

**THE EFFECTS OF GAMES ON THE ACQUISITION OF SOME  
GRAMMATICAL FEATURES OF L2 GERMAN  
ON STUDENTS' MOTIVATION AND  
ON CLASSROOM ATMOSPHERE**

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## ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study is to explore the effects of the use of games as a teaching strategy for raising the grammatical accuracy level of secondary students of German as a second language. This thesis seeks also to examine the effect of game-based grammar instruction on students' motivation and classroom atmosphere.

The participants in this study were divided into two groups, the Control and Experimental groups, and received 90 periods, over 18 weeks, of grammatical instruction by the same teacher. The teaching program was the same for both groups. The difference consisted in the use of game-based practice for the experimental group, while the control group performed traditional grammar-based practice only.

Data were collected using the following instruments: grammar tests and examinations, a questionnaire on motivation, a questionnaire on classroom atmosphere, a questionnaire on the type of grammar practice, a questionnaire on the role of grammar and grammar instruction, focus group interviews with students, and the researcher's field notes.

While the main result does not support the hypothesis for significant improvement in grammatical accuracy by the experimental students as a result of game-based practice, their overall improved performance is a worthwhile achievement, particularly if it is linked to significant improvements in students' motivation and classroom atmosphere.

These positive results offer a notable incentive to language teachers to include games in their teaching of grammatical features, because the positive results of this experiment with regard to learners' motivation, peer interaction, teacher-student interaction augur well for an eventual improvement also in the rate of grammatical accuracy.

## DECLARATION

This thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma. No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgment in the main text of the thesis. This thesis has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution. All research procedures reported in the thesis received the approval of the relevant Ethics committee.

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Shu-yun YU

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background of the Study**

The issues which are examined in this study are linked to the effects that the use of games has on three aspects of classroom-based acquisition of L2 German: the accuracy level of selected grammatical features, the level of students' motivation, and the state of the classroom atmosphere.

These issues are closely linked to my experience as a second language learner of English and German, as well as to my long experience as a practising teacher of German as a second language in Taiwan.

For many years, I have been nurturing the wish to study the relationship between what I have gained from my learning and teaching experience and the results of a more formal investigation into the learning and teaching of grammatical rules. The aim of such an investigation would be to establish whether research would match my personal understandings and beliefs.

The following are the perceptions that I have built in the course of many years of learning two second languages and of teaching German as a second language. As a second language (L2 henceforth) learner and L2 teacher, I believe that it is important to study L2 grammar, since the study of grammatical rules has been a definite and positive factor in my L2 acquisition. However, the challenge of teaching L2 grammar to students is a difficult one, for despite my efforts over many years I have not been entirely happy with the ways in which I have taught German grammar to my students. Neither their grammatical accuracy nor their motivation and classroom level of participation seem to have improved, even though I have experimented with many different teaching strategies.

These experiences have led me to reflect on L2 grammar teaching, and to search for a teaching approach which could enhance L2 grammar learning. Although I believe that grammar is an important part of L2 acquisition, I am acutely aware that the learning of grammar often has a bad reputation (Gao, 2001; Madylus, 2002). As Madylus (2002) comments, grammar is a word that often “freezes” the hearts of students and teachers. Gao (2001) has the same opinion, stating that grammar learning is a negative experience for many L2 learners.

In spite of the fact that learners find grammar both daunting and boring, the traditional grammar approach has dominated the teaching of second languages in my classes, reflecting a general trend in Taiwan, to which I have felt bound. Actually, and in spite of the new L2 approaches that have been developed and tried around the world, the only classroom approach to teaching second languages in Taiwan has been, and still is, the traditional grammar-translation one (Chio, 1999; Huang, 2004; Hsu, 2003; Lin, 1997).

The main justification for such an enduring practice may be the fact that in a typical Taiwanese class there are about fifty students. Language teachers feel they cannot afford to offer communication-based practice and so they concentrate on teaching grammatical rules. Although they try their best to explain the rules, these explanations are usually not made as part of a contextualised framework. Teachers use grammar exercises and practice drills which often have little or no meaning for their students. Students repeat after their teachers or engage in choral reading and responding. Such activities require only minimal participation and are essentially passive.

With this approach there are usually few interactions between the teacher and the students, or between the students themselves. Teachers are active speakers; students passive listeners or repeaters. When students are asked to do some oral exercises relevant to the learned grammar, they feel anxious and uncomfortable. They prefer to keep silent because

they are not used to speaking German in front of the whole class and are afraid of “losing face”, due to their likely errors (Gary, Marrone & Boyles, 1998). It is hard to find out whether students have understood what teachers have taught them. As a result, our students feel that grammar is not meaningful and memorable, reflecting what researchers have found (Engel & Myles, 1996; Larsen-Freeman, 1997; Madylus, 2002). Students are frustrated, so they can easily lose interest and motivation to learn. I believe that our students usually practise what may be termed the three S principles: 1) keep silent in order to hide boredom or anxiety; 2) smile in order to hide embarrassment for not being able to answer any questions; 3) sleep because of lack of interest and lack of motivation to learn. It becomes then obvious that, as a result of our students’ passivity, teachers become easily discouraged.

The Taiwanese College of the students who participated in this study provides L2 German courses to students aged between 15 to 22 years. They undertake the study of German for five years, nine hours per week during the first three years. Of these nine hours in the first three years, five focus on the teaching of grammar, three on conversation, and one on pronunciation drilling. This allocation highlights the importance of grammar in our L2 program. However, in spite of the prominence given to grammar, the overall learning outcomes are limited. The college language teachers agree that it does not appear that our method of teaching grammar, as well as that of teaching L2 in general, is effective.

As a result of a mainly grammatical focus, delivered in a traditional way, our L2 learners develop only limited grammatical competence and very little communicative ability. It is obvious that our traditional teacher-centred and grammatical-focused method is lacking in effective teaching strategies and does not motivate our students to develop grammar or communicative competence in German. This approach has encouraged our students to adopt a “learn-the-rules-only” attitude to the studying of German, which has resulted in their inability to apply grammar rules in any meaningfully communicative context.

This situation has led me to reflect on how grammar could be taught and studied more effectively. I have become aware that the focus on forms needs to be incorporated into communicative practice, as supported by much recent research, in a balanced integration of both aspects, each with its own clearly defined space, but with constant and protracted opportunities for their implementation within relevant communicative contexts (Ellis, 1997; Lando, 1996, 1999; Li, 2003; Lightbown, 1998; Musumeci, 1997; Savignon, 1972, 2000; Sysoyev, 1999; Yen, 2002).

Some of the most useful tasks that have been recommended for practising both grammar and communication are language games (Hassaji, 2000). Many language researchers and teachers such as Gaudart (1999), Hadfield (1996), Rinvolucris and Davis (1995), and Ur (1988, 1999), have recognized the pedagogic value of language games, arguing that their value also consists in their ability to enhance students' motivation and participation in general.

In brief, the main intent of this research was born out of my wish to validate through research my pedagogical perceptions about the usefulness of games in the L2 classroom, given the fact that there exists a major gap in the L2 literature regarding this issue. There also exists a major gap in research into the effectiveness of different methodological approaches to German language teaching in Taiwanese Higher Education. Thus, I felt that it was crucial for me as a practitioner to find out both the advantages and limitations of using games with regard to the acquisition of grammatical rules and in relation to the raising of my students' motivation and the improvement of the classroom atmosphere. This wish has contributed to the setting out of the aspects to be investigated and of the research questions and hypotheses for this study.

## 1.2 Objectives and Significance of the Study

The main objective is to examine the effects of the use of games on the students' level of grammatical accuracy.

The second objective is whether game-based grammar practice increases students' motivation towards language learning.

The third objective is to look at the impact of the use of games on the students' perceptions of classroom atmosphere.

The fourth objective is to explore the students' experiences and perceptions of the role of grammar itself within their overall language program.

The significance of this experiment lies in the hypothesized possibility that the use of games in practising grammatical features may improve the students' rate of accuracy, as well as create a more positive class atmosphere and a more positive learning experience overall. Any positive results on the suitability of language games as a teaching/learning strategy will have implications for developing curriculum design, textual materials and the teacher training of foreign language instructors.

## 1.3 Outline of the Study

The thesis is composed of six chapters. Chapter one provides a general introduction to the background, the purposes, and significance of this study.

The second chapter contains the review of the relevant literature which is divided into two sections. The first part reviews the literature relating to the role of grammar in the second language classroom; the second part explores the role of games and their function in education, particularly in the second language classroom. This chapter also outlines the research questions and hypotheses of this study.

Chapter 3 introduces the methodology and procedures and provides a description of

the research setting, of the participants, of the data gathering instruments, and the method of data analysis. This chapter also describes the experimental instructional program, including a description of the games that were used and of the grammatical features taught and practised.

In chapter 4, all quantitative data from tests, examinations and questionnaires are reported and discussed with reference to the research questions and hypotheses.

Chapter 5 is a natural extension of Chapter 4, as it provides extra supportive qualitative data from two sources: focus group interviews and my field notes on the aspects of student motivation, classroom atmosphere and the role of grammar in language study.

Chapter 6 deals with the overall conclusions to be drawn from this study, together with its limitations, implications for second language teachers and recommendations for future research.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the literature on the major issues associated with L2 grammar teaching and learning is reviewed, in order to set up a theoretical framework for the current study. The first part of this chapter examines the areas which relate to the research questions in terms of the definition of grammar, its role in language teaching and learning. This section also brings out the controversy between the form-orientated and the meaning-orientated approaches, as well as an alternative: a combination of form-orientation and meaning-orientation in teaching second languages. Both empirical and theoretical aspects of second language learning are addressed. The second part of this chapter describes the conceptual framework of language games, their taxonomy and characteristics, their relevance to various learning styles and their perceived influence on students' learning outcomes, on their motivation, and on classroom atmosphere. Based on the literature reviewed, the research questions and hypotheses are then proposed. It is noted that I am aware of the difference that some teachers of languages and researchers see in the two terms "second" and "foreign" language – the term "second language" (L2) is used in the course of this study in the sense defined by UNESCO: "a language acquired by a person in addition to his mother tongue" (as quoted by Cook, 2001, p. 13).

#### 2.1 Main Issues of this Study

In the field of second language acquisition, the role of grammar has undergone major changes and heated debates. The issue of whether and how to facilitate the acquisition of grammar in the L2 classroom has been extensively discussed in the theoretical and

pedagogical literature (Doughty & Williams, 1998; Ellis, 1990, 1997, 2001; Hinkel & Fotos, 2002; Krashen & Terrell, 1988; Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991; Lightbown & Spada, 1990; 1991, 1993, 1994; Robinson, 2001; Rutherford, 1987).

Language educators and applied linguists have argued for the effectiveness of various approaches for the teaching of L2 grammar. However, not all are in agreement about which approach is essential or even helpful in the learning of L2 grammar. There are researchers who believe that formal grammar instruction is necessary (Hammerly, 1985; Gao, 2001; Lund & Light, 2003; Valette, 1991), or that it can help to enhance the learning of a new language (Doughty & Williams, 1998; Erlam, 2003; Hutchinson, McCavitt, Rude, & Vallow, 2002; Lightbown, 1998; Long & Robinson, 1998; Lyster, Lightbown & Spada, 1999); and there are those who see limited value in devoting classroom time to the practice of particular grammatical patterns (Krashen, 1985; Terrell, 1977). For these latter researchers, comprehensible input and the meaningful use of a target language constitute the main elements of a second language.

Over the last decades, researchers and educators have argued over the controversy between form-based and meaning-based instruction, without reaching agreement. Nevertheless, a number of researchers, such as Fotos and Ellis (1991), Ellis (1997), Larsen Freeman and Long (1991), Lightbown (1998), Norris and Ortega (2000), Savignon (1972) re-examined the value of both the focus-on forms and focus-on meaning approach. Based on empirical studies conducted in classrooms, these researchers found that the impact of instruction on acquisition is often indirect, and suggested that optimal classroom instruction in L2 grammar seems to allow students to learn explicit grammar rules while providing opportunities to practise them for communication in authentic or simulation tasks. In other words, the integrated use of Form-Focused Instruction and Communicative Language Learning works better than the communicative approach alone or the focus-on-forms alone.



A series of studies investigated the effects of the ‘focus-on-forms’ approach in communicative language programs. Some of them revealed positive findings (Hutchinson, McCavitt, Rude, & Vallow, 2002; Klapper & Rees, 2003; Lando 1996, 1996; Muranoi, 2000; Norris & Ortega, 2000; White, Spada, Lightbown & Ranta, 1991). However, a number of studies have also demonstrated difficulties with this approach (Long, Inagaki & Ortega, 1998; Salaberry, 1997; Toth, 2004). Toth (2004) noted that learners might not accurately understand what the instructor intends by designing activities around a particular grammar structure. That could lead to a negative instructional result. Methodologists, hence, argued that the approach ‘focus-on-forms’ might work effectively only if the provision of comprehensible input and the contextualization of L2 grammatical forms, reflecting authentic communication tasks, reach a balance (Lee & VanPatten, 2003; Omaggio-Hadley & Terry, 2000).

Much has been written, on both theoretical and empirical levels, about the ideas on how to integrate or contextualize grammar instruction within meaningful interaction and authentic communicative contexts. However, much less has been written about how to foster this objective in classroom contexts. For many teachers, this is still a challenge.

The results and recommendations of studies conducted on this issue have encouraged me to integrate explanations of grammatical rules with practice that included games, in order to attend both to focus-on-forms and to meaningful, contextualised interaction.

The next sections of this chapter explore in some depth the aspects about grammar raised so far, starting with the nature and role of grammar in L2 teaching and learning, and including the main grammar-teaching approaches.

## **2.2 The Nature of Grammar**

There are different points of view on the nature of grammar. The literature available on this indicates that many students and teachers of L2 have operated under a static and

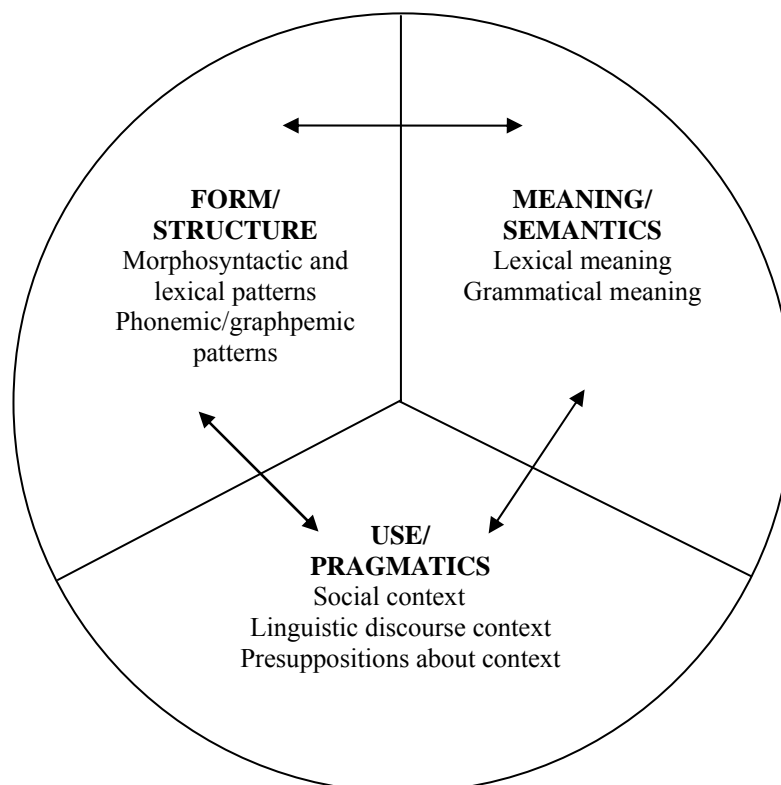
limited conception of grammar. In this traditional view, grammar is often understood as a set of rules, as “the features of a language (sounds, words, formation and arrangement of words, etc) considered systematically as a whole, especially with reference to their mutual contrasts and relations” (Macquarie Dictionary, 1997, p. 925), or defined as “the rules by which words change their forms and are combined into sentences” (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 2003, p. 705). Many people associate grammar with verb paradigms and rules about linguistic form, and understand grammar as written language governed by a set of sentence structures.

Moving away from the traditionally prescriptive grammar of written sentences, Ur (1988) explores the dimension of meaningfulness of grammar and defines grammar as “a way a language manipulates and combines words (or bits of words) in order to form longer units of meaning” (p. 4). As well as grammatical features, the connections between “grammar and meaning and grammar and social context” (de Silva, 1999, p. 17), have been taken into account. Pennington (1995), sees grammar as ‘situated’ grammar (p. v), Gurrey (1962) views grammar as living grammar from a functional perspective, and commenting that,

The grammar of language, however, to a grammarian is a description of the form structures and grammatical functions of common occurrence, and of the way that these play their part in various situations in real life – one of their main purposes being to express meaning. ... The study of grammar, therefore, should mean the study of forms, grammatical functions and structures of language in close association with the meaning they express. (p. 45)

Celce-Murica (1991) also stresses that “grammar should never be taught as an end in itself but always with reference to meaning, social factors, or discourse – or a combination of these factors” (Celce-Murcia, 1991, pp. 466-7). Larsen-Freeman (1997, 2001) supported these views and argued that grammar is not only a set of grammatical forms, but also it includes grammatical meaning and use as a whole. It is not helpful to view grammar as “a discrete set of meaningless, decontextualized, static structures” or “prescriptive rules about

linguistic form” (Larsen-Freeman, 2001, p. 252). Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999) view grammar teaching as “a communicative end” and as consisting of three interrelated or intertwined dimensions of “form, meaning and use” (p. 4). Grammatical structures not only have ‘(morphosyntactic) form’, they are also used to express meaning (semantics) in context-appropriate use (pragmatics). Larsen- Freeman (2001) has offered a pie chart showing the three-dimensional grammar: morphosyntax (form), semantics (meaning) and appropriateness (use). These three elements are represented by the pie chart in Figure 2.1.



*Figure 2.1 A Three-Dimensional Grammar (Larsen-Freeman, 2001, p. 252)*

According to this view, grammar has a range of flexible frames with interchangeable components that can be organized and manipulated in different ways. By manipulating

linguistic components within a grammatical frame, speakers should be able to produce a wide variety of constructions to express themselves in what would be considered an acceptable language form. This polysystemic orientation implies that there is not, in fact, only one correct form of the grammar of a language but rather a range of options useful for different purposes and appropriate in different situations.

In short, it is not appropriate to view the grammar of a language as a set of absolute rules. Rather, grammar can be seen as having the three dimensions of form, meaningfulness and use as a whole. L2 students must master all three dimensions, if the acquisition is to take place (Larsen-Freeman 1997, 2001). The objectives of grammar teaching should not be so much knowledge transmission as skill in development. It is better to think of teaching “grammaring” (Larsen-Freeman, 2001, p. 255), rather than “grammar”, so that students are able to use grammatical structures accurately, meaningfully, and appropriately. It is to this view of grammar that this experiment is close, as it aimed at combining explanations of rules with meaningful and contextualised practice through the inclusion of games.

### **2.3 The Role of Grammar in Language Learning and Teaching**

Grammar is one of the most ancient intellectual pursuits (Dykeman, 1961). Hudson (1992) points out that people have studied grammar for over 2000 years since the time of the Ancient Greeks. However, the questions whether and how to include grammar in L2 instruction have been controversial issues.

Although traditionally grammar has been an important and integral part of language programs, during the last three decades grammar has lost its popularity because some educators have become uncertain about its value. Many schools have ceased to teach it, or they have taught it only in parts.

The arguments for giving the teaching of grammar only limited attention were

developed in the 1970s and 1980s, and continue nowadays when a number of studies on the second language acquisition of English grammatical morphology have been published (Dulay & Burt, 1973, 1974; Elley, Barham, Lamb & Wyllie, 1975; Hillocks, 1986; Krashen, 1985; Makino, 1980; Pienemann, 1989). These studies have shown that grammar teaching had a limited or negative effect on grammatical accuracy. As a result, some second language professionals do not consider grammar to be an important element in second language learning and teaching. They believe that language can be learned holistically through context without explicit instruction in grammar. For example, Krashen (1985), in his “Input Hypothesis”, argued that exposing learners to communicatively meaningful situations is more ‘natural’ and more motivating than teaching them grammar. Krashen (1992), moreover, claimed that “the effect of grammar is peripheral and fragile” and that “direct instruction of specific rules has a measurable impact on tests that focus the performer on form, but the effect is shortlived” (p. 410).

