifiable data will be anonymised, and stored in my personal password protected computer, which will be destroyed by the end of the research project (October 2022)

Please provide details of all those who will have access to the data.
My supervisor and myself will have access to data collected as part of the project.

Data sharing

Do you intend to share or archive data generated from this project once it is complete?

If yes, please describe briefly.

Please indicate the means by which you intend to share/archive your data:

If you chose other, please provide more details.

If you do not intend to share data please provide specific reasons why the data will not be made available.

Risk and risk management

Risk Assessment documents
Are there any potential risks (e.g. physical, psychological, social, legal or economic) to participants or subjects associated with the proposed research?
No

If yes, please provide full details and explain what risk management procedures will be put in place to minimise the risks.

Are there any potential risks (e.g. physical, psychological, social, legal or economic) to the researchers working on the proposed research?
No

If yes, please provide full details and explain what risk management procedures will be put in place to minimise the risks.

Are there any potential reputational risks to the University as a consequence of undertaking the proposed research?
No

If yes, please provide full details and explain what risk management procedures will be put in place to minimise the risks.

Are there any other ethical issues that have not been addressed which you would wish to bring to the attention of the reviewer(s) of your application?

Amended Ethics Application

Ethics ETH2021-0818: Ms Stamatia Savvani

Date Created	12 Jan 2021
Date Submitted	12 Jan 2021
Date of last resubmission	14 Jan 2021
Academic Staff	Ms Stamatia Savvani
Category	Professional Services Staff
Supervisor	Dr Christina Gkonou
Project	Language teachers' emotions on game-based learning instruction: reflections throughout a schoolyear
Faculty	Social Sciences
Department	Language and Linguistics
Current status	Signed off under Annex B

Ethics application

Project details

Title of project

Language teachers' emotions on game-based learning instruction: reflections throughout a schoolyear

Do you object to the title of your project being published?
No

Applicant(s)
Ms Stamatia Savvani

How would you like to submit your application?
Postgraduate Research Student

Supervisor(s)
Dr Christina Gkonou

Proposed start date of research
01 Feb 2020

Expected end date
30 Jun 2021

Amendment details

Is the amendment substantial or non-substantial?
Non-substantial

Type of amendment:

Amendment to the information previously provided in the application form
Amendment to the information sheet(s) and consent form(s) for participants, or to any other supporting document for the project

Summary of changes

Obtaining and recording consent will be done by the named researcher but also teacher participants will be disseminating parental consent forms to their students.

Regarding anonymity and confidentiality, codes will be given to participants and to the recordings of interviews/classroom observations involving teacher/student participants to anonymise them. Other personal data that could make the participants identifiable will be kept confidential to the researcher and excluded/deducted from participant completed forms.

Regarding data access, storage and security, any consent forms, recordings of interviews, recordings of classroom observations and questionnaires or other identifiable data will be anonymised, and stored in my personal password protected computer, which will be destroyed by the end of the research project (October 2022).

Revised Consent forms for and Participant Information Sheets for both teacher and student participants are also attached. Given that some classes may also be attended by adult students, I have also included Participant Information Sheet and Consent form for adult student participants.

Any other relevant information.

Supporting documentation

Attached files

consent-form_parents_V2.docx

consent-form_teachers_V2.docx

Participant Information Sheet_parents_V2.docx

Participant Information Sheet_teachers_V2.docx

Participant Information Sheet_adults.docx

consent-form_adults.docx

Appendix K: Analytic Memos (example)

TEACHER instance 1 [How do I get there?]
and so they did

Pre : what's important is the vocab → value
clear goals → vocabulary || listening /speaking || giving direction,
discussed the probability of complex instructions & Ss waiting on standby

happiness: happy class – when they play a game they're happy
anxiety: delivering it right but it's ok to make mistakes.
predicts satisfaction for successful completion

Class : T is always eliciting, avoids using Greek even when
Ss address to her in Greek.
T is repeating game rules through /repetition /miming/ eliciting
T is calm even when Ss get "naughty" or "loud", she only
intervenes when she wants their full attention
T started lesson by informing Ss that they're gonna play,
by the end of class asks Ss if they liked it.
T never spoonfeeds the answer – shrugging shoulders when
Ss can arrive to an answer themselves

Post
disappointment "I would be even more satisfied if I had found a way
wins more exciting for the person that was waiting"
satisfaction Negative emotions topple positive ones ← general life attitude
"It would be perfect, if it would be faster"

Teacher 4. instance 3 [Pronunciation tic-tac-toe]

Pre [even briefer session] Pronunciation tic-tac-toe

"that's it a very short game at the end of the lesson. that's it!"

"I mean [...] they don't really communicate and I know that this is the point of playing games to have some interaction in the target language"

Revision day

enthusiasm : already listening to their voices & reactions

Not going to give instructions,

(played in w previous classes who love it)

Class
two Ss present   focused on   correct spelling rather than pronunciation

"Listen!"   ↓they're fast to give answers → T surprised!

a I'm good at this! »   high competitive → T enjoys it laughs when S says?

game ends in Tie → T: well done!   their plan - T having fun   "I know where she will put i

St. getting annoyed when peer obstructs   disrupt. h.

attempts to but   T beginning of class insisting on S to turn on cam [confides to me environ.

automatically   T offering help to weak student coming

says "let's play"   feeling strongly about test - not doing at unless everyone's p.eet

Post   " I feel how they feel ; so when you've reading you have to red , I know

this is not a very satisfying moment for them - not always.

enthusiasm , for their expressions I understand how he's feeling from

haha his voice. I'm rained now

surprising: couldn't remember we have played the game before

happiness

I'm afraid of spending more time on instruction s than the actual game