Perhaps as a result of less focus on grammar teaching, a strong feeling has developed amongst teachers of second languages that the ability of students to understand grammatical concepts and to use grammatical constructions accurately has been declining (Lando, 1999; Metcalfe, Laurillard & Mason, 1995; MacRae, 2003). The resultant poor level of linguistic accuracy has been found in their oral and written work (Lando, 1999). Metcalfe, Laurillard and Mason (1995) also found in their research that pupils’ written accuracy in their use of French verbs has declined in recent years. Newspapers criticised the lack of teaching of grammar in schools and complained, “We’re not teaching our children well: students suffer when the school system neglects grammar and spelling” (MacRae, 2003, p. A12).

Moreover, these kinds of results might even influence students’ proficiency as a whole (Gao, 2001; Li, 2003). Lund and Light (2003), supporting other researchers’ concern, pointed out that “an individual’s inability to write grammatically can have deleterious effects

on his or her educational and vocational achievement” (p. 1111).

Therefore, SLA researchers, such as Foto and Ellis (1991), Lightbown and Spada (1991, 1999), Sharwood-Smith (1993) and Savignon (2000), have argued that learners need to pay more attention to language forms, if acquisition is to take place. Evans and Durie (cited in Williams, 1995) and Schiff (2004) stressed the importance of reintroducing grammar into the school curriculum. State departments of education in the United States, for example West Virginia's, took steps such as adding a “Grammar Tips” feature to the department's web site in an effort “to build awareness and correct grammar usage among all West Virginians” (West Virginia Department of Education, 2002, para. 1). On the basis of their classroom experience, many language teachers and researchers have also continued to believe that an understanding of the linguistic structures is a necessary part of the study of another language (Gao, 2001; Manley & Calk, 1997; Petruzzella, 1996; Schultz, 2002). Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999) conclude that grammar is a necessary component of second language instruction and views linguistic competence as a tool for the development of communicative competence. Gao (2001), furthermore, stresses that grammar is “a catalyst for second language accuracy and fluency” (p. 326).

In Taiwan, students and language teachers in recent years have also agreed that grammar learning contributes to language learning (Lai, 2004; Yen, 2002; Yu, 2003). Yen (2002) conducted her research on Taiwanese high school students' attitudes toward the effect of grammar instruction on their English skills. The results showed that most students in her English classes surveyed believed that grammar study was useful to their English learning. Yu (2003) investigated students' perception of the role of L2 German grammar and concluded that most students view grammar as an important element for the acquisition of the German language. The questionnaire and interview data collected in a high school English program in Taiwan (Lai, 2004) reaffirmed teachers' belief in the necessity of grammar instruction.

Since the mid 1990s, the belief that grammar is important in literacy teaching has continued to gain much ground (Batstone, 1994; Engel & Myles, 1996; McCarthy, 2002; Schiff, 2004). McCarthy (2002) comments

... Almost every piece of spoken and written language presented to... the students is 'grammar'. And the mastery of grammar ... is not a thing that can be considered 'good' or 'bad'; it is not an optional ingredient... it is very difficult indeed to conceive of a 'grammar-free' language activity. (p. 17)

It has also been found that it is possible to accelerate students' learning of grammar through instruction. Research findings can be brought to bear on this question from a variety of sources (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991). Recent studies have established that instruction does make a difference to accuracy (Doughty, 1991; Long, 1983; Schultz, 2002) while Pienemann (1984) demonstrated that subjects who received grammar instruction progressed to the next stage after a two-week period, a passage normally taking several months in untutored development.

With regard to whether instruction can help learners acquire accuracy, most research points to the value of form-focused instruction to improve learners' accuracy over what normally transpires when there is no focus on forms (Larsen-Freeman, 1995; Lando, 1996, 1999).

From many supporting studies on the role of grammar in language learning and teaching, it seems accepted that a focus on grammar should be part of language teaching. SLA researchers are now shifting their concern towards the way in which grammar should be taught (Benati, 2001; Crystal, 1995; Nunan, 2005; Patterson, 2001).

Crystal (1995) points out that some native speakers of English have limited grammar knowledge because "the potential fascination of this task has been stifled by poor teaching methods" (p. 191). It should be the same with L2 learners. Therefore, he claims that the task of finding appropriate ways of "developing a person's knowledge about grammar, which are

both enlivening and rewarding” (p. 191) is, and continues to be, “an important goal of contemporary education linguistics” (p. 191). Likewise, SLA educators, such as Benati (2001), Nunan (2005) and Patterson (2001), remind us that the issue should never be whether or not grammar is taught. Rather, it should be about how grammar is taught. Moreover, Macedonica (2005) asserts that the problem of non-fluency and accurate speech is attributed primarily to the type of exercises employed to process second language input. Therefore, they call for an investigation, or search for, more effective ways of providing effective grammar instruction.

As a result, it is valuable to have an overview of L2 grammar teaching and learning in terms of the various methods of instruction. The main focus of the next section is to address the controversy between form-orientation and meaning-orientation in teaching foreign languages, and an alternative approach – the combination of form-orientation and meaning-orientation.

## **2.4 Approaches to Grammar Instruction**

### ***2.4.1 Focus-on-Forms***

‘Focus-on-forms’ is a traditional and still common approach used in the classroom (Chio, 1999; Cook, 2001; Huang, 2004; Lin, 1997; Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999). It is noted here that the notion of “focus-on-forms” adopted in this study is the following: deliberate discussion of grammar without reference to meaning in the classroom. This definition is an adoption of Cook’s (2001, p. 39) notion of both “focus-on-forms” and “focus-on-form”. He defines “focus-on-forms” as “deliberate discussion of grammar without reference to meaning” and “focus-on-form” as “incidental discussion of grammar arising from meaningful language in the classroom”.

From the structural view of language acquisition, this approach implies that language



learning consists of, to a great extent, the mastery of the rules (Doughty, 1991). According to this approach, language is broken down into morphemes, words and their collocations.

Special focus is placed on grammatical rules, phonemes, intonation, and stress patterns. The learners' role is to synthesize the pieces for use in communication. This approach includes transformation exercises, continuous error "correction", drilling and repetition of models, explicit negative feedback, often in isolation from context or from communicative use of the language (Long & Robinson, 1998). As Stern (1990) points out, focus-on-forms instruction has the following characteristics:

1. Focus on specific language features which are isolated and given more instructional attention. This applies also to features that might otherwise be overlooked, like pronouns, word order, affixes, intonation patterns, and sociolinguistic distinction;
2. Decontextualisation of linguistic features;
3. Attention to the lawfulness of language, as language items become objects of study and are therefore examined, observed, explained, compared, and placed into some order within a system;
4. Provision of practice, in order to give an opportunity for the learner to come to terms with a specific feature, and to try out a language feature safely outside the pressure of a real communicative situation;
5. Attention to accuracy and error correction to an extent deemed appropriate for a given group of learners.

The widely used grammar-translation (1890-1930) and audio-lingual (1950-1970) approaches were based on these principles, which engaged the learner in activities especially designed to teach specific grammatical features.

There have been many research studies looking at the teaching of grammar in the language classroom (Braddock, Lloyd-Jones & Schoer, 1963; Elley, Barham, Lamb & Wyllie;

1975; Harris, 1962; Hillocks, 1986). The results show that the traditional study of grammar provides little or no evidence for the argument that isolated grammar studies improve student writing. Harris (1962) investigated grammar instruction with middle school students in London, England, by comparing two groups of students- those who received heavy doses of traditional grammar and those who learned grammatical concepts within the context of language use. In their summary of the Harris study, Elley, Barhan, Lamb, and Wyllie (1975) wrote:

After a period of two years, five classes of high school students who had studied formal grammar performed significantly worse than a matched group of five non-grammar groups on several objective criteria of sentence complexity and the number of errors in their essays. (p. 6)

In other words, the study by Harris found that the formal teaching of grammar actually had an adverse effect on students' abilities to write well.

Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Schoer (1963) conducted a meta-study, an examination of previous research studies, and concluded that there is no evidence that the teaching of grammar improves writing:

In view of the widespread agreement of research studies based upon many types of students and teachers, the conclusion can be stated in strong and unqualified terms: the teaching of formal grammar has a negligible or, because it usually displaces some instruction and practice in actual composition, even a harmful effect on the improvement of writing. (pp. 37-38)

Hillocks (1986) conducted a research study on written composition and concluded that isolated grammar lessons could have a negative effect on students' writing by stating:

The study of traditional school grammar (i.e., the definition of parts of speech, the parsing of sentences, etc.) has no effect on raising the quality of student writing. ...Every other focus of instruction examined in this review is stronger. Taught in certain ways, grammar and mechanics instruction has a deleterious effect on student writing. In some studies a heavy emphasis on mechanics and usage (e.g., marking every error) resulted in significant losses in overall quality. (p. 248)

Macedonia (2005) has the same opinion, stating that

The traditional transmission of morphology and syntax by way of rules, and practicing such rules via written exercises, does not lead to spoken language, for with this type of practice the retrieval of learned material is too slow and often incomplete to enable successful speech. (p. 135)

In summary, the results of these research studies show that the isolated teaching of school grammar did not result in the outcomes that teachers expected. Moreover, isolated grammar drills are unlikely to lead to effective communicative use of the language, because learners may not have any way of transferring their knowledge of grammatical structure appropriately to a range of communicative situations, and learning grammar in isolation detaches the grammatical aspects from the meaning-making aspects of language (de Silva & Burns, 1999; Krashen, 1985; Macedonia, 2005; Nunan, 2005; Petruzzella, 1996; Smitherman, 1977).

Many researchers, such as Krashen (1985) and Smitherman (1977), point out the need for developing students' communicative competence. Smitherman (1977) writes:

Communicative competence, quite simply, refers to the ability to communicate effectively. At this point, however, all simplicity ends. For to be able to speak or write with power is a very complex business, involving a universe of linguistic choices and alternatives. Such a speaker or writer must use language that is appropriate to the situation and the audience. (p. 229)

Following the disappointing results of studies of teaching grammatical features in isolation, researchers and teachers began to explore the effectiveness of a more meaning-based and contextualised approach to the teaching of grammar.

#### ***2.4.2 Focus-on-Meaning***

Following on the pedagogical experience and second language acquisition research, that deals with decontextualized grammatical features and that does not necessarily lead to the ability to use the language in context, there has been a shift of research and practice from the

audio-lingual and grammar-translation methods to the exploration of communicative language teaching. Scholars have stressed the importance of communicating in the target language and have focused on global and integrative tasks, rather than on discrete structures.

Some language practitioners have interpreted this to mean that teaching grammar may be detrimental to learners' progress. Dulay and Burt (1973), Krashen (1982) and Prabhu (1987) claimed that grammar instruction should be abandoned in favour of creating opportunities for natural language use of the kind found in untutored setting. Prabhu (1987), for instance, justified the Communicational Teaching Project (CTP) in southern India on the grounds that:

The development of competence in a second language requires not systematization of language inputs or maximization of planned practice, but rather the creation of conditions in which learners engage in an effort to cope with communication. (p. 1)

Such a perspective means that "form can best be learnt when the learner's attention is focused on meaning" (Beretta 1989, p. 233). Stern (1990) explores the following characteristics of a focus-on-meaning approach:

1. Focus of the classroom activities on a substantive topic or theme which is not arbitrary or trivial, but motivated by identified educational or personal needs;
2. The existence of some purposeful enterprise, like projects, inquiries, games, problem solving tasks, scenarios, where the focus of attention is the planning, carrying out and completing the enterprise itself, involving communication, decision making and execution;
3. Real language use and true conversation. Real talk includes use of target language, information gap, sustained speech, reaction to message, incorporation of preceding utterances, discourse initiation, and relatively unrestricted use of linguistic forms and of all four language macro-skills;

4. Emphasis on meaning and fluency - i.e., on making sense of written and spoken texts and on language production, without too much worrying about absolute correctness;
5. Creation of a diversified social climate conducive to social interaction, where students are not afraid, inhibited, or aggressive. This calls for a language class that operates with a socially flexible arrangement, including individualized work, pair work, and work in small groups, apart from some whole-class, teacher-led activities.

Objectives of meaning-focused instruction are set in terms of students' ability to perform certain communicative functions. Therefore, this form of instruction emphasizes communicative interaction, often in the context of task-based or 'information-gap' activities. It engages the learner in communication where the primary effort involves the exchange of meaning and where there is no conscious effort to achieve grammatical correctness.

As a consequence, a range of teaching methods which exclude grammar teaching in principle has been developed since the 1970s, for example the "Total Physical Response" (Asher, 1969), Suggestopaedia (Lozanov, 1979), the "Natural Approach" (Krashen & Terrell, 1988), Immersion programs (Harley, 1991; Baker, 1993), some context-based ESL instruction and numerous other variants.

Communicative language teaching (CLT) has been adopted by courses and L2 textbooks all over the world, including ESL in Taiwan. The South Korean educational authorities published the so-called Communicative Curricula for secondary schools, which were to guide English teaching from 1995 to 2010 (Li, 1998). In Hong Kong and Singapore, the standards of the curriculum are based on CLT (Shih, 2001). In China, there have been attempts to introduce CLT into English language teaching recently (Rao, 2002). In 1992, the State Education Development Commission (SEDC) of China replaced the structure-based national unified syllabus with a new one which set communication as the teaching aim (Yu, 2001).

Such trends have also been reflected in Taiwan. In Taiwan, the Ministry of Education has initiated a series of reforms in the English curriculum. One of the most important moves in this direction is the incorporation of CLT into the standards of the English curriculum for junior high schools and senior high schools in 1994 and 1995 respectively (Shih, 2001). The ultimate aim of the new curriculum and textbooks is to develop students' linguistic repertoire and communicative ability (Chang & Huang, 2001; Wang, 2001,2002). CLT has apparently turned out to be the mainstream in English language teaching in Taiwan (Chang & Huang, 2001; Shih, 2001). All such initiatives have been outlined in a current Taiwanese policy document (Ministry of Education, Taiwan, 2005).

Despite the popularity and prevalence of CLT in Asian countries, this approach is by no means applied and practised without any impediments or constraints. A large number of teachers perceive the implementation of CLT to be difficult (Anderson, 1993; Chang, 2001; Hsu, 2003; Li, 1998). Some English teachers think students receiving CLT are unable to develop good language knowledge (Chang & Huang, 2001). In spite of most teachers' positive attitudes towards the notions of the communicative approach, their classroom practice has remained unchanged in Taiwan (Huang, 2004).

A review of many research studies starting from the 1970s (Ellis, 1997) shows that communicative L2 teaching was perceived as a departure from the teaching of grammar, in favour of focusing on meaning only. Lightbown and Spada (1998) observed that there is increasing evidence that learners continue to have difficulty with basic structures in programs where no form-focused instruction is offered. Prabhu (cited by Beretta & Davies, 1985) conducted an experiment in communicative language teaching and found that the experimental group, which received focus-on meaning instruction, did well on the meaning-based test, but showed low results on the discrete-point test. The control group, on the other hand, having received structural instruction, performed better on the grammar structure tasks,

rather than on the meaning-based test.

Similar to Prabhu's research, Lin (2002) introduced communicative language teaching and the audio-lingual methods in English courses in elementary school and examined the immediate effects and retention effects on language learning, learning motivation, teacher-and-student interaction, and classroom climate. Best outcomes were obtained by the communicative language teaching approach on the children's listening, speaking, and reading skills in the aspects of English learning.

Chang (2002) tested the following three approaches in his study of the English wh-question with three groups of high school students in Taiwan: the Form-Focused instruction (FFI) combined with the Communicative Language Teaching approach (FFI+CLT); the Communicative Language Teaching approach (CLT); and the traditional Grammar-Translation Method (GTM). The best results were those by the students that were taught through the combination of FFI+CLT both in the short and long term.

Therefore, Savignon (2000) makes it clear that "communication cannot take place in the absence of structure, or grammar, of a set of shared assumptions about how language works" (p. 53). Fotos (1993) also found that a formal grammatical focus is important in improving the accurate use of structures in communicative production. Some research, although not unequivocally, points to the value of form-focused instruction to improve learners' accuracy in the language used for communication (Larsen-Freeman, 1995; Lando, 1996).

It seems that each form of instruction has its own limitations. Comparisons of meaning-based instruction with form-based instruction in L2 teaching show that communicative language teaching enables students to perform spontaneously, but does not guarantee linguistic accuracy of their utterances. On the other hand, form-based instruction focuses on the linguistic and grammatical structures, which makes the speech grammatically

accurate. But accuracy is observed in prepared speech only, and students lack the ability to produce spontaneous speech. In order to find a solution to the use of either of these two approaches, some studies have investigated the effectiveness of combining them.

### ***2.4.3 The Combination of Focus-on-Forms and Focus-on-Meaning Instruction***

Many SLA researchers now support the value of some focus-on-forms combined with communicative activities, because empirical studies have generally found it inadequate to use one approach to the exclusion of the other (Ellis, 2001; Fotos & Ellis, 1991; Musumeci, 1997). Fotos and Ellis (1991) stress that “providing learners with grammar problems they must solve interactively, integrates grammar instruction with opportunities for meaningful communication” (p. 605). Stern (1990), Engel and Myles (1996) and Sysoyev (1999) advocate that, in order to gain the highest degree of effectiveness from the language classroom, the two approaches should be integrated and regarded as complementary. Lightbown and Spada (1991) have also argued “that form focused instruction and corrective feedback, provided within the context of communicative interaction, can contribute positively to second language development in both the short and long term” (p. 205). Musumeci (1997) states that the idea of connecting forms and meaning in grammar teaching is a developing trend in reference to the proficiency-oriented curriculum. She points out that students should be able to learn explicit grammar rules as well as have a chance to practise them in communication in authentic or simulation tasks. Gover and Stay (1995), point out that

the development of grammatical understanding enables a student to build a paradigm through which to view the world and act in it through language, a paradigm that a student can apply in a variety of contexts. By extension, approaching grammar as a way of thinking, as a style of inquiry, and as a way of seeing the work, means approaching grammatical questions within the larger context of audience and purpose. (p. 131)



Results of a series of studies have showed that teachers who focus students' attention on linguistic forms during communicative interactions are more effective than those who never focus on forms or who only do so in decontextualized grammar lessons (Klapper & Rees, 2003; Li, 2003; Lando, 1996, 1999; Lightbown 1998; Savignon, 1972; Yen, 2002).

Savignon (1972), whose study was one of the earliest and provided empirical supports for the combination of the two approaches, compared college students' grammatical and communicative skills in regular audio-lingual (form-focused) French L2 classes for 4 hours a week. In this study, subjects were divided into three groups: control, FFI, and FFI+CLT. The last experimental group, with an additional hour devoted to communicative tasks, outperformed the other two groups on the "communicative" measures, while performing no differently on the "linguistic" measures. The study showed the effectiveness of spontaneous communicative interaction and suggested the adoption of spontaneous communicative activities in a form-focused classroom.

Lando (1996, 1999) found that optimal instruction in L2 grammar seems to allow students to learn explicit grammar rules as well as have a chance to practise them in communication in authentic or simulation tasks. He conducted a study of the effects of direct grammatical instruction on the accuracy rate in the written work of advanced learners of Italian. The instructional program, and its short and long term effects, focused on the standard and non-standard use of the Italian past tense system in the free writing of 100 learners of Italian, undertaking a major sequence of study at tertiary level. The major findings of the study were, first, that the 60 experimental learners registered significant short and long term benefits from an instruction input which comprised regular meaning-focused and form-focused use of the targeted features; second, that the 40 control learners, who did not receive direct instruction in the same features, did not record any significant progress as a result of months of contextualised use of them.

Yen (2002) implemented a communicative approach to grammar instruction in an EFL vocational high school classroom in Taiwan. The results of this study showed positive outcomes.

Similar to Yen's research, Li (2003) included a focus on grammar in L2 immersion programs with second year high school students in Taiwan. Her findings indicated that the experimental group showed a significant advantage over the control group in the written and oral tasks on the immediate post-test measure.

As well as others, Klapper and Rees (2003) obtained similar research results. They investigated grammar instruction with undergraduate learners of German as a second language at a major UK university for a four-year longitudinal study. The two experimental groups were exposed to different instructional approaches: one group received substantial explicit teaching of grammatical forms, while the other received more meaning-focused instruction in German with occasional and, generally, more incidental attention to linguistic form. This study suggests that there is still a substantial need for a focus-on-form approach to language instruction. It would appear that foreign languages are taught more efficiently and effectively when meaning-based classroom interaction in L2 is linked to focus-on-form, rather than just focus-on-meaning instruction.

A large number of ESL researchers and experienced language teachers claimed that games are optimal activities to use in this teaching and learning approach where form and meaning are combined (Deesri, 2002; Gary, Marrone & Boyles, 1998; Gaudart, 1999; Graetz, 2001; Hassaji, 2000; Jones, Mungai & Wong, 2002; Macedonia, 2005; Pennington, 1995; Schweckendiek, 2001; Shie, 2003; Stern, 1990; Ur, 1999). Gary, Marrone and Boyles (1998) stated that games facilitate "positive interaction among different, and often competing, communication patterns and learning styles" (para. 2). Deesri (2002) claims that games give students opportunities to take part in "real communication" (para. 9). Gaudart (1999)

supports these statement with her 20 years experience by saying that games are the most effective techniques in that they allow second language learners to practise in the target language the grammatical structures that they have learned, participating in the communicative process throughout the games (para. 49). Macedonia (2005) asserts that language games serve the function of “redundant oral repetition of grammar structures (morphological, syntactic and vocabulary in a playful way” (p. 138). These SLA researchers and educators argue that games, because they combine fun with challenging activities, can motivate teenage language learners and can encourage active student participation and practice in a non-threatening environment.

The present study links up with the now perceived usefulness of combining focus-on-forms with focus-on-meaning, by integrating the use of games into L2 practice.

The following section presents an overview of the current literature related to the nature of games, types of language games and the promotion of learning through games.

### **2.5 Games: Conceptual Framework and Characteristics**

The use of games as a teaching strategy has been widely adopted in different subject areas of the curriculum, such as the social sciences (Steele, 1995), mathematics (Downton, 2004; Markey, 1997), physics (Chandler, 1996), biology (Nemerow, 1996) and medicine and nursing (Anderson, 1998; Gary, Marrone & Boyles, 1998; Ogershok & Cottrell, 2004).

There has also been a tendency toward a greater use of games in the language classroom. Many innovative language teaching methods, such as the Natural Approach (Terell, 1982), and Suggestopedia (Lozanov, 1979), - make use of language games. Several German course books, for example, “*Ping Pong 1*” (Kopp & Fröhlich, 1997), “*Passwort Deutsch 1*” (Albrecht, Dane, Fandrych, Grüßhaber, Henningsen, Kilimann & Schäfer, 2001), and “*Sowieso*” (Hermann & König, 1995) have incorporated German language games into

their suggested activities. Furthermore, a number of language learning games has been included in the many German teaching resource books commercially available, e.g. *Lernen mit Spielen, Lernspiele für den Unterricht mit ausländischen Arbeitern* (Goebel, 1979); *Mit Spielen Deutsch lernen. Spiele und spielerische Übungsformen für den Unterricht mit ausländischen Kindern, Jugendlichen und Erwachsenen* (Spier, 1984); *66 Grammatik-Spiele, Deutsch als Fremdsprache* (Rinvoluceri & Davis, 1999), and *Spiele im Deutschunterricht* (Dauvillier & Hillerich, 2004). The Goethe Institute in Taipei in May 2005 offered a professional development course for German teachers with a focus on the use of games in German classes.

Much has been written on the use of language games (Deesri, 2002; Gaudart, 1999; Hong, 2002; Macedonia, 2005; Schweckendiek, 2001; Shie, 2003). Despite the growing interest in, and increasingly common use of games, relatively few empirical studies on the educational effectiveness of games have been conducted. Bohn and Schreiter (1994), Cortez (1974) and Gardner (1987), and Shie (2003) point out that most of the literature which discusses the value of using games in language classrooms has not been based on empirical research. Some studies of language games in L2 acquisition are listed in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1

*Studies of Language Games in L2 Acquisition*

Study	Research	Subjects	Data collected	Results
Cortez (1974)	Games for second language learning: A comparison of two approaches for teaching English to Puerto Rican children	Non-English-speaking 3 <sup>rd</sup> graders ESL in Puerto Rica	Spanish test, reading test, vocabulary test, English test	A significant difference between the control and experimental group in acquisition of vocabulary
Issacs (1979)	Affective and cognitive changes in using Hebrew language games with thirteen and fourteen year old students: an exploratory study	High school students Hebrew language in the U. S. A.	Listening-comprehension test & attitude test	A significant difference between the control and experimental group in listening-comprehension and attitude
Gardner (1987)	Communication games: do we know what we're talking about?	23 pairs of university pre-sessional students	Questionnaire Pronunciation, structure error counting	Students had positive attitude toward the use of games. However, the effects of games on the communication were not as effective as expected.
Matheidesz (1988)	Communication games – Are they really effective?	ESL students	Questionnaire observation	Teachers and students had positive attitude towards the use of games.
Miller (1992)	Two experimental studies of the effectiveness of interactive game-playing in the acquisition of Japanese by Americans	Three classes of Japanese language uni-students in America.	A Cloze, an oral interview, a written essay test, interview & ethnographic observation	No significant differences among two game groups and one traditional control group on any of the three tests after four semesters. The game classes outperformed the control class on all three tests by the fourth semester.
Wrucke-Nelson (1992)	An investigation into the development of oral English in concept formation through the use of group games in the bilingual/ESL classroom	36 Bilingual/ESL kindergarten students	Iowa test of Basic Skills (LAS) & Language Assessment Scales (ITBS)	A significant difference between the control and experimental groups on the posttests to the LAS, the ITBS. Group games can facilitate bilingual/ESL kindergarten students' acquisition of oral English.
Hajdus (2000)	A journey in language teaching and learning	German as L2 Year 7 and Year 10 students in Melbourne, Australia	Learning strategy inventory, worksheet	Students liked to have games as their learning strategy in German class.

Generally, though, it can be argued that there is a gap in the research in this important area. Most of the studies on games have come out in favour of the usefulness of games. Among the very few to find no significant differences in the students' performance were those by Gardner (1987) and Miller (1992). Thus, it seems beneficial to test the widely accepted, but mainly untested, belief in the usefulness of games, also because it seems widely accepted that games increase the level of student motivation in the language classroom. Anecdotal evidence of the language teachers' belief in the implicit benefit of games can be gathered, for example, from the fact that 200 books on language games are to be found in my college's library.

However, Loucks' (Loucks, as cited in Cortez, 1974) assessment on the value of games remains accurate today:

Little has been written in regard to the game approach to teaching foreign languages to elementary school children. To the best of the experimenter's knowledge, no published research is available at the present time concerning the teaching of Spanish or any other foreign language through the use of a method based on games. (pp. 7-8)

Cortez (1974) and Shie (2003) also call attention to the need to investigate the effects of language games in language classrooms. These writers suggest that research be undertaken to answer the following questions:

1. What changes in learners' attitudes occur when language games are used frequently? (Cortez, 1974)
2. Which language games would be effective with older children? (Cortez, 1974)
3. Do weaker students benefit from the use of games as much as other students? (Shie, 2003)

These questions reveal that there is minimal documented research that demonstrates the relationship between language games and the promotion of improved student outcomes in language acquisition. It needs to be noted that the importance of this study is particularly

relevant for the teaching of languages in the Chinese context. My contacts with many Chinese teachers of second languages have convinced me that generally they think that games connote fun and are not therefore considered serious enough to be used in the classroom. They are afraid that using games would trivialize their subject matter and their profession. They do not believe that students can learn anything through playing. This belief may have been caused by the fact that games always imply one element: fun (Deesri, 2002).

However, SLA educators, many authors of language games and experienced language teachers admit that the games they have included are meant to provide only examples, and suggest that teachers should select and develop their own games since not all games are suitable everywhere (Hong, 2002). Hong (2002) has stated that many games require modification in order to meet students' needs. He has also commented that teachers need to consider which games to use, when to use them, how to link them up with the syllabus, textbook or program and how, more specifically, different games will benefit students in different ways.

The most relevant aspects of language games discussed above are summarised in the following graphic model (see Figure 2.2). The model places language games at the centre to indicate their central role in the learning process as generally perceived by researchers and practising teachers. The next section will focus on the definition and characteristics of language games.

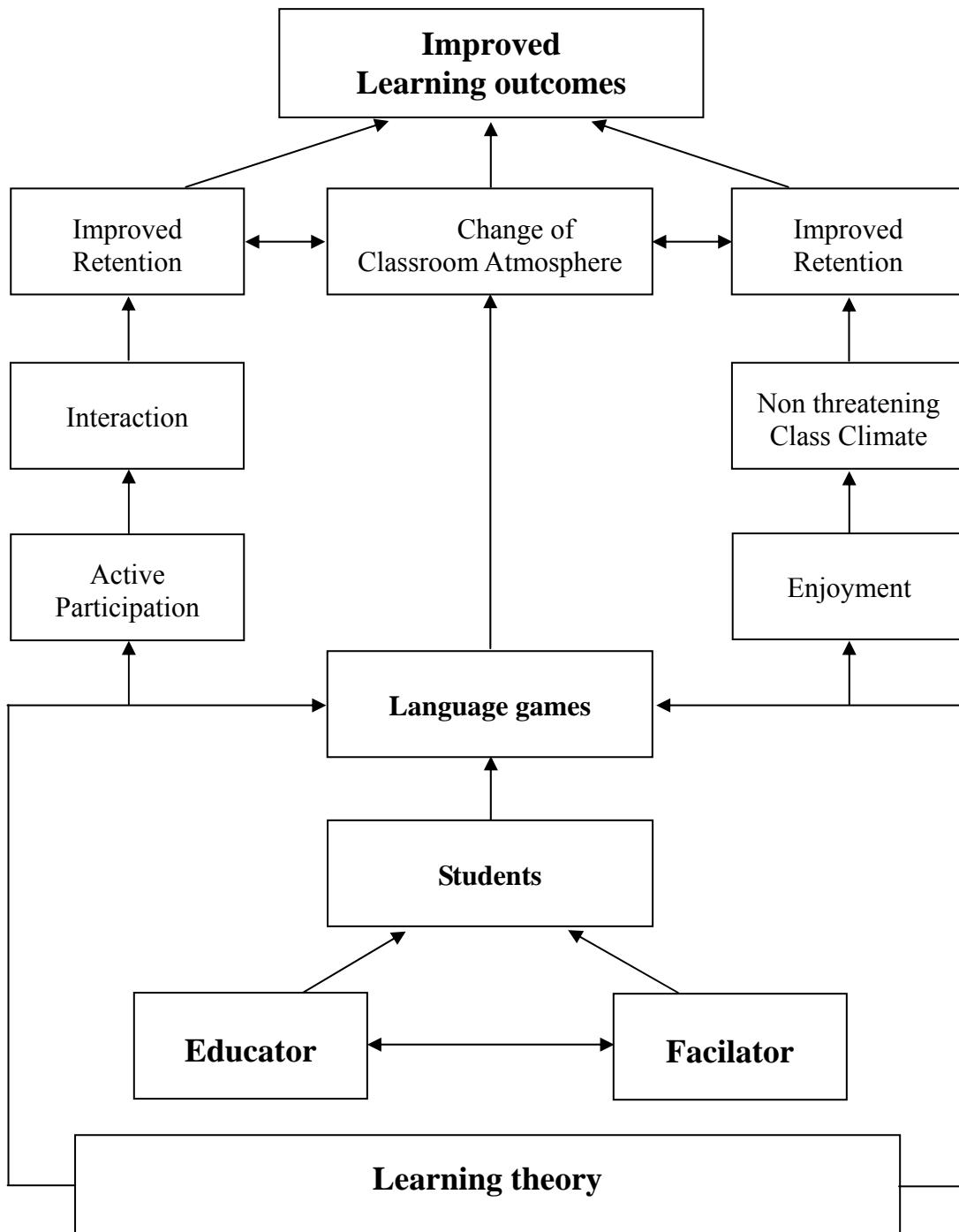


Figure 2.2 Language Games, Learning Theory and Learning Outcomes



## 2.6 Definition of 'Game'

A single definition of the word 'game' is difficult to find. All available definitions seem to be descriptions of the most common characteristics of games. It seems that as long as a certain activity is felt to be interesting, amusing, or entertaining, it is likely to be referred to as a game.

In the Macquarie Dictionary (1997), a game is defined as “amusement or pastime; diversion; contest with rules, the result being determined by skill, strength, or chance” (p. 871).

Griffiths and Clyne (1995) state that the word diversion implies that a game is to be enjoyed. A game may be defined as an enjoyable diversion in which we test our skill, strength or chance, according to a set of rules.

Allery (2004) defined a game as “a competitive activity with a prescribed setting, constrained by rules and procedures. The learning results from playing the game (for example, interactions and behaviours exhibited) and not from the academic content or specialist subject matter” (p. 504).

According to Hunt and Cain (1950) a game is:

- A way of behaving in play which tends to conform to a pattern that is generally formed and shared by several individuals;
- The game pattern is emphasized by the elements of organization which bring about a definite and often repeated climax;
- In a game, individuals do not lose their identity, for the game itself is a situation in which the elements of success and failure are so equally balanced that only players by their own efforts, practice, and application of self can swing the balance to succeed (pp. 31-32).

Harvey and Bright (1985) define an instructional game by the following characteristics:

- A game involves a challenge against either a task or an opponent;
- A game is governed by a definite set of rules;
- A game is freely engaged in;
- Psychologically, a game is an arbitrary situation clearly separate from real-life;
- Socially, the events of a game situation are considered, in and of themselves, to be of minimal importance;
- A game has a definite number of possible solutions; that is, only a finite number of things can happen during play;
- A game must always end, although the end may come simply because time has run out;

Summing up, the basic characteristics of games in general are:

- A game is fun and interesting.
- A game is rule-governed.
- A game is goal defined.
- A game is engaging.
- A game is competitive.
- A game has a closure.

The perception of what constitutes a 'language game' is that it shares some common aspects with games in general, but also has specific traits.

'Language games' is a general term used to cover a variety of language activities. Language games are used for practicing specific language items such as grammar, sentence structures, vocabulary, and spelling; and for developing language skills, such as listening, speaking, writing and reading.

Another specific trait of language games is that they seem to be task-oriented. The

goals of language games may fall into three categories: linguistic structure, communication and a mixture of the two. Structural games emphasize accuracy of language use; communication games stress fluency of language use. Between the polarities of structure and communication there is a wide spectrum of structural and communicative goals. In some games the accent is more structural than communicative; in others it is more communicative than structural. The games with mixed goals provide the participants with the opportunities to use particular language structure points in various communicative contexts. In this study, all three types of games will be introduced according to set objectives.

Like games in general, language games are rule governed. Their rules distinguish language games from other classroom activities such as discussion, songs, and role-plays. The rules of language games describe the pattern of activity meant to take place. The rules lay out the game organization, the procedure of the game, the behavioural restrictions and the scoring method.

In brief, language games encourage active participation and generate fun, are rule-governed, have specific linguistic language outcomes to achieve, are based on competitive and challenging interaction.

## **2.7 Types of Language Games**

In the field of language teaching, the word ‘game’ has been a rather vague umbrella term for all kinds of activities considered to be fun. Research conducted by Shie (2003) confirms Klepping (1980) initial findings that it is difficult to group language games. Every author or practitioner classifies games according to different aspects, such as functions, language skills, techniques and organization.

In this study, I am using the distinction by Littlewood (1981) and Hadfield (1996), who divide language games in two main types: communicative and pre-communicative games.

The following section describes these two types of games.

Communication games are those where the emphasis is on successful communication, rather than on grammatical correctness. Communication games cover such communicative functions as greeting, invitation, request, description, and narration, where the output is open-ended, unprescribed, or unpredictable. There are many examples to be found in books such as those by Lohfert (1996), Altenmöller (1987), and Benito, Dreke and Oberberger (1997).

Games that stress accuracy of language use are called pre-communicative games. As this type of games emphasize accuracy of language use, they have explicit definitions, such as “structural games” (Hadfield, 1996), or more direct “grammar games” (Ur, 1988; Steinberg, 1992; Rinvolutri & Davis, 1995). The aim of structure-aimed games is to foster the linguistic ability for certain syntactic patterns, some vocabulary areas and idiomatic expressions, spelling and pronunciation skills and new vocabulary. In pre-communicative games, the participants’ output is close-ended to ensure the correctness of language use. Both pre-communication and communication games are included in this study (see Chapter 3).

A further subdivision of language games, both communicative and pre-communicative, can be made on the basis of specific aspects such as (a) cooperation and competitiveness (b) techniques.

**(a) *Cooperation and competitiveness***

As the name indicates, in this type of game the main action is organised into team-based activities which encourage cooperation. The participants have to work together towards a common goal. Increasing number of game designers, such as Hadfield (1996), and Wright, Betteridge and Buckby (1989), have emphasized the cooperative element of the language learning games. Rinvolutri and Davis (1995) divide games into two major categories in his collection: competitive games and cooperative games.

The latter type of games is excellent for encouraging shy students, since they require the participation of all the members of a team, group or pair. Some typical activities may include the completion of drawings, putting things in order, grouping things, finding a pair or finding hidden things. Students are involved in the exchange of information in order to complete a task and in the giving or following of instructions.

Bruffee (1993) describes collaborative learning as a process which enables students to practise working together in low risk situations, in preparation for effective working group relationships when the stakes are high. Students learn to depend on one another rather than depending exclusively on the authority of the teacher. Collaborative learning promotes the craft of interdependence where collaboration, consultation, and teamwork are essential components inherent in the employment arena. Games encompass the theoretical foundations of collaborative learning.

According to Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1985), second language acquisition is a highly collaborative and interactive process. He also claims that a small-group approach enables learners to attain greater language competence than a teaching methodology that stresses the memorization of grammar, vocabulary and drill exercises in isolation. Therefore, he asserted that cooperative learning could help to create a healthy learning environment that makes language learning meaningful.

Research on cooperative learning has been conducted in many ways and has shown benefits for the learners. Lacey and Walker (1991) conducted a cooperative learning study in a secondary classroom, and concluded that students appeared to participate in the learning process more and generate creative ideas more frequently when they worked together with their peers towards a common goal. Liang (2002) conducted a research study to examine the effects of cooperative learning on teaching English as a second language to senior high school students. She found that the students in the experimental group outperformed the students in

the control group in their language skills.

The cooperative nature of most language games naturally encourages student interaction. Vygotsky (1997) stated that play, in providing interaction creates a zone of proximal development, which provides an opportunity for learning. Games can be seen as a means of enhancing learning outcomes by creating more interactive opportunities for learners. Grammar games, especially communication-oriented ones, seem to be perceived as good for bringing about natural, meaningful and low-anxiety interaction in a formal linguistic environment, because they require pair or group work and are by their very nature ‘informal’ tasks.

**(b) *Technique***

Games make use of a variety of techniques. Variety is important in language teaching: a succession of games based on the same principles, though exciting and novel at first, can cause boredom. Techniques include information-gap, problem-solving, guessing, search, matching, exchanging and collecting, combining card games, puzzles and simulation. Because of the importance of variety in games, Hewitt (1999), Hölscher (1991), Ramor and Wetz (1984), and Wright, Betteridge and Buckby (1989) group their games as Puzzle games, Crosswords games, Bingo games, Domino games, matching games, board games, cards games, picture games, Quartett and Lotto.

The games adopted for the experiment of this study can be classified as “communicative grammar games”, because they include the components of accuracy and communication, according to the division adopted by Rinvolucris and Davis (1995), Benito, Dreke and Oberberger (1997). Each game will present one or more of the characteristics described above. These will be indicated in their description. This choice was inspired by my wish to sustain students’ learning interest and to cater for the learning styles of different students.

## **2.8 Advantages of Learning through Games in the Language Classroom**

This section highlights some of the main advantages of using language games, as they emerge from the literature, i.e. active learning, improved retention, collaborative learning, catering for learning styles, change of classroom atmosphere, and improved level of motivation. Most of these are perceived advantages: they are often stated, are based on anecdotal evidence, but are mainly untested by empirical studies.

While acknowledging the risks associated with the use of games, such as noise and lack of discipline (Kuo, 1990), Richard-Amato (1996) advises teachers not to lose sight of the pedagogical value of games, particularly in second language teaching. Games are effective for helping students learn. Games make practice more effective as students become active participants in the learning process (Allery, 2004; Ruben, 1999; Thatcher, 1990; Wesson, Wilson, & Mandlebaum, 1988). In addition to the improvement of learning outcomes, games are effective because they can lower students' stress, increase students' interest and motivation and give them the opportunity for effective communication (Allery, 2004; Ruben, 1999; Garcial-Carbonell, Rising, Montero & Watts, 2001; Gaudart, 1999; Straus, 1986). These are all very positive reasons for playing games in the language classroom. This section presents the advantages of games, as they have been pointed out in the literature on their usefulness: active learning, improvement in retention, interaction, flexibility, motivation and supportive atmosphere.

### ***2.8.1 Active Learning in Games***

Games provide unique learning opportunities to meet students' needs while engaging in an active learning process (Allery, 2004; Anderson, 1998; Thatcher, 1990). These advantages seem to be summarised in the following quotation, attributed to Confucius

(Silberman, 1996):

I hear and I forget  
I see and I remember  
I do and I understand.

Silberman (1996) emphasizes the need for students to be given a more active role in the learning process because merely hearing something, or seeing something, is not enough to learn it.

Thatcher (1990) promotes games as a significant form of experiential learning. Allery (2004) also states that games “ensure all participants are winners in that all have the opportunity for involvement and to engage with experiential learning ... the role of the participant as an active processor of information” (p. 504). During a game, the learner is actually engaged in an experience in which resolutions or decisions must be made. Evaluation, discussion, reflection, and application all occur during playing games and all promote learning.

Ruben (1999) states that active participation is the chief advantage of games. Games “accommodated more complex and divers approaches to the learning processes and outcomes; allowed for interactivity; ... perhaps most important, fostered active learning” (p. 500). Games allow the students to have active control of the learning process and also promote prompt feedback from their peers (Allery, 2004). Reinforcing and augmenting prior knowledge, while obtaining new information for basic problem solving, allows students the opportunity to use and apply newly acquired course material (Jones, Mungai & Wong, 2002).

Also Holler (1996) explored the relation between retention and learning method. His findings agreed with the above writers. He also found that games are a valuable tool for enhancing learning. He stated that we remember only 10% of what we read, 20% of what we hear, 30% of what we see, 50% of what we both hear and see, 70% of what we say, but 90% of what we do. Traditionally, students have listened to explanations from their teachers and



have completed homework exercises. If Hollers' work is taken seriously, it is possible to conclude that students cannot retain grammar rules for a long time, and so learning outcomes will be limited. Games provide more opportunities for students to practise in a meaningful linguistic situation. This contributes to greater retention and more satisfactory learning outcomes.

There is some evidence that games may improve the retention of what is learned (Pierfy, 1977; Jacobs & Dempsey, 1993). Pierfy (1977) reviewed twenty-two comparative studies of simulation games. On the basis of this work, Pierfy concluded that games encouraged greater retention over time than conventional classroom instruction, with students reporting more interest in the game activities. In their research, Cortez (1974), Issacs (1979) and Wrucke-Nelson (1993) also confirmed the effectiveness of the use of games on their students' language skills (see Table 2.1).

### *2.8.2 Interaction through Games and a Formal Linguistic Environment*

In Taiwan a traditional German grammar class is a typically formal linguistic environment, where the overwhelming majority of learners' achievements result from far more language "learning" than language "acquisition", in Krashen's (1982) terms. In such a formal linguistic environment, the teacher often explains overtly and the learner supplies various strategies – memorization, searching for connections, and conscious study of grammar.

Aware of the limitation of a traditional grammar course, it will not be a surprise to hear that German learners who have received several years of formal German grammar training still cannot actually use the language. The root of the problem is to be found in the learning environment, which lacks in interaction among learners, and in opportunities to communicate.

To improve the learning setting, Pietro (1987) proposes that we “break away from the traditional idea of the teacher-dominated classroom” and turn it into “the locus of a functioning speech community in which natural discourse is simulated” (p. 13). Vygotsky (1997) explained that external dialogues or interactions with people are necessary to develop inner speech and awareness of one’s thought process. He also believed that play, providing interaction for developmental change, is an important source of development and that it creates a zone of proximal development, which provides an opportunity for learning.

Games can be a means to enhance learning outcomes by creating more interactive opportunities for learners to make up the deficiency in informal acquisition of language. Allery (2004) also claims that games can provide “insight into individuals’ behaviour and aid self-awareness through interaction and feedback ... [they] aid skill development in a relatively risk-free environment, for example, decision-making, negotiation, problem solving, ... and initiative” (p. 504). Grammar games, especially the communication-aimed ones, are, under this view, one good option to bring about natural, meaningful and low-anxiety interaction in a formal linguistic environment (Macedonia, 2005).

A study to measure the different types of interaction patterns in second language setting was carried out by Bailey (1985). In his study, differences in the quantity and quality were investigated. He found that the students produced not only a greater quantity but also a greater variety of speech in group work than in teacher-centered activities. By providing greater intensity of involvement, group work will multiply the amount of talk the participants engage in. The face-to-face interaction in a small group is a natural setting for conversation. Long and Porter (1985) argue that in a small group:

Students can take on roles and adopt positions and can thus practice a range of language functions associated with those roles and positions. While solving a problem concerning the siting of new school in an imaginary town, for example, they can suggest, infer, qualify, hypothesize, generalize, or disagree. In terms of another dimension of conversational management, they

can develop such skills ... as topic-nomination, turn-allocation, focusing, summarizing, and clarifying ... Finally, ... given appropriate materials to work with and problems to solve, students can engage in the kind of information exchange characteristics of communication outside classrooms – with all the creative language use and spontaneity this entails. (pp. 209-210)

A formal language class is a high-anxiety learning environment. As I have already noted, it appears that the informal, pleasant atmosphere of a grammar game reduces the learner's anxiety in a formal German class. The pleasurable tension generated by the competitive activity of games maintains the learner's attention to and interest in the work at hand. Therefore, in a formal linguistic environment games can help learners to communicate effectively with one another in German.

Grammar games can constitute a major part of a strong communicative component in a formal linguistic environment. A grammar communicative game offers not only a source of hands-on experience of linguistic interaction but also a natural context in which the participants can be exposed to realistic or even authentic communication. Significantly for the learners, games can motivate them to become committed to sustaining the communication, thus reaching also the goal of grammar learning.

### *2.8.3 Flexibility of Games versus Variety of Students' Learning Styles*

Recent educational theory has found that people learn in a variety of ways. Different students learn in different ways and are motivated by different reasons. People have their own preferred learning styles. Pithers and Mason (1992) define learning style as a “relatively consistent pattern of perception, interaction with response to stimuli in a particular learning environment” (p. 61). A learning style could be a person's general approach to learning and problem – solving. Ehrman (1996) states that “a learning style ... can range from a mild preference ... through to a strong need and to an out and out rigidity” (p. 54).

Traditional lecture formats encourage passive learning and have been shown to be

less effective in meeting the needs of diverse student populations (Sprenkel, 1994). Students are engaged in participatory applications in addition to the visual and auditory components that occur in the traditional lecture format (Specht & Sandlin, 1991).

Lightbown and Spada (1999), Oxford (1996), and Oxford, Ehrman and Lavine (1991) explored the relationship between learning style and positive outcomes. Many successful learners are aware of their preferences for learning styles. A student who has a strongly visual learning style tends to use the strategies of taking notes and outlining, whereas an auditory learner tends to use the strategies of recording lectures and listening to them after class ends. Learners who have an analytic learning style often like to use strategies that involve breaking material down into smaller pieces, whereas global learners prefer strategies that help them grasp the main idea quickly without attending to details.

Recognizing individual differences and learning preferences provides an important rationale for providing a flexible program to accommodate the learners. Ur (1999) argued that it is necessary to provide a variety of activities to sustain student interest. A successful learning activity, if continued too long without variation, may end up boring the learners. It is widely accepted that a timely game offers a pleasant change of pace in the lesson. It can revive learners' flagging interest. A game can also lengthen the students' attention span.

Due to their flexibility, grammar games are more variable, versatile and adaptable than other forms of classroom tasks, like exercises. Games may be combined with any other form of language activities, including simulation, role play, pantomimes, songs, chants, riddles, puzzles, quizzes, surveys, discussions, debates, strip stories, jigsaw readings, ranking activities, problem solving, information-gap activities, and Total Physical Response Activities. Besides, the teacher can set up games in all kinds of different formats – individual work, pair work, small group work, large group work, and whole-class work.

Grammar games are also versatile because of the comprehensive nature of their

pedagogical goals. They develop one, two, three, or even all the four language skills – listening, speaking, writing, and reading. They can provide intensive practice of language points, ranging from vocabulary and pronunciation to grammar and culture. They can promote interaction in the class, contextualize meaningful learning, provide opportunities for real communication, and offer practice for such fundamental language functions as greeting, invitation, request, and narration. They warm up, start, punctuate, or end a lesson; they diagnose or spotlight areas of difficulties, reinforce or review the items previously taught. Allery (2004) and Jones, Mungai and Wong (2002) comment that games can adapt to different style of learners, as well as different learning styles. When constructed with different learning styles in mind, games can often accelerate the learning process.

According to Gardner's (1993) model of multiple intelligences, there are seven learning styles: linguistic, logical-mathematical, visual-spatial, musical, bodily-kinaesthetic, interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence. There are games for different learning styles in language learning:

- Students who exhibit strengths in linguistic intelligence usually enjoy and may be good at playing word game and puzzles;
- Students with logical-mathematical intelligence enjoy ordering objects, categorizing, finding out facts, playing word match games or dominoes;
- Students who have a visual-spatial learning style tend to understand things presented visually by video and pictures. They respond well to picture games, board games and card games in language learning;
- Students with a kinesthetic style respond well to active learning provided by games that require physical movement. Activities, such as role- play are good for them;
- Students with interpersonal intelligence like cooperative games involving groups;
- Students with strengths in intrapersonal intelligence prefer individual games, such as

puzzles and crosswords.

- Students with strengths in musical intelligence enjoy games that include music and rhythm.

#### *2.8.4 Games as Motivator*

A widely perceived advantage of language games is also their ability to improve student motivation (Deesri, 2002; Gaudart, 1999; Nemerow, 1996; Shie, 2003). Researchers in social psychology and education have recognized the importance of motivation for successful L2 learning (Gardner, 1985; Gardner & Clement, 1990; Nemerow, 1996).

Nemerow (1996) points out the role of motivation by saying that “lack of motivation is probably the greatest obstacle to learning” (p. 3). Gardner’s (1985) socioeducational model of second language acquisition focuses on language learning taking place in the classroom and stresses that motivation is one important variable important in second language acquisition.

Under the framework of achievement, motivation is defined as a driving force for students’ learning goals, for the activities they choose to engage in to reach those goals, and for the intensity with which they engage in the activities.

According to Deci and Ryan’s self-determination theory (1985), there are two general types of motivation: intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation (Brown, 1994; Noels, Clement & Pelletier, 1999, 2000). Intrinsic motivation, based on intrinsic interest in the activity per se, refers to motivation to engage in an activity because that activity is enjoyable and satisfying to do. These feelings of pleasure derive from fulfilling innate needs for competence and self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier & Ryan, 1991). People who are intrinsically motivated feel free to choose to perform an activity; they will seek interesting situations where they can rise to the challenges that the activity presents. By striving to meet these challenges, they develop a sense of competence in their abilities.

Ehrman (1996) noted that intrinsic motivation has been related to feeling of self-efficacy, language use, grammar sensitivity, speaking and reading proficiency, and teacher ratings of L2 competence.

In contrast to intrinsically motivated behaviours, extrinsically motivated behaviours are performed not because of inherent interest in the activity, but in order to achieve some instrumental end, such as earning a reward or avoiding a punishment.

Regarding motivation to learn an L2, Gardner (1985) in his earlier work defined motivation to learn an L2 as

the extent to which the individual works or strives to learn the language because of desire to do so and the satisfaction experience in this activity and combination off effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language. (p. 10)

The motivation that is applied specifically to language acquisition can be categorized into five kinds. The first two kinds are called “integrative motivation” and “instrumental motivation” by Gardner (1985). Integrative motivation reflects the learner's desire to identify with the native speakers of the target language and to integrate with the culture of the target language population. Instrumental motivation implies that the learner's interest in learning the target language is associated with the pragmatic, utilitarian benefits of the target language, such as a better paying job and a doctor's degree from a university in the country of the target language. The third kind is the “compulsory motivation” (Shie, 2003, p. 111). Some learners do not have an apparent interest in learning a language; but they have no choice but to do so. Among these learners I can place the unwilling students taking a required German course at my college because their parents want them to do so. The fourth kind of motivation is what Deci and Ryan (1985) calls intrinsic motivation, associated with an interest in the target language itself. Learners with motivation of this type are presumably those who have a strong aptitude for language acquisition or those who want to achieve personal enrichment via

language study. Intrinsic motivation occurs when students engage in learning 'for its own sake' and enjoy it.

The final type of motivation can be called “methodological motivation” (Shie, 2003, p. 110). It can be seen in learners who are motivated to learn a language because they like the teaching methodology itself. The methodological motivation relates to such aspects as the materials and activities which have inherent interest, the teacher’s ability to inspire and stimulate the learners, and the provision of reward for learning.

As Finocchiaro (1989) observes, in many instances the motivation to learn a target language can be fostered and enhanced even in learners who do not have a strong initial interest. It is particularly to this type of motivation that this study relates to, because at the start of it I hypothesised that my L2 German students would begin to respond positively to this fifth type of “methodological motivation”. It seems that games can act as sources of learning motivation in each of these five kinds.

Based on his survey, Nemerow (1996) found that students are more highly motivated when games are used in the classroom. More than 80% of the students surveyed used the word "fun" in their evaluation of games. For them, games are a change of pace, something different that makes learning easier. Because they make learning more fun, they are encouraged to learn more. In this situation, students' affective filter (Krashen, 1982) is down and it allows acquisition of more information. Games also seem to make remembering of the information easier. As one student commented, “I believe we remember events that make us happy or sad for longer periods of time than those that do not affect us emotionally” (Nemerow, 1996). Therefore, Nemerow (1996) concluded that the emotions raised by games stimulate the memory and so games are perceived as a good motivator to learn. However, whether this positive perception translates to better acquisition remains untested.

By virtue of their integral engaging power, grammar games seem to provide a



possible cure for the bored language learner. Some linguists have pointed out that foreign language anxiety often affects learner motivation negatively, like when they suffer from communicative apprehension and fear of negative social evaluation (Horowitz et al., 1986).

Language games can promote the learners' motivation not only through their changeable forms of activity and kaleidoscopic nature of engagedness, but also through their positive effect on the level of anxiety.

Games can lower learners' anxiety in the classroom and thus improve their learning. In conventional classrooms, there is a lot of stress put on students trying to master the target language. Schultz (1988) argues that

Stress is a major hindrance in language learning process. This process [Learning language in traditional way] is by its nature time consuming and stress provoking...raises the stress level to a point at which it interferes with student attention and efficiency and undermines motivation. ... [The use of games] has been developed to make students forget that they are in class... they relax students by engaging them in stress-reducing task. (vii)

The overall findings on motivation show that it is related to success in L2 learning (Gardner, 1985). Unfortunately, research cannot indicate precisely how motivation is related to successful learning. Nor do we know whether both are affected by other factors, as noted by Skehan (1989).

The current state of L2 motivation research does not bear witness to its importance. In Keller's (1983) words, motivation is the 'neglected heart' of our understanding of how to design instruction. What teachers usually wish to know is how they can intervene, that is, what they can actually do to motivate their learners. In other words, for classroom practitioners the real area of interest is not so much the nature of 'motivation' itself as the various techniques or strategies that can be employed to motivate students. Nevertheless, Dörnyei (2001) reviewed the literature and found that until the mid-1990s there had been no serious attempts in the L2 literature to design motivation strategies for classroom application.

Dörnyei and Csizér (1998) point to several areas where educational research has reported increased levels of motivation for students in relationship to pedagogical practice. They report the following suggestions to increase students' motivation via instruction: (1) setting a personal example with the teacher's own behavior, (2) creating a pleasant, relaxing atmosphere in the classroom, (3) presenting the tasks properly, (4) developing a good relationship with the learners, (5) increasing the learner's linguistic self-confidence, (6) making the language classes interesting, (7) promoting learner autonomy, (8) personalizing the learning process, (9) increasing the learners' goal-orientedness, and (10) familiarizing learners with the target language culture.

The games adopted in this experiment fit in with all ten of these suggestions: they provide an initial incentive at the start of a lesson when the teacher announces that it will contain a game; they offer a welcome variation on the usual lesson routine; and they count on cooperative learning.

#### ***2.8.5 Interactive and Supportive Classroom Atmosphere for Learning an L2***

Classroom climate was rank-ordered second among the motivational factors in a Hungarian survey of teachers of English as a second language (Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998). It is acceptable that language learning is one of the most face-threatening school subjects because of the pressure of having to operate using a rather limited language code. In a language class students need to take considerable risk even to produce relatively simple answers because it is all too easy to make a mistake when you have to pay attention to pronunciation, intonation, grammar and content at the same time. MacIntyre (1999) and Young (1999) note that language anxiety has been found to be a powerful factor hindering L2 learning achievement.

The solution, according to the general consensus among motivation researchers is: to create a pleasant and supportive classroom atmosphere. Scheidecker and Freeman (1999)

have summarized very expressively the essences of the classroom with a motivational climate for learning: “When one teaches students enter such a classroom, one gets an overwhelming sense that the students shed emotional baggage at the doorway. This is an “emotional safe zone” (p. 138). That is to say, ‘pleasant-and supportive-classroom atmosphere’ means that there is not tension in the air; students are at ease; there are no sharp comments made to ridicule each other. Research studies indicate that the most crucial factors responsible for a positive class atmosphere are the teacher’s rapport with the students and the students’ relationship with each other (Dörnyei, 2001).

It is commonly accepted that almost everything a teacher does in the classroom has a motivational influence on students. Chambers (1999) conducted a study among British secondary school learners of German. The survey revealed that the learners considered the teacher’s own behaviour to be the single most important motivational tool. Such behaviour was described in terms of care for the students’ learning, warm interaction with students, empathic manner, mutual trust and respect (Christophel, 1990). Clement, Dörnyei and Noels (1994) found that students’ evaluation of their teacher’s rapport with the class were associated with students’ linguistic self-confidence and anxiety. Williams and Burden (1997) maintain that the effective teacher communicates the goals of a learning task with a precise and clear set of instruction, while emphasizing the activity’s value to the students personally, now and in the future. Schmidt, Boraie and Kassabgy (1996) argued that learners’ preferences for certain kinds of learning strategies and instruction practices have been related to motivation which was termed ‘methodological motivation’ by Shie (2003).

In addition to the interaction between teachers and students, the relationship between students and students is another key factor influencing classroom atmosphere. Raffini (1993) states that “while there are too few rewards in school teaching, one of the most satisfying is the pride of accomplishment that comes from teaching in a classroom that has developed a

level of cohesiveness” (p. 95): a cohesive class is described as one which is ‘together’; in which there is a strong ‘we’ feeling and where students are happy to belong; a cohesive class refers to its members’ commitment to the group and to each other. Cohesiveness is often manifested by members seeking each other out, providing mutual support and making each other welcome in the group. Student motivation tends to increase in cohesive class groups. This is due to the fact that in such groups students share an increased responsibility for achieving the group goals, they ‘pull each other along’ and the positive relations among them make the learning process more enjoyable in general.

Dörnyei (2001) provides some techniques to promote the development of group cohesiveness (p. 45):

1. Promote interaction, cooperation and sharing of genuine personal information among the learners;
2. Use ice-breakers at the beginning of a course;
3. Regularly use small-group tasks when students can mix;
4. Encourage and if possible organize extracurricular activities and outings;
5. Prevent rigid seating patterns;
6. Include activities that lead to the successful completion of whole-group tasks or that involve small-group completion games.

Once again it seems that in creating a positive classroom atmosphere the use of games is important as it fits the characteristics of a cohesive class. This experiment will monitor any change in the class atmosphere which may be linked to the use of games through the use of student questionnaires.

## 2.9 Summary, Research Questions and Hypotheses

From the literature review of issues relating to the teaching and learning of grammar in L2 it is possible to conclude that grammar plays an important part. It is central to learning a foreign language in the acquisition process. Interiorizing the grammar of a foreign language is not simply an intelligent, cognitive act. It should also be a highly affective one. It is important to make use of all the strategies that can be beneficial towards the mastering of it.

It seems commonly accepted that communicative activities need to be integrated within grammatical explanations and exercises in the teaching programs. As Fotos and Ellis (1991) stated

[Communicative grammar tasks] may contribute directly by providing opportunities for the kind of communication which is believed to promote the acquisition of implicit knowledge, and they may also contribute indirectly by enabling learners to develop explicit knowledge of L2 rules which will later facilitate the acquisition of implicit knowledge. (p. 622)

The results of many research studies have shown positive outcomes from communicative grammar tasks. Among the communicative grammar tasks, games seem to hold a privileged position, because they are commonly perceived as having a range of considerable advantages and benefits in the foreign language learning process. They create a meaningful context, provide interactive group work, and help to internalize vocabulary and structures. Furthermore, the competition that is generated by games enhances student motivation. They also reduce the stress in the classroom and improve the classroom atmosphere. The Belgian businessman who came out to coffee after a grammar game saying “Ce n'est pas bete du tout”, (Rinvoluceri & Davis, 1995, p. 3) was expressing his surprise that a game could be fun and serious at the same time.

However, in spite of what seems to be a widely spread belief in the value of language

games, the evidence in support of such a claim is mainly anecdotal, as little research has been conducted to measure the real benefit of games in second language learning and teaching (Gardner, 1987; Shie, 2003). Furthermore, the theoretical underpinnings of the usefulness of games are provided by some research studies, mainly in terms of positive results on motivation and classroom atmosphere, but not in terms of grammatical accuracy, and also by the fact that games are always one of the tasks suggested as part of the communicative approaches. This means that the positive role of games has been mainly assumed rather than based on empirical evidence. This study is meant to begin to fill this gap. Its purpose is to investigate the effects of game-based grammar practice on the accuracy level of selected grammatical features by beginner students of German as a second language, their perception of language games as a learning strategy, their attitude towards the role of grammar in language learning, and the impact of the use of games on their motivation to learn and on classroom atmosphere. This study focuses on the students' written production of L2 German.

The research questions are as follows:

1. Do the experimental students taught by the game-based grammatical practice perform better in grammatical accuracy than those in the control group taught by the traditionally exercise-based practice?
2. Is the level of effectiveness of game-based grammatical practice comparable across the language competence levels?
3. Does game-based grammatical practice enhance the students' learning motivation?
4. Does game-based grammatical practice create a more positive classroom atmosphere during language lessons?
5. Will students in the game-based grammar practice perceive grammar learning as being more interesting and effective than those in the traditional grammar practice?
6. Do second language students believe that grammar ought to be taught at all in

language classes?

The hypotheses are as follows:

1. The experimental students, taught by means of language games, will produce higher scores on grammar tests and examinations than the students in the control group;
2. Students of all three language competence levels (high, middle and low) of the Experimental group, taught by means of language games, will produce higher scores on grammatical accuracy tests and examinations than the students of all three competence levels (high, middle and low) of the control group;
3. Students in the experimental group will show a greater degree of motivation with regard to grammar after having been exposed to language games;
4. Students of the experimental group will record an improvement in the language class atmosphere as a result of the use of language games, while the control students will not;
5. Students in the experimental group will provide more positive responses toward the game-based practice in their learning of German grammar than the students of the control group will toward the traditional grammar practice;
6. Most students of both groups will indicate their belief that grammar needs to be taught in a second language program.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **STUDY DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

Chapter Three describes the research design and setting, the participants, the data gathering instruments, the procedure of data collection, and the method of data analysis. This chapter also describes the experimental instructional teaching program, including a list of the games that were used and the grammatical features that each game is related to.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The research study utilizes a quasi-experimental design. It employs both quantitative and qualitative elements. It is seeking both to quantify aspects of students' learning in L2 grammar, as a result of a game-based grammatical practice, and to discuss some qualitative aspects. Some of the concerns of educational researchers in the use of quantitative approaches are that education contexts are complex and it is difficult to measure variables and to establish strict controls. In this research, an attempt is made to consider the possible variables that may affect the research outcomes and try to minimise their effect.

This research is also seeking to contribute to a theoretical perspective on the use of game-based grammatical practice: if game-based grammatical practice does contribute to learning, in what ways does it do this? This requires the use of qualitative methods. Denzin & Lincoln (1994) suggest that “qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry” (p.



4). Thus, the use of multiple methods has been recommended as a way of securing a more in-depth understanding of the phenomenon studied.

In an attempt to explore how game-based grammatical practice affects the learning of grammar, this study has collected students' responses on their level of motivation and classroom atmosphere. These were investigated by means of appropriate questionnaires, focus group interviews, and field notes. A graphic representation of the variables that were analyzed in this experiment appears in Figure 3.1.

### ***3.1.1 Controlled Variables***

There are often some potentially confounding variables that can threaten the internal validity of an experiment. I have tried to control these in order to reach causal conclusions. The controlled variables in this study were the teacher, the students, and the teaching itself. They are controlled variables because everything possible was done to ensure comparability, i.e. same teacher, same teaching approach in relation to explanation of grammatical rules, and placement of students in the two groups. Statistical control, discussed later in this section, was one of the strategies used in this study to ensure comparability between the two groups and the different language levels.

#### ***(a) Research Setting***

The setting for this study was a German Language Department, located in a private college of languages in the south region of the Republic of Taiwan. The college is the only college of languages in Taiwan that offers German language as a second language to its five-year junior college students. Although the syllabus

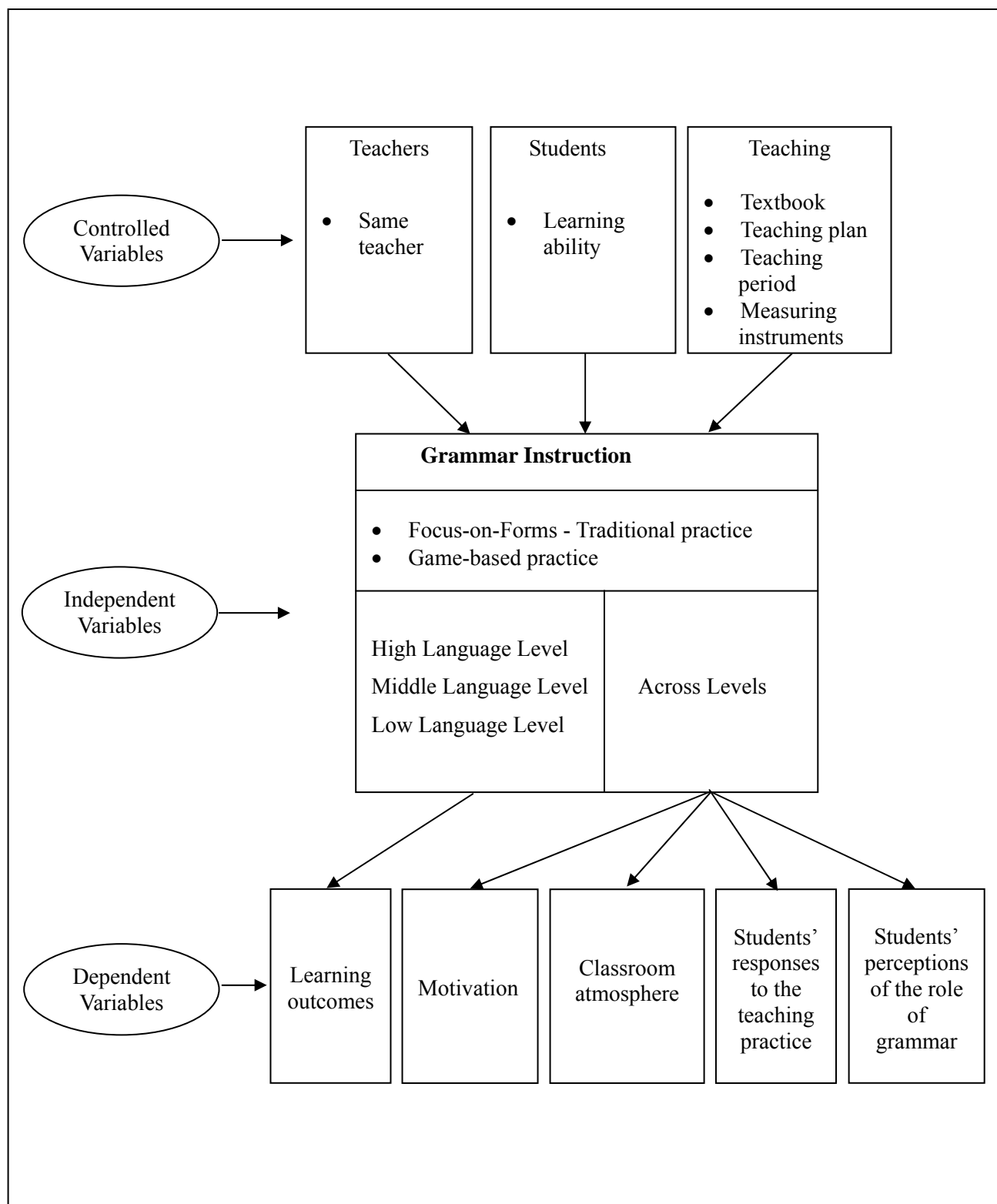


Figure 3.1 Research Design of the Experiment

includes the study of German culture, German literature, politics, and economics; it focuses on developing the learners' knowledge of the German language, with special emphasis on the grammatical structures.

**(b) *The Teacher***

The two classes were taught by me, the students' regular teacher of German and researcher. I have taught German in a junior college for fifteen years, using mainly the traditional grammar approach. However, since 1998 and as a result of a teaching training course I attended in Germany, I have wanted to introduce the use of language games in my German classes. Specifically I have been thinking of integrating language games into grammar practice to improve the level of my students' motivation and the atmosphere in the classroom, as well as to increase their level of linguistic accuracy.

**(c) *Selection of the Students***

The students who participated in this experiment were in two of my German classes (93 students in all). All students have studied English as a second language for at least three years and have begun to study German as their major, after entering college. They are 15 - 16 year-old beginners. The reason for the selection of this sample was to examine second language acquisition in the early stages, as I was assuming that these students would be more receptive to changes in teaching methods than older students. Furthermore, beginners are often tricky to teach and tricky to interest in grammar and the level was a very challenging and important for language teaching.

The students were allocated to their classes according to the grades of their entrance examination. The questionnaire "Students' Demographic Information" (see

Appendix A) was administered in order to understand the students' background (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1

*Students Demographic Information*

Variables	Experimental Group (N=46)			Control Group (N=47)		
	No	Mean	SD	No	Mean	SD
Gender						
Male	6			7		
Female	40			40		
Total students	46			47		
German as 1st choice						
Yes	17			17		
No	29			30		
Existing German knowledge						
Yes	0			1		
No	46			46		
Exposure to games						
A lot	10			8		
Some	31			26		
None	5			13		
Entrance examination scores		217.39	12.549		218.68	10.143
English as a second language scores		51.98	3.873		52.40	3.965

Table 3.1 shows that there were 6 boys and 40 girls in the experimental group: 7 boys and 40 girls in the control group. Their distribution to the two classes was consistent with the college academic policy that an equal number of students with a similar general performance level is assigned to each class, in order to ensure comparability between the two classes. The students' general academic performance was determined by their scores in the entrance examination, based on the results for

Chinese, English, Mathematics, Science, and History (Mean score  $217.39 \pm 12.549$  for the experimental groups and  $216.68 \pm 10.143$  for the control groups). An Independent *t*-test showed no statistically significant differences in the performance of the two groups on the entrance examination and on the subject of English as a second language in the entrance examination (also see Table 4.2 and 4.7).

With regard to the level of the students' motivation to study German, in each group there were 17 students who had selected German as their first choice rather than English, Japanese, French, or Spanish. The remaining 29 students in the experimental group, and 30 in the control group, were assigned to German classes because of their lower entrance examination scores.

Of a total of 93 students, only one student in the control group had learned some German previously, but only the alphabet, some phonetics and some sentence structures, for one month before the College's semester began. For all practical purposes, this student was also considered a beginner. All the other 92 students were total beginners in German.

The two groups were judged by me and by other teachers to be very comparable in terms of class performance and levels of motivation. In order to find out whether the game-based grammatical practice would be effective for students from different language levels, students of each group were divided into three language levels, namely high, middle and low language level, based on their English as a second language scores in the entrance examination. Table 3.2 illustrates the distribution of the three language levels in both groups. A *t*-test and an ANOVA test indicated that no significant differences were found in the language levels of the two groups (see Table 4.7, p. 90).

Table 3.2

*Distribution of Students According to their Entrance Performance in English as a Second Language*

Language Level Subgroups	Distribution of Students	
	Experimental Group	Control Group
	n	n
All language levels	46	47
High language level	15	15
Middle language level	16	17
Low language level	15	15

**(d) Teaching Program**

The two groups were taught following the same teaching plan. A detailed description of the instructional program appears below (see 3.5, p. 75). Both groups received an equal amount of instruction time over 18 weeks, for a total of 90 periods (five lessons per week, each of 50 minutes duration). The experiment was conducted from September 2003 to January 2004.

All instruments used to measure students' learning outcomes; motivation, classroom atmosphere, response toward grammar instruction, and students' perceptions of the role of grammar and grammar instruction were the same in each group (see 3.2, p. 64).

### **3.1.2 Independent Variables**

In this study, the effects of two different ways of practising grammatical rules were investigated. While the presentation and explanations of grammatical features were conducted in the same way in the experimental and control class, the reinforcing and practising phases of such features were different: the experimental group used

language games, while the control group used only grammatical exercises. These two different strategies constitute the independent variables.

### ***3.1.3 Dependent Variables***

The dependent variables were:

1. Six tests, one mid-term and one final exam;
2. A questionnaire on the level of students' motivation to learn grammar; measured by the factors of enjoyment, effort and capability;
3. A questionnaire on the German classroom atmosphere, measured by the factors of peer support, teacher support, student satisfaction and classroom cohesion;
4. A questionnaire on the teaching strategies used during grammatical practice;
5. A questionnaire on the role of grammar and grammar instruction.

### ***3.1.4 Statistical Control***

No pre-test was administered because the students had no previous knowledge of German. However, to determine the subjects' learning abilities in German, the academic test scores of English as a second language in their entrance examination, and the total scores from their entrance examination, were used. These scores helped to establish the level of learning ability of students across the two groups and to evaluate the effects of the use of games among students with comparable levels of language learning ability.

The students' scores in English were selected because previous academic performance in another language is significantly related to a student's future performance in another language (Constantino, 1999). The purpose of including these variables in the *t*-test and ANOVA was to reduce random error and to make any differences resulting from the two types of learning experiences easier to detect. As

Specht and Sandlin (1991) stress, it is important to include covariates in comparative studies. They point out that a significant source of variation in examination scores may be due to the different academic abilities of the students in the various classes. By removing this potentially serious source of performance variation, the internal validity of the study was strengthened as the random error component was reduced, providing more reliable statistical results.

### 3.2 Data Collection

Information from a variety of sources was collected in order to highlight the effects of the two types of grammatical practice. Both quantitative and qualitative data are listed in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3

*Data Collection*

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**Quantitative data:**

- a. Student demographic information form
- b. Questionnaire on motivation
- c. Questionnaire on classroom atmosphere
- d. Questionnaire on the two types of grammatical practice
- e. Questionnaire on the role of grammar and grammar instruction
- f. Tests on grammar accuracy: six grammar tests, a mid-term exam and a final exam

**Qualitative data:**

- g. Focus group interviews
  - h. Field notes
  - i. Suggestions and comments made in students' questionnaires
-



(a) *Student Demographic Information Form*

Student demographic information was collected using the students' background form (see Appendix A). It included student numbers, gender, scores of all subjects from their entrance examination, including English as a second language, whether the students had experience with language games, whether German was their choice, and their experience with German.

(b) *Questionnaire on Motivation*

The Questionnaires on Motivation and on Classroom Atmosphere (see Appendix B and C) were prepared by me, drawing upon some proven motivation/attitude scales and classroom atmosphere scales (Lee, 2001; Lin, 2002). These scales have demonstrated acceptable validity and reliability and were successfully used in a variety of studies in Taiwan, including those conducted in language education settings (Lin, 2002), as well as in cross-cultural contexts (Lee, 2001). For example, the scales developed by Lee (2001), have been found to be internally consistent (alpha = .942 for the Motivation scale; alpha = .950 for the classroom atmosphere scale).

After designing the questionnaire, I organised for two professors and two experienced teachers of German to check them, to ensure that testees could understand and complete all the questions.

In order to verify whether the questionnaires adopted in this study were sufficiently reliable, I used them first with pilot subjects. The 94 subjects for the pilot study were in a class of the English Department and in another class of the German Department. They were not to be involved with either the experimental or the control

groups. These students were following a similar German syllabus to those of the experimental and control group, and were therefore in a comparable situation as far as their study and attitude to German were concerned.

Both questionnaires on motivation and classroom atmosphere were administered to the pilot subjects twice (see Pilot Study Questionnaires in Appendices B and C). They were asked to respond using a 4-point Likert scale (1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3=Agree, 4= Strongly Agree). Students scoring high on the scales were considered highly motivated and having a positive attitude to classroom atmosphere.

The first time the questionnaires were administered to the pilot subjects was on September 18, 2003. In the process of filling out the questionnaires, many subjects stated that they found it difficult to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with statements. Their own German grammar teachers and class teachers also noticed that students had difficulties in making a decision between “agree” and “disagree”. They suggested that I revise the questionnaires. I then introduced a 5-point Likert scale (1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Undecided, 4=Agree, 5= Strongly Agree) and administered the questionnaires again on September 25, 2003.

After this, the final questionnaires were devised and administered 3 times to the experimental and control groups: at the beginning of semester as a pre-test, before the grammar instruction was introduced; during the semester, after the mid-term examination as a post-test; at the end of the semester, as a delayed post-test after the grammar practice was finished. The question numbers for the factors of each scale, with the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients, are presented in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4

*Questionnaire on Motivation: Items Employed to Assess Three Factors of Students Motivation to Learn*

Factors	Items	Total	Alpha
Enjoyment	1, 2, 4, 6, 14, 16, 18	7	0.7459
Effort	3, 5, 10, 11, 12, 15, 19	7	0.8101
Capability	7, 8, 9, 13, 17, 20, 21	7	0.8046
Total questions		21	0.9030

The questionnaire on the students' motivation was composed of three scales of 21 items that measured variables that have been shown to be related to motivation, including the three variable motivational factors of 'enjoyment', 'motivational effort' and 'capability'.

Seven items were used to assess students' enjoyment of learning German, where a high score indicated a very positive attitude toward learning German grammar. Seven items assessed students' motivational effort when learning German. Students chose one of five alternatives of varying intensity to describe the extent of their effort when learning Germany grammar in class. A high mean score indicated a high level of motivational effort. Self-evaluation of the students' capability to learn German was also determined through the use of seven items. The students indicated the level to which they felt they could perform. A high score was indicative of a high degree of perceived competence. Overall, a total mean score of the three motivational factors was used to assess the students' motivation to learn German grammar. A high mean score indicated a high level of motivation.

(c) *Questionnaire on Classroom Atmosphere*

The Questionnaire on Classroom Atmosphere measured four aspects of class interaction: peer support, teacher support, level of satisfaction and class cohesion (see Table 3.5).

Table 3.5

*Classroom Atmosphere Scale: Items Employed to Assess Four Factors of Students' Perception on the Classroom Atmosphere*

Factors	Items	Total	Alpha
Peer support	1 - 11	11	0.8754
Satisfaction	12 - 20	9	0.7997
Teacher support	21 - 28	8	0.8857
Classroom cohesion	29 - 35	7	0.8051
Total questions	35	35	0.9387

Peer support was measured through 11 items. A high score reflected a high level of supportive interaction between students when called upon to study grammar in the German classroom. Students' perception of satisfaction was measured through nine items. A high score indicated a positive evaluation toward the German grammar course. Eight items were used to collect the students' perception about their German teacher support to students. A high score indicated a positive evaluation of the level of such support. The students' feeling of belonging (class cohesion) was measured through seven items. A high score indicated a stronger feeling of belonging. Overall, a total mean score of these four aspects was used to assess the students' responses on classroom atmosphere. A high mean score indicated a high level of positive responses.

(d) *Questionnaire on the Two Types of Grammatical Practice*

To check the students' perceptions on the two methods of grammar practice, i.e. focus-on-forms for the Control Group and game-based grammatical practice for the Experimental Group, a questionnaire was also devised (see Appendix D). The questionnaire consisted of fourteen questions, eliciting students' opinions about the way they learn grammar, about their perceptions of the game-based activities integrated into grammar practice, and if this way of grammar practice would help them to improve their acquisition of German. The questionnaire was administered and collected at the end of the experiment. The validity of the questionnaire was checked by two experienced teachers of German grammar and by one professor who has expert knowledge in the content area of our German programs.

In an effort to encourage the students to respond honestly, I informed them that the results of their answers would not affect their grades. I also urged the students to answer the questions in terms of their own opinions, attitudes and situations, and not according to what they thought or what is generally believed or expected by others. All students were asked to answer the questionnaires carefully and completely.

(e) *Questionnaire on the Role of Grammar and Grammar Instruction*

To obtain an understanding of students' opinions about the value of grammar in their language-learning program, the study used a questionnaire concerning the role of grammar and grammar instruction (see Appendix E). The questionnaire consisted of sixteen specific questions (Items 1-16) and four open-ended questions (Items 17-20). The twenty questions included perception of how important grammar was in their learning of German (Items 1-9), their difficulties in grammar learning the

students were experiencing in dealing with grammatical rules (Items 10-13) and their preference of the ways that grammar is taught (Items 14-20). Three negative items (Items 11, 12 and 13) were included in the questionnaire to check the reliability. The open-ended questions had three to five items for students to choose from. They asked students' opinions about the best way for their teachers to teach grammar and about the best way for students to learn grammar. Explanations or why they thought so were also invited.

The validity of the questionnaire was checked by two experienced teachers of German grammar and by one professor who has expert knowledge in the content area of our German programs.

*(f) Tests on Grammatical Accuracy*

Lightbown and Spada (1999) questioned the meaning of a significant difference between two groups if such difference is determined only by one written grammar test. Therefore, in the course of this experiment, a variety of tests was administered. They took the following formats:

1. Written tests (6 in all), designed to assess students' knowledge of selected grammatical features;
2. A midterm written examination on the selected grammatical features taught and practised during the first half of the course;
3. A final written examination of all the grammatical features covered during the second part of the course.

The preparation of all tests and examinations was conducted with the contribution of two other teachers of German and of one professor of German and it was approved by the chairperson of the German Department.

All questionnaires were administered in Chinese, my students' first language. The English versions that appear in the Appendices were prepared by me.

(g) *Focus Group Interviews*

Many researchers, such as Chávez (1984), Dupuy and Krashen (1998), and Tse (2000) recognized the value of students' perception of their foreign language classroom experiences because of their theoretical, pedagogical and programmatic implications and because of their bearing on linguistic outcomes. From a theoretical perspective, certain attitudes and beliefs derived from student perceptions can have a profound impact on the learner's affective state. This affective disposition has been hypothesized to play a central role in the processes of language acquisition (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). Pedagogically, student opinions and attitudes toward specific classroom activities, or teacher-student interactions, can affect decisions on how best to modify and employ various techniques and methods in the classroom (Chávez, 1984). Programmatic decisions are also linked to student perceptions, in that attributions of success and failure and the level of success students want to attain determine the popularity of courses (Dupuy & Krashen, 1998).

In order to gather a deeper understanding of my students' response toward grammar practice, two focus groups were set up and interviewed at the end of the teaching program. A focus group allows discussion to take place during group interaction on specific issues, or concerns, and is "a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment" (Krueger, 1994, p. 16). The aim of the focus groups was to encourage the students to offer honest opinions on the way grammar was taught in a non-threatening environment (Murphy, 2001).

The focus groups consisted of some high, some middle, some low achievers, and some students who were willing to voice their opinions on their teacher's way of teaching. The first focus groups had 12 students from the experimental group; the second focus group had 13 students from the control group.

The topics that came up for discussion centered on the following aspects: the students' perceptions of the course, their teacher, the teaching materials, the use of language games and the place of grammar learning (see Appendix F for a full list of these aspects).

The focus group discussions were conducted at the end of the experiment. I met the students during their self-study hours. I acted as discussion leader and made an effort to keep the discussion on an informal level, because Krueger (1994) and Murphy (2001) pointed out that focus groups work in an informal atmosphere. In order to protect the students' identities, they were reassured that no names would appear in the report, although they were glad to be able to volunteer for the discussion and expressed no objection to their names appearing in a report.

In the focus group discussions, the students were encouraged to choose their preferred topics to start with; stimulus questions were provided. I took notes on what students had to say. Each focus group sessions lasted approximately 90 minutes. The focus group discussions occurred in Chinese and were recorded on audiotape and transcribed for analysis.

Although it could be argued that the results of the interviews were influenced by the students' wish to please the teacher, it seemed this was not the case. I had to be absent soon after the interviews were conducted and the students knew that I would not be teaching them the next semester. Therefore, it can be stated with a fair degree of reliability that they answered freely and honestly.



**(h) Field Notes**

Murphy (2001) views retrospective field notes as a less intrusive way than questionnaires and focus groups discussions, and values them as a valuable source for gathering information about the teacher's own understandings and explanations of teaching. In order to gain a deeper understanding and awareness of the teaching and learning process, I reflected on my teaching and my students' learning by taking field notes. I wrote these notes soon after the end of a class, as the events were fresh in my mind. Sometimes, I observed and took notes while students were playing language games. I focused on the course-related and research-related events; for example, how students responded towards the teaching materials and grammar practice.

### 3.3 Procedures of Data Collection

Data were collected over 18 weeks from the middle of September 2003 to the middle of January 2004. The procedures of data collection are all recorded in the Table 3.6.

Table 3.6

*Overview of Data Collection*

---

Week 1	:	First pilot study: Student Demographic Information; Questionnaire On Motivation; Questionnaire On Classroom Atmosphere;
Week 2	:	Second pilot study: Individual Demographic Information; Questionnaire On Motivation; Questionnaire On Classroom Atmosphere;  Pre-test with both the Experimental and Control group: Student Demographic Information; Questionnaire On Motivation; Questionnaire On Classroom Atmosphere;

---

Table 3.6 (Continued)

*Overview of Data Collection*


---

Week 3	:	Start of grammatical teaching using games with the Experimental Group, and traditional grammatical practice with the Control Group;
Week 4	:	Continuation of teaching experiment;
Week 5	:	First grammar test conducted with both groups;
Week 6	:	Wenzao Week (no class);
Weeks 7-8	:	Second grammar test conducted with both groups;
Week 9	:	Mid-term Examination with both groups;
Week 10	:	Post-test with both the Experimental and control Group: Questionnaire On Motivation; Questionnaire On Classroom Atmosphere; Administration of the Questionnaire on the Role of Grammar and Grammar Instruction; Third grammar test conducted with both groups;
Week 11	:	Continuation of teaching experiment;
Week 12	:	Fourth grammar test conducted with both groups;
Weeks 13-14:	:	Continuation of teaching experiment;
Week 15	:	Fifth grammar test conducted with both groups;
Week 16	:	Continuation of teaching experiment;
Week 17	:	Sixth grammar test conducted with both groups; Delayed post-test for both the Experimental and Control Groups: Questionnaire On Motivation; Questionnaire On Classroom Atmosphere; Administration of the Questionnaire on the Grammatical Practice;
Week 18	:	Final examination; The end of the experiment.

---

### 3.4 Statistical Analysis

The data analysis was divided into two parts - a quantitative and a qualitative part. The statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS/PC 11.0) was used for statistical analysis, and the 0.05 level ( $p < 0.05$ ) was used to determine any significant differences for all results.

The statistical analyses employed for data processing included percentages,

means, standard deviations, one-way analysis of variance, *t*-test, pair *t*-test and Chi-test.

### 3.5 Description of the Teaching Program

The following is a general framework of the grammar-teaching program of this study (Figure 3.2).

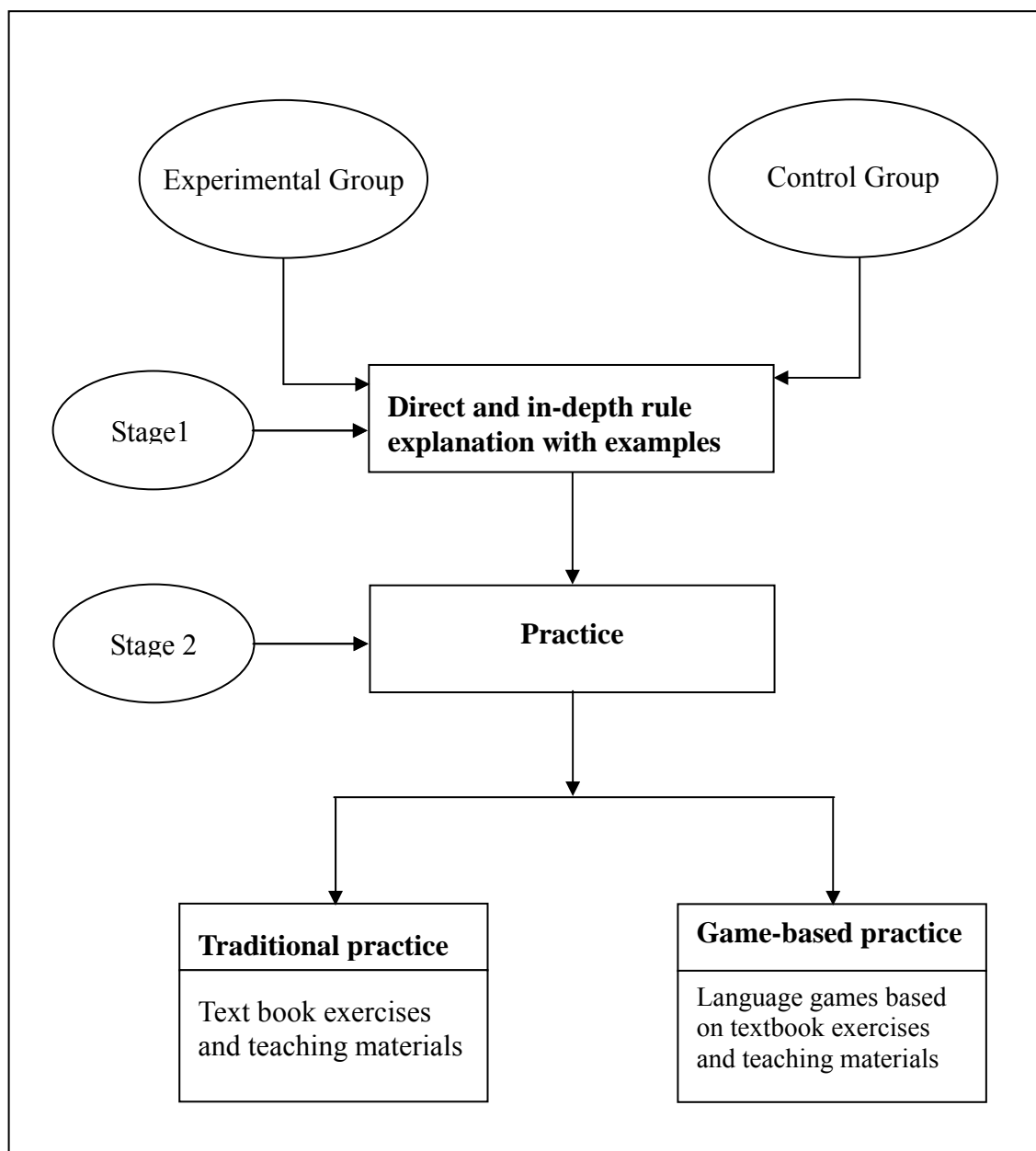


Figure 3.2 Teaching Program

### ***3.5.1 Stage 1: Focus-on-Forms***

At the first stage of the teaching program both in the control group and in the experimental group, the teaching focused on the forms of the language. In this study, I used both inductive and deductive teaching approaches for form-focused instruction (Norris & Ortega, 2000) and the “3Ps” approach (Presentation – Practice – Production) as suggested by Ur (1999).

At times I moved from the context and focused only temporarily on the grammatical features, alerting students to the rules involved: using an inductive approach, the students were to look for the rule, verbalise it, and then grammatical rules were explained by me. Alternatively, the students were given an in-depth rule explanation by me at the beginning of the lesson. I made sure to state the grammatical rules at the beginning or at the end of the lesson, so that the students had an overview of the explicit information about the rules, before they began to work on a series of exercises. In some classes, I made extensive use of the students’ native language to explain, translate, and make generalizations. Appendix G contains the teaching program, as well as a table of all the functions, grammatical features and tasks that were part of it.

### ***3.5.2 Stage 2: Form-based Exercises for the Control Group; Game-based Tasks for the Experimental Group***

Stage Two was the practice stage of the teaching program. This stage consisted of a series of form-based exercises for the control group and of game-based tasks for the experimental group. These tasks were communication-oriented. However, the main aim of this stage was the same for both groups: a consolidation of the taught grammatical features in order to facilitate the transfer from short-term to

long-term memory.

(a) *Form-based Exercises for the Control Group*

The students of the control group were expected to practise formal rules through exercises provided by the textbooks, which consisted of words, phrases and sentences in no particular communicative context or text-type. Some common exercises of this type were:

(1) Fill in the blanks

Example 1:

Übung 3 Wer ? Fragen und antworten Sie. ('Passwort Deutsch 1', p. 91)

1. (spielen) Wer \_\_\_\_\_ Karten? Lisa und Tobias \_\_\_\_\_ Karten.  
(to play) Who \_\_\_\_\_ cards? Lisa and Tobias \_\_\_\_\_ cards.
2. (schlafen) Wer \_\_\_\_\_? Frau Schmidt \_\_\_\_\_.  
(to sleep) Who \_\_\_\_\_? Mrs. Schmidt \_\_\_\_\_.
3. (fahren) Wer \_\_\_ nach Italien ? Frau Schmidt, Lisa und Tobias \_\_\_\_\_ nach Italien.  
(to go) Who \_\_\_\_\_ to Italy? Mrs. Schmidt, Lisa and Tobias \_\_\_\_\_ to Italy.
4. (wohnen) Wer \_\_\_\_\_ in Bremen? Thomas und Anna \_\_\_\_\_ in Bremen.  
(to live) Who \_\_\_\_\_ in Bremen? Thomas and Anna \_\_\_\_\_ in Bremen.

Example 2:

Transformation (the students change the structure in some prescribed manner)

e.g. Der Kaffee ist kalt. (put into negative)

Übung 3 Nicht kalt – heiss. Bitte schreiben Sie. ('Passwort Deutsch 1', p. 105)

langsam voll gut rechts heiss klein kurz  
(slow full good right hot small short)

1. Der Kaffee ist kalt. Nein, der Kaffee ist nicht kalt! Er ist heiss.  
(The coffee is cold. No, this coffee is not cold! It is hot).

2. Der Mann ist gross. Nein, \_\_\_\_\_ ! \_\_\_\_\_  
 (*The man is tall. No, \_\_\_\_\_! \_\_\_\_\_*)
3. Das Bier ist schlecht. Nein, \_\_\_\_\_ ! \_\_\_\_\_  
 (*The beer is not good. No, \_\_\_\_\_! \_\_\_\_\_*)
4. Der Bus ist schnell. Nein, \_\_\_\_\_ ! \_\_\_\_\_  
 (*The bus is fast. No, \_\_\_\_\_! \_\_\_\_\_*)
5. Der Zug ist lang. Nein, \_\_\_\_\_ ! \_\_\_\_\_  
 (*The train is long. No, \_\_\_\_\_! \_\_\_\_\_*)
6. Die Kirche ist links. Nein, \_\_\_\_\_ ! \_\_\_\_\_  
 (*The church is on the left side. No, \_\_\_\_\_! \_\_\_\_\_*)

Other types of practice exercises aiming at the practice of correct forms, but involving meanings as well, were:

(2) Multiple-choice

Example 3:

Übung 1 Was ist richtig? ('Passwort Deutsch 1', p. 88)

1. Wo fährt \_\_\_\_\_ der Zug? (*Where does the train go?*)  
 ist (*is*)  
 kommt (*does come*)
2. Wo \_\_\_\_\_ kommt der Zug? (*Where does the train come from?*)  
 Woher (*Where*)  
 Wohin (*Where*)
3. Wohin fährt der Zug ? (*Where does the train go to?*)  
 ist (*is*)  
 kommt (*does come*)
4. Deutschland kommt (comes) \_\_\_\_\_ mitten in Europa. (Germany \_\_\_\_  
 liegt ( *is located* ) \_\_\_\_\_ in the middle of Europe.)  
 wohnt (*lives*)

(3) Fill in the gaps

Example 4:

Übung ein – der – er ... Ergänzen Sie bitte. ('Passwort Deutsch 1', p.103)

1. Das ist ein Mann. Der Mann wartet im Cafe. Er trinkt Kaffee.

(*This is a man. The man waits in the coffee shop. He drinks coffee.*)

2. Das ist \_\_\_\_\_ Frau. \_\_\_\_\_ Frau wartet nicht. \_\_\_\_\_ schläft.

(*This is \_\_\_\_\_ woman. \_\_\_\_\_ women doesn't wait. \_\_\_\_\_ sleeps.*)

3. Das sind Kinder. \_\_\_\_\_ Kinder sind noch klein. \_\_\_\_\_ spielen Fussball.

(*They are children. \_\_\_\_\_ children are young. \_\_\_\_\_ play football.*)

(4) Matching

Example 5:

Übung 2 Was passt zusammen? (Matching Exercise) ('Passwort Deutsch 1', p. 118)

Tennis	_____	essen
Urlaub	_____	hören
Musik	_____	fahren
Grammatik	_____ →	spielen
ins Kino	_____	machen
Zug	_____	gehen
Torte	_____	lernen

<i>tennis</i>	_____	<i>to eat</i>
<i>holiday</i>	_____	<i>to listen to</i>
<i>music</i>	_____	<i>to drive</i>
<i>grammar</i>	_____ →	<i>to play</i>
<i>a movie</i>	_____	<i>to go to</i>
<i>train</i>	_____	<i>to go to see</i>
<i>cake</i>	_____	<i>to learn</i>

The students of the control group received a selection of exercises taken directly from the textbook and worked on the exercises with me, applying the grammar rules that they had learned in the past few periods. I gave either the correct answers and explained my choices, or elicited answers from the students while explaining and correcting any errors that arose during this feedback session. Though some of the excises were based on meaning, the whole practice stage was still focused on the forms of the language and was teacher-centered.

**(b) *Game-based Tasks for the Experimental Group***

This sub-section contains a detailed description of the game-based tasks I developed for my experimental group, alongside the grammatical features that were involved, the language skills to be developed, the sentence structures called for and the topics they were part of. A list of games used in this experiment is presented in Table 3.7.



Table 3.7

## The Games Used in the Study

	<b>Games</b>	<b>Grammar Feature</b>	<b>Sentence Structure</b>	<b>Functions</b>	<b>Language skills</b>
1	<b>Card and Board game (Snakes and Ladders)</b>	Pronouns; Regular verbs and verb endings; Question words	Sentences structure; Questions: 1. Who are you? 2. Who is it?	Enquiring and Responding	Listening, speaking, reading, writing
2	<b>Interview (Kennenlernspiel)</b>	Pronouns; Regular verbs and verb ending; Question words	Questions: Who are you?	Introducing oneself Introducing your friends	Listening, speaking, reading, writing.
3	<b>Picture and board game</b>	Irregular verbs; Verb forms	Yes/no questions structures	Enquiring and answering about what people do	Listening, speaking, reading,
4	<b>Who wrote what about me?</b>	Irregular verbs; Verb forms	Yes/no questions structures	Checking statements	Listening, speaking, reading, writing
5	<b>Matching Game</b>	Definite article: der, die, das Nouns , Singular and plural forms of nouns	Structures of description relating to: family-members, occupation Furniture, stationery	Naming objects and people	Listening, speaking, writing
6	<b>Quartet (Happy families)</b>	Definite article: der, die, das Singular and plural forms of nouns	Structures of requesting	Naming objects	Listening, speaking, reading

Table 3.7 (Continued)

*The Games Used in the Study*

	<b>Games</b>	<b>Grammar Feature</b>	<b>Sentence Structure</b>	<b>Functions</b>	<b>Language skills</b>
7	<b>Memory game</b>	indefinite articles: ein, eine (a, an)	What is it? This is a(n)..... They are...	Describing objects	Listening, speaking, writing
8	<b>Picture game</b>	Negation : nicht, kein, keine	Yes/no questions structures Negative sentences	Asking and answering	Listening, speaking, reading, writing
9	<b>Describing game</b>	1. Definite articles: der, die ,das 2. Nouns 3. Singular and plural 4. Indefinite articles (a, an) 5. Negative words: nicht, kein, keine	1. Questions with question words and answers 2. Yes/no questions structures 3. Negative sentences	Describing a picture	Listening, speaking, reading, writing
10	<b>Domino (DIY word order)</b>	Separable verb prefixes	Sentence structure with separable verbs	Ordering, putting the words in the correct order	Listening, speaking, reading, writing
11	<b>Finding a time to meet</b>	Separable verb prefixes timetable	Sentence structure with time adverbs	Gathering information Making appointments	Listening, speaking, reading, writing
12	<b>Detectives</b>	Possessive adjectives	1. Yes/no questions structures 2. Negative sentences	Stating possession	Listening, speaking, reading, writing
13	<b>Grammar letters</b>	Possessive adjectives	All sentence structures taught in the semester	Asking and answering; Describing family	Listening, speaking, reading, writing

The following is a detailed example of one of the games used in the practice phase of grammatical features. The detailed descriptions of all the other games are to be found in Appendix H.

### Game 1                      Snakes and Ladder

**Grammar:** To reinforce the usage of subject pronouns, the present tense of verbs and the sentence structure for questions and answers.

The German pronoun and verb ending of regular verb forms; e.g.

ich komme (*I come*), du kommst (*you come*), er kommt (*he comes*), sie kommt (*she comes*), wir kommen (*we come*), ihr kommt (*you come*), sie kommen (*they come*)

Sentence structure: subject + verb + object

Gabi lernt hier Englisch. (*Gabi learns English here.*)  
Er heisst Willi. (*His name is Willi.*)

W-questions: question words and structure:

wie, woher, wo, was + verb + subject ? e. g.  
Wie heissen Sie? (*What is your name?*)  
Woher kommst du ? (*Where do you come from?*)  
Wo wohnt ihr? (*Where do you live?*)  
Was macht Gabi hier? (*What are you doing here?*)  
Wer ist das? (*Who is it?*)

Prepositions: in (*in*), aus (*from*)

Gabi kommt aus Hamburg und wohnt jetzt in Bonn.  
(*Gabi comes from Hamburg and lives now in Bonn.*)

**Function:** To enquire and respond

**Skills:** Speaking and writing, partly reading and listening

**Class Organisation:** Groups

**Time:** 50 minutes

**Preparation:** A SNAKES AND LADDERS board (Appendix H)  
A dice and 4 markers  
A deck of playing word-cards (Appendix H):  
The white cards have fill-in exercises with correct verb endings.

The blue cards have fill-in exercises with correct prepositions.  
The orange cards have fill-in exercises with correct question words.  
The green cards have exercises to build correct questions.

*Procedure:*

Students take turn placing a marker on the starting place and tossing the die.

The students then move their marker the appropriate number of spaces. The colour on the spaces where they land decides which playing cards students choose.

Students are permitted to move by giving a correct answer to the question. If a student lands at the base of a ladder and gives the right answer, he may climb up to the top of the ladder and continue from there to the next turn; if the answer is not correct, he just does not proceed any further.

If a student lands on the tail of a snake and gives the right answer, he is not permitted to move forward. If the answer is incorrect, he moves three spaces back. If he lands on the head of snake and gives the right answer, he may stay on the same spot; otherwise, he has to slide down to the tail of the snake and continue from there on the next turn.

The first person to reach the endpoint, wins.

### **3.6 Summary of Chapter 3**

This chapter has presented the experimental design for this study. The participants' background, the teaching program, the material used in the study, and the procedure employed for data collection were explained. Statistical analysis issues and the transcription of the interviews were also considered.

The next chapter will present and discuss the results of the statistical analyses performed to address the research questions and the hypotheses, as has been outlined at the end of Chapter 2.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **QUANTITATIVE RESULTS**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents and discusses all results from grammar tests and exams including the pre-tests, as well as all findings from questionnaires, as they relate to the research questions and hypotheses (see 2.9, pp. 53-54). Section 4.1 deals with the rationale of the pre-tests and with their results. In section 4.2 the results relating to the research question on the students' level of grammatical accuracy are presented and discussed. Section 4.3 presents the results relating to the research question on students' motivation, while the results relating to the question on classroom atmosphere are discussed in section 4.4. Section 4.5 presents the results relating to the research question on students' responses towards the grammatical practice. Section 4.6 contains the results regarding the students' reaction to the role of grammar in learning and teaching a second language. Section 4.7, finally, summarized the results and finding of Chapter 4.

#### **4.1 Pre-tests**

Before investigating the results of the grammar achievement tests, the comparability of all students in the two groups was ensured by analyzing the students' total scores on the entrance examination, as well as their English scores in order to provide an indication of their performance in a second language.

The results of the *t*-test in Table 4.1 indicate that the two groups obtained comparable total scores in their entrance examination: the mean total score of the experimental group was 217.39 and the mean total score of the control group was 218.68. There was no statistically

significant difference between the two groups ( $t = -0.546, p > 0.05$ ).

Table 4.1

*Mean Total Scores of Entrance Examination in the Experimental and Control Groups (n=93)*

Group	n	Total Scores of Entrance Examination		t	p
		Mean	SD		
Experimental Group	46	217.39	12.549	-0.546	0.176
Control Group	47	218.68	10.143		

The mean difference is not significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 4.2 shows that the mean English score of the experimental group was 51.98 and the mean English score of the control group was 52.40. No statistically significant difference between the two groups was found ( $t = -0.524, p > 0.05$ ).

Table 4.2

*Mean English Score of the Entrance Examination in the Experimental and Control Groups (n=93)*

Group	n	English Score of the Entrance Examination		t	p
		Mean	SD		
Experimental Group	46	51.98	3.873	-0.524	0.834
Control Group	47	52.40	3.965		

The mean difference is not significant at the 0.05 level.

The  $t$  results (Tables 4.1 and 4.2) show that the two groups were comparable in two important aspects, i.e. entrance examination and English as L2. These results also indicate that the basic ability, both in general performance and in a second language, was similar between the two groups. This fact allowed me to refer differences in their performance during this study to the different instruction treatment with a good level of plausibility.

It is worth reiterating that, apart from analyzing the students' general learning performance (as evidenced in their entrance examination scores on Chinese, Mathematics, Science, and History), the English as a second language scores were analyzed in order to gain an idea of the students' performance in a second language (given the fact that none of them had studied another second language previously).

In order to better evaluate the students' performance in another language, the students were divided into 3 groups according to their L2 English scores in the entrance examination:

1. High-Level Subgroup (HL): students with scores in the upper third (33%, scores 55 to 60).
2. Middle-Level Subgroup (ML): students with scores in the middle third (34%, scores 52 to 55).
3. Low-Level Subgroup (LL): students with scores in the lower third (33%, scores 42 to 52).

There were 15 students in each of the High- and Low-Level subgroups in both the experimental and control groups; there were 16 and 17 students in the Middle-Level subgroups of the experimental and control group, respectively.

First, a within-group difference test was carried out to compare the between-group difference among the students' language levels in each group. Comparing their performance in English, the students in the high language level performed better than the middle language level and low language level students, while the middle language level performed better than the low language level students in each group (Table 4.3 and 4.5).

One-Way ANOVA tests were also carried out to compare the inter-group differences among the students' language levels in each group. As Table 4.4 indicates, there were statistically significant differences between the three language levels of students in the experimental group in their English scores ( $F=100.999$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Also the results of the ANOVA test shown in Table 4.6 revealed that there were statistically significant differences among the three language levels of the control group ( $F=72.437$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

Tables 4.3 to 4.6 show that the students belonging to the same level in both the control and experimental groups had comparable performance. Moreover, the results from Tables 4.4 and 4.6 reveal that students from different language levels in both groups performed differently.

Table 4.3

*Results for English as a Second Language in the Three Language Levels of the Experimental Group (n=46)*

Language Level Subgroup	n	English Score of the Entrance Examination	
		Mean	MD
High Level	15	56.13	3.88 <sup>1</sup>
Middle Level	16	52.25	4.72 <sup>2</sup>
Low Level	15	47.53	8.60 <sup>3</sup>

MD = Mean Difference between the different language levels.

MD<sup>1</sup> is calculated from the mean of the High language level minus the mean of the Middle language level

MD<sup>2</sup> is calculated from the mean of the Middle language level minus the mean of the Low language level.

MD<sup>3</sup> is calculated from the mean of the High language level minus the mean of the Low language level.

Table 4.4

*ANOVA Results of Pre-test for English as a Second Language in the Three Language Levels of the Experimental Group (n=46)*

Sources		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
English Scores	Between	556.512	2	278.256	100.999	0.000*
	Group Within	118.467	43	2.755		
	Groups Total	674.978	45			

The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.



Table 4.5

*Results for English as a Second Language in the Three Language Levels of the Control Group (n=47)*

Language Level Subgroup	n	English Score of the Entrance Examination	
		Mean	MD
High Level	15	56.67	4.20 <sup>1</sup>
Middle Level	17	52.47	4.40 <sup>2</sup>
Low Level	15	48.07	8.60 <sup>3</sup>

MD = Mean Difference between the different language levels.

MD<sup>1</sup> is calculated from the mean of the High language level minus the mean of the Middle language level.

MD<sup>2</sup> is calculated from the mean of the Middle language level minus the mean of the Low language level.

MD<sup>3</sup> is calculated from the mean of the High language level minus the mean of the Low language level.

Table 4.6

*ANOVA Results of Pre-test for English as a Foreign Language in the Three Language Levels of the Control Group (n=47)*

	Sources	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
English Scores	Between Groups	554.817	2	277.409	72.438	0.000*
	Within Groups	168.502	44	3.830		
	Total	723.319	46			

The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Then, the *t*-tests were conducted to compare the intra-group differences between all three levels of both groups (Table 4.7). The mean score of the HL subgroup was 56.13 and 56.67 in the experimental and control groups, respectively. The mean score of the ML subgroup was 52.25 and 52.47 in the experimental and control groups, respectively. The mean score of the LL subgroup was 47.53 and 48.07 in the experimental and control groups, respectively. There was no statistically significant difference between the two groups with regard to the basic language level (Table 4.7).

Table 4.7  
*Mean Score of English in Entrance Examination among Three Language Level Subgroups in the Experimental and Control Group*

Language Level Subgroup	English Score in Entrance Examination						<i>p</i>
	Experimental Group			Control Group			
	n	Mean	SD	n	Mean	SD	
All	46	51.98	3.873	47	52.40	3.965	0.843
High (HL)	15	56.13	2.066	15	56.67	2.044	0.133
Middle (ML)	16	52.25	0.683	17	52.47	1.068	0.129
Low (LL)	15	47.53	1.922	15	48.07	2.187	0.354

A two-way mixed model factorial ANOVA test of the raw scores for all post-tests was conducted in order to find out whether the differences in the post-test results could be attributed to the interaction of the two different approaches. Table 4.8 shows that there was no statistically significant interaction between these two factors ( $F = 1.010, p = 0.369$ ). This means that the differences in the post-test can be safely attributed to the different teaching approaches.

Table 4.8  
*Two-way Mix Factorial Model ANOVA Test of Main Effects*

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Teaching Approaches	317.148	1	317.148	3.621	0.060
Achievement Levels	408.513	2	204.256	2.332	0.103
Teaching Approaches * Achievement Levels Interaction	176.890	2	88.445	1.010	0.369

To sum up, the results from Tables 4.3 to 4.6 show that the students from different language levels in the experimental group, as well as in the control group, performed differently. Moreover, the results also indicate that students of each language level in both groups were from a homogeneous population and their performance in a second language was similar. Table 4.7 and 4.8 also indicate that the mean score of English in entrance examination among the three language level subgroups in the experimental and control group were comparable. The results make plausible my conclusion that any differences among different levels on the post-tests could not be attributed to different learning ability or to prior knowledge of another language, but probably to different instructional approaches.

#### **4. 2 Post-Tests on Grammatical Accuracy**

##### **(Research Questions 1 and 2 and Hypotheses 1 and 2)**

In order to find out whether the game-based practice was making any significant difference during the 18-week treatment period, the results of a total of six grammar tests, a mid-term examination and a final examination were collected from the two groups. First, the intra-group comparison was made, to see whether there were any differences between the different language levels in the both groups. Then, the inter-group differences were analyzed.

The first intra-group analysis was made on the experimental group. As shown in Tables 4.9, the experimental students of the high level performed to an overall higher accuracy level, but the students of the middle and low levels progressed at a higher growth rate (without, however, reaching the accuracy performance of the students of the high level). There was a 1.47 mean difference between the high and the middle language level while a 0.22 mean difference was found between the middle and the low language levels. The ANOVA results in Table 4.10 also show that there was no significant difference between the three levels ( $F=0.314$ ,  $p>0.05$ ). The middle and low level students in the experimental group grew at their own pace,

made improvement, and performed as well as the high level students did. That means that the three levels were not homogeneous before the study (Table 4.5), but became homogeneous after the study (Table 4.10). This indicates that the game-based practice benefited the middle and low levels more than the high levels in terms of growth rate in the post-tests.

Table 4.9

*Results of Post-Tests of the Experimental Language Levels (n=46)*

Language Level Subgroup	n	Grammar Achievement	
		Mean	MD
High Level	15	86.81	1.47 <sup>1</sup>
Middle Level	16	85.34	0.22 <sup>2</sup>
Low Level	16	85.12	1.69 <sup>3</sup>

MD = Mean Difference between the different language levels.

MD<sup>1</sup> is calculated from the mean of the High language level minus the mean of the Middle language level.

MD<sup>2</sup> is calculated from the mean of the Middle language level minus the mean of the Low language level.

MD<sup>3</sup> is calculated from the mean of the High language level minus the mean of the Low language level.

Table 4.10

*ANOVA Results of Post-Tests of the Experimental Language Levels (n=46)*

	Sources	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Grammar Achievements	Between	25.560	2	12.780	0.134	0.875
	Group Within	4096.595	43	95.270		
	Groups Total	4211.155	45			

In contrast to the improvement of middle and low language levels in the experimental group (Table 4.10), the students from the middle and low language levels of the control group performed similarly to their pre-tests (Table 4.11). The mean difference between the high and middle language levels of the control group was 5.40, while the mean difference between

the middle and low language levels was 3.13. The mean difference between the high and low language levels reached 8.53. The ANOVA result in Table 4.12 also shows that there was a statistically significant difference between the three levels ( $F=3.497, p=0.039$ ). This means that the three levels remained heteronomous, as they were before the study (Table 4.5 and Table 4.6). The results reveal that the high language level students performed best among the three language levels. The big mean differences were the evidence of the gap between the three language levels (Table 4.11).

Table 4.11

*Results of Post-Test for the Control Levels (n=47)*

Language Level Subgroup	n	Grammar Achievement	
		Mean	MD
High Level	15	86.70	5.40 <sup>1</sup>
Middle Level	17	81.30	3.13 <sup>2</sup>
Low Level	15	78.17	8.53 <sup>3</sup>

MD = Mean Difference between the different language levels.

MD<sup>1</sup> is calculated from the mean of the High language level minus the mean of the Middle language level.

MD<sup>2</sup> is calculated from the mean of the Middle language level minus the mean of the Low language level.

MD<sup>3</sup> is calculated from the mean of the High language level minus the mean of the Low language level.

Table 4.12

*ANOVA Results of Post-Tests of the Control Levels (n=47)*

Sources		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Grammar Achievements	Between Group	560.035	2	280.017	3.497	0.039*
	Within Groups	3523.485	44	80.079		
	Total	4083.520	46			

$p < 0.05$

In addition to the intra-group analysis presented above, also the comparisons of inter-group were made on the gain scores of each language level in both groups. The *t*-tests were carried out to determine whether the two different grammar instructions had a positive effect on the different groups.

The results in Table 4.13 show that there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups ( $t=1.889, p=0.062$ ). However, the experimental groups had a higher mean post-test score than the control group ( $85.75 \pm 9.751$  versus  $82.02 \pm 9.422$ ). This finding indicates that the experimental group outperformed the control group ( $MD=3.70$ ). In other words, the game-based practice gave the experimental group some advantage over the control group, although the difference was not statistically significant.

Table 4.13 also shows that the students of the high language levels in the experimental group and in the control group outperformed the best scores of the other two levels.

Table 4.13

*Post-treatment t-Tests for the Outcomes of both Groups (n=93)*

Language Level Subgroup	Grammar Achievement						MD	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	Experimental Group			Control Group					
	n	Mean	SD	n	Mean	SD			
All	46	85.75	9.751	47	82.02	9.422	3.70	1.889	0.062
High (HL)	15	86.81	6.361	15	86.70	5.891	0.11	0.048	0.932
Middle (ML)	16	85.34	9.265	17	81.30	10.279	4.04	1.182	0.963
Low (LL)	15	85.12	12.656	15	78.17	9.809	6.95	0.691	0.413

MD = Mean Difference between the experimental and control groups.

The MD is calculated from the mean of the experimental group minus the mean of the control group.

There was only 0.11 mean difference between the high language levels of the two groups. However, there was 4.04 mean difference between the middle levels of the two groups, while the mean difference between the two low language levels was bigger ( $MD=6.95$ ). These

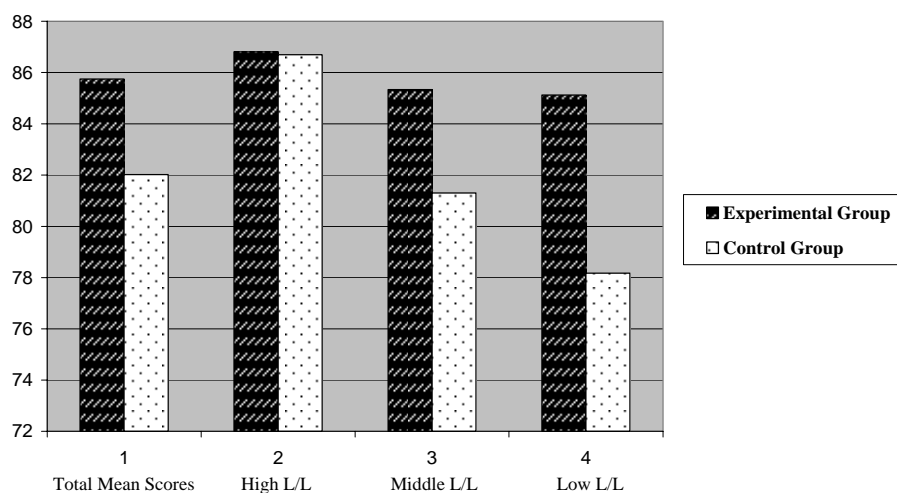
findings indicate that the students of the middle and low levels of the experimental group performed better than the equivalent students of the control group. However, the ANOVA results in Table 4.14 reveal that such mean difference between the three language levels in both groups did not reach a statistically significant difference ( $p= 0.875$ ).

To sum up, the average scores of the post-tests on grammatical accuracy show an overall higher performance of the Experimental Group over the Control Groups (Figure 4.1). They also reveal that the students in the high levels in both groups performed better than the other two levels. It is noted that the progress of the students from middle language level and low language level of the experimental group was obvious. However, the difference between the experimental levels and the control levels was not statistically significant (Tables 4.13, 4.14).

Table 4.14

*ANOVA Results of the Post-tests among the Three Language Levels in both Groups (n=93)*

	Sources	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
High L/L	Between Group	0.088	1	0.088	0.008	0.962
	Within Groups	1052.458	28	37.588		
	Total	1052.546	29			
Middle L/L	Between Groups	134.161	1	134.161	1.396	0.246
	Within Groups	2978.212	31	90.071		
	Total	3112.373	32			
Low L/L	Between Groups	362.269	1	362.269	2.826	0.104
	Within Groups	3589.410	28	128.193		
	Total	3951.679	29			
Total mean scores	Between Groups	410.891	2	205.445	2.278	0.108
	Within Groups	8116.599	90	90.184		
	Total	8527.489	92			



*Figure 4.1* Group Means on the Grammar Accuracy by the Three Language Levels in Both Groups

The first hypothesis stated that the experimental students taught by the game-based practice would perform better in the use of German grammar than those in the control group taught by the traditional practice. The results of the statistical analysis reported that the experimental students performed better overall over the control group. However, there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups. Therefore, the first hypothesis was not supported by the results.

The second hypothesis was that students of all three language competence levels (high, middle and low) of the experimental group, who have been taught by means of language games, would produce higher scores on grammatical accuracy tests and examinations than the students of all three competence levels (high, middle and low) of the control group. The results of the statistical analysis reported that the students in the high levels in both groups, performed better than the other two levels; the progress of the students from middle language level and low language level of the experimental group was obvious. However, the difference between the experimental levels and the control levels was not statistically significant. Therefore, the second hypothesis was not supported by the results, although the trends of the scores were in the



direction predicted by this hypothesis.

#### *4.2.1 Discussion of the Results on Students' Grammatical Accuracy*

These results relate to the first research question of this study: (“Do the experimental students taught by the game-based grammatical practice perform better in grammatical accuracy than those in the control group taught by the traditionally exercise-based practice?”) and to the second research question: (“Is the level of effectiveness of games-based grammatical practice comparable across the language competence levels?”).

The most noteworthy finding of the use of games with the experimental students is that there was no significant difference between the two groups as a result of the use of games, as shown in six grammar tests and two examinations. The results were consistent with the findings obtained with EFL university pre-sessional students by Gardner (1987) and Miller (1992). However, this main findings does not support the common perception on the validity of games as a recommended learning and teaching strategy that emerged from most of the literature review in chapter 2 (for example, Deesri, 2002; Garcia-Carbonell, Rising, Montero & Watts, 2001; Gaudart, 1999; Hong, 2002; Shie, 2003). It does not reflect the outcome from the studies conducted with L2 students by Cortes (1974), Issacs (1979), and Wrucke-Nelson (1992).

However, the experimental students obtained a higher grammatical accuracy level than the control students, indicating some positive advantage as a result of using games; it also emerged that the middle and low levels of the experimental students gained more in grammatical accuracy than the high level did (Table 4.13, p. 94, Figure 4.1, p. 96).

The main result on the use of games with the experimental students was disappointing to me, as one of my strongest hypotheses was that games would make a substantially positive difference. In spite of this, however, the small advantage recorded within the experimental students can, with a fair degree of reliability, be attributed to the use of games. This

interpretation is strongly supported by both the experimental students' comments, my field notes (see 5.1 for detailed comments from these two sources, pp. 171-182 and Appendix I, pp. 300-301) and the positive responses of the experimental students in the Questionnaire on the Two Types of Grammatical Practice (Table 4.42).

The failure, however, to obtain a significant difference in grammatical accuracy through the use of games requires some interpretation. Firstly, I believe that the introduction of a way of teaching grammar which was very different to what students were expecting, and also different from the way all other subjects in the students' curriculum were taught, was a big change for most students, particularly because this new method required them to be much more active in class, to use a lot more language than in other language classes they had experienced. Actually some students complained about the organisation of games (see 5.2 for detailed comments, pp. 182-184 and Appendix I, p. 302) because it was hard for them to work with some students they were unfamiliar with. Generally students were accustomed to teacher-fronted lessons. They did not wish to become involved with games at the beginning of the study. I also found out that most students were not familiar with the rules of the games. Toth (2004) noted that learners might not accurately understand what the instructor intends by designing activities around a particular grammar structure. That could lead to a negative instruction results. The new method they were exposed to ran against a deeply ingrained pedagogical approach, which proved too alien to my students for them to be able to benefit from in the short period of this experiment.

Once again, as shown in other tables in this chapter, there was no statistically significant improvement on overall motivation and classroom atmosphere between the pre-test and the post-test. Statistically significant improvement in overall motivation and classroom atmosphere, however, was found between the pre-test and the delayed post-test. This shows a delayed change in the students' perception of motivation and classroom atmosphere in the

delayed post-test, supporting my interpretation that it is not realistic to expect changes to occur within a short time framework.

Secondly, I am now convinced that the size of the experimental class was too large to allow an appropriately extended use of games, though the students were divided into small groups. The sheer number of 46 students did not provide enough practice time to allow a substantial change to occur in these students' accuracy rate, as compared to those of the control group. This interpretation is supported by the results from students' interview (see 5.2, pp. 184-186 and Appendix I, p. 302). Some students pointed out that it was too hard to keep up with all the information they had to know in playing games. They wished to have more time to play games or more games to play. Lee and VanPatten (2003) and Omaggio-Harley and Terry (2000) also argued that the approach 'focus on form' might work effectively only if the provision of comprehensible input and the contextualization of L2 grammatical form, reflecting authentic communication tasks, reach a balance. However, I had to keep up with the tight class schedules, which had to be the same as those of the control group. Moreover, when it was clear that students were using more German during language games, the high number of students made it difficult for me to check their level of accuracy. This meant that the obviously higher approval for the use of games was not necessarily translated into a higher level of grammatical accuracy, because of high student numbers.

Thirdly, all the grammar tests and the mid-term and final examinations were only paper-and-pencil tests, in strict accordance with the requirements of the course that I was not permitted to change. The tests dealt only with the reading and writing skills, with no speaking component. The speaking practice that this study focused on, through the use of games, was meant all along to improve the students' writing and reading accuracy. However, many students noted during their focus group interviews and in their answers to the questionnaire on teaching method (see 4.5, p. 149, 5.1, p. 171 and Appendix I, pp. 300-301), that the use of

games, apart from giving them a better understanding of grammar, had improved also their speaking ability, their confidence and their willingness to be active during classes. They were, therefore, disappointed that test did not offer the opportunity to demonstrate these other changes.

The small advantage, however, that the experimental students obtained over the control students on grammatical accuracy in the post-test, can be interpreted as a noteworthy result, for the simple reason that it was an improvement (even if not significant) on the control group's. The much less traditional "grammatical exercise" practice of the control students, replaced by the more communicative practice of the experimental students proved effective enough not only to allow a similar level of accuracy in exercise-based tests, but also to improve on it. This result strikes at the weakness of the traditional "rule + exercise only" approach of the control students, while pointing to the strength of the "rule + communicative practice" approach, which proved more effective, to some extent, not only in raising the level of participation and oral ability, but also the level of grammatical accuracy. These results are consistent with the positive findings obtained by Doughty and Varela (1998), Klapper and Rees (2003), and Norris and Ortega (2000).

It is acknowledged again here that, in spite of the reasons proposed above to explain the failure to achieve a statistically significant outcome in favour of games, such failure was quite a major disappointment to me, as I was expecting a clear advantage of the experimental students, as indicated in my first hypothesis.

I am not certain to what extent the reasons above can account for the disappointing result. I feel that they do not fully explain it and that the real impact of games in the teaching and learning of grammatical features of a second language needs to be further explored, in order to either confirm its limited value or to indicate a greater degree of usefulness than this study has provided. All that this experiment was able to do was to point towards a likely more positive

result under a more favourable teaching and learning environment, in which games constitute one of the main strategies.

The following section is going to explore the effects of the game-based practice on the students' motivation to learn. This is the main focus of the third research question and research hypothesis three, according to which I was expecting a significant difference between the two groups of students using different types of grammatical practice.

### **4.3 Results of the Game- based Practice on Students' Motivation**

#### **(Research Question 3 and Hypothesis 3)**

As indicated in chapter 3, this study has monitored the effects of the game-based practice on the students' motivation to learn German grammar before, during and after the experiment. The specially devised motivation questionnaire (see Appendix B) was administered three times: once before the experiment and twice after, and it covered both the inter- and the intra-group comparisons. In addition to the total motivational scores of the two groups, the inter- and intra-group motivational subscales were also investigated. The three subscales included: (a) Enjoyment, (b) Effort, and (c) Capability (see 3.2 for the meaning of these terms, p. 64).

Paired *t*-tests were carried out in order to monitor the changes in each of these three motivational factors, as well as the overall changes in motivation with both groups. The first comparison of motivational change was on the intra-group motivational factors in both the experimental and control group.

#### ***4.3.1 Intra-group Comparison of Motivation Change in the Experimental Group and in the Control Group***

##### ***(a) Motivational Factor 'Enjoyment' of the Experimental Group***

The results of the motivational factor 'Enjoyment' in the pre-test, post-test and the

delayed post-test phases are displayed in Table 4.15-1 and 4.15-2. The mean score of the pre-test phase was 24.826. The experimental group scored similarly in the post-test phase after the nine-week intervention of the game-based practice, with scores slightly higher than in the pre-test (Mean=25.391, MD=0.565,  $p>0.05$ ). However, a growth of the factor 'Enjoyment' was recorded between the post-test and the delayed post-test (25.391 versus 28.022, MD=-2.630,  $p<0.001$ ), as well as between the pre-test and the delayed post-test (24.826 versus 28.022, MD=-3.196,  $p<0.001$ ). That is, the experimental group showed a statistically significant improvement in the motivational factor 'Enjoyment' after the intervention of the game-based practice for a whole semester. The changes regarding 'Enjoyment' of the experimental group are shown in Figure 4.2.

Table 4.15-1

*Mean Scores for the Factor Enjoyment in all Phases for the Experimental Group (n=46)*

Enjoyment	Mean	SD
Pre-test	24.826	3.427
Post-test	25.391	3.505
Delayed post-test	28.022	3.429

Table 4.15-2

*Paired T-Test for the Factor Enjoyment in all Phases for the Experimental Group (n=46)*

Enjoyment	MD	<i>t</i>	Sig.
Pre-test – Post-test	-0.565	-1.635	0.109
Post-test – Delayed post-test	-2.630	-5.255	0.000*
Delayed post-test – Pre-test	-3.196	-5.930	0.000*

The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

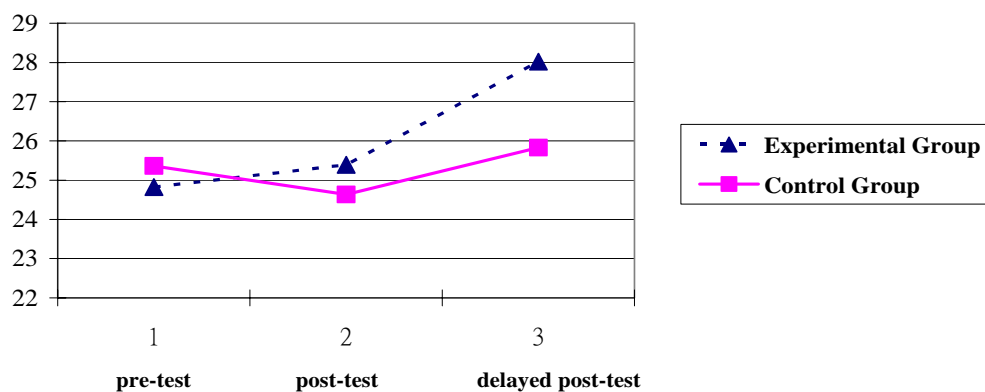


Figure 4.2 The Development of the Motivation Factor Enjoyment in both Groups

**(b) Motivational Factor ‘Effort’ of the Experimental Group**

The results of the motivational factor ‘Effort’ in the pre-test, post-test and the delayed post-test are displayed in Table 4.16-1 and 4.16-2. The mean score of the pre-test was 26.457. The experimental group scored similarly in the post-test after the nine-week intervention of the game-based practice, with scores slightly higher than in the pre-test (Mean=26.761, MD=0.304,  $p>0.05$ ). However, the growth patterns were found to be different between the post-test and the delayed post-test (26.761 versus 28.696, MD=-1.935,  $p<0.05$ ), as well as between the pre-test and the delayed post-test (26.457 versus 28.696, MD=-2.239,  $p<0.001$ ). That is, the experimental group gained statistically significant improvement in their motivational factor ‘Effort’ after a one-semester intervention of the game-based practice. The changes in the motivational factor ‘Effort’ of the experimental group are shown in Figure 4.3.

Tables 4.16-1 and 4.16-2 and Figure 4.3 show the difference between the two groups in relation to ‘Effort’. Again, the experimental students scored a statistically significant increase, while the control students did not (see also Tables 4.20-1 and 4.20-2 further on).

Table 4.16-1

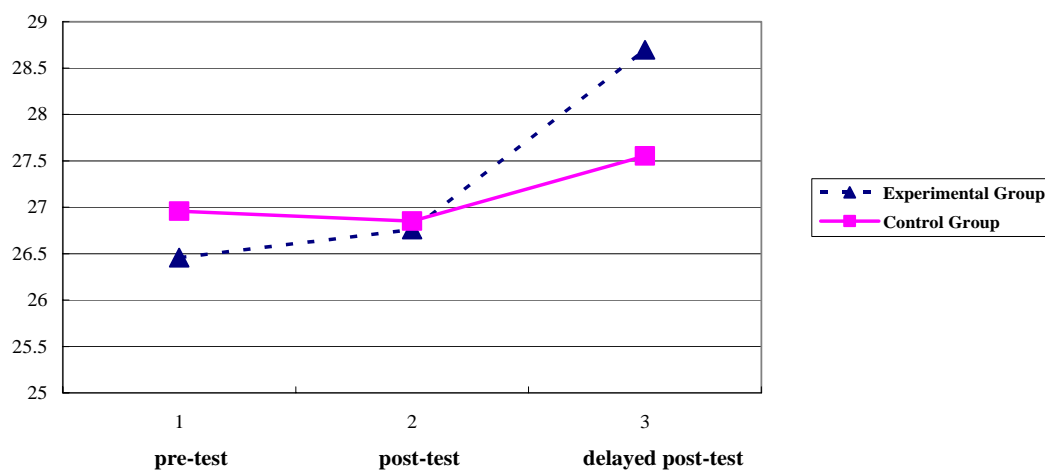
*Mean Scores for the Motivational Factor Effort in all Phases for the Experimental Group (n=46)*

Effort	Mean	SD
Pre-test	26.457	2.904
Post-test	26.761	4.089
Delayed post-test	28.696	3.457

Table 4.16-2

*Paired t-Test for the Motivational Factor Effort in all Phases for the Experimental Group (n=46)*

Effort	MD	<i>t</i>	Sig.
Pre-test – Post-test	-0.304	-0.674	0.504
Post-test – Delayed post-test	-1.935	-3.107	0.003*
Delayed post-test – Pre-test	-2.239	-3.796	0.000*



*Figure 4.3 The Development of the Motivational Factor Effort in both Groups*



(c) *Motivational Factor ‘Capability’ of the Experimental Group*

As shown in Tables 4.17 -1 and 4.17- 2, the mean score on the motivational factor ‘Capability’ in the pre-test was 24.457. The experimental group scored almost identically in the post-test after the nine-week intervention of the game-based practice, with scores slightly lower than in the pre-test (Mean=24.283, MD=0.174,  $p>0.05$ ). However, the scores improved between the post-test and the delayed post-test (24.283 versus 27.326, MD=-3.304,  $p<0.001$ ), as well as between the pre-test and the delayed post-test (24.457 versus 27.326, MD=-4.952,  $p<0.001$ ). That is, the experimental group gained statistically significant improvement in their motivational factor Capability after the intervention of the game-based practice for one semester. The changes in the Capability factor of the experimental group are also shown in the Figure 4.4. Tables 4.17 -1 and 4.17 -2 and Figure 4.4 reveal the improvement by the experimental students on their perceived level of capability in learning grammatical features of German.

Table 4.17-1

*Mean Scores for the Motivational Factor Capability in all Phases for the Experimental Group (n=46)*

Capability	Mean	SD
Pre-test	24.457	3.557
Post-test	24.283	3.931
Delayed post-test	27.326	3.627

Table 4.17-2

*Paired t-Test for the Motivational Factor Capability in All Phases for the Experimental Group (n=46)*

Capability	MD	<i>t</i>	Sig.
Pre-test – Post-test	-0.174	-0.363	0.718
Post-test – Delayed post-test	-3.304	-5.937	0.000*
Delayed post-test – Pre-test	-4.952	-4.952	0.000*

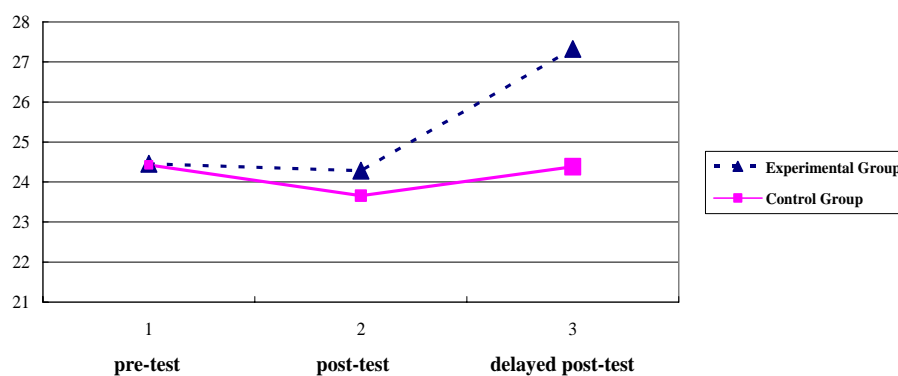


Figure 4.4 The Development of the Motivation Factor Capability in both Groups

**(d) Overall Changes in Motivation of the Experimental Group**

Paired *t*-tests were carried out to compare the students' overall changes in motivation between the pre-test, the post-test, and the delayed post-test in the experimental group. As shown in Tables 4.18 -1 and 4.18 -2, the experimental group scored similarly in the post-test after the nine-week intervention of the game-based practice, with the scores slightly higher than in the pre-test (75.739 versus 76.435, MD= -0.696,  $p > 0.05$ ). However, a higher growth pattern was found between the post-test and the delayed post-test (76.435 versus 84.044, MD=-7.609,  $p < 0.001$ ), as well as between the pre-test and the delayed post-test (75.739 versus 84.044, MD=-8.304,  $p < 0.001$ ). The experimental group gained statistically significant improvement in

their motivation toward learning German after one semester intervention of the game- based practice. The motivation change of the experimental group is shown in Figure 4.5.

Table 4.18-1

*Mean Score for the Overall Change in Motivation for all Phases for the Experimental Groups (n=46)*

Motivation	Mean	SD
Pre-test	75.739	8.744
Post-test	76.435	10.909
Delayed post-test	84.044	9.984

Table 4.18-2

*Paired T-Test for the Overall Change in Motivation for all Phases for the Experimental Groups (n=46)*

Motivation	MD	t	Sig.
Pre-test – Post-test	-0.696	-0.651	0.519
Post-test – Delayed post-test	-7.609	-5.118	0.000*
Delayed post-test – Pre-test	-8.304	-5.475	0.000*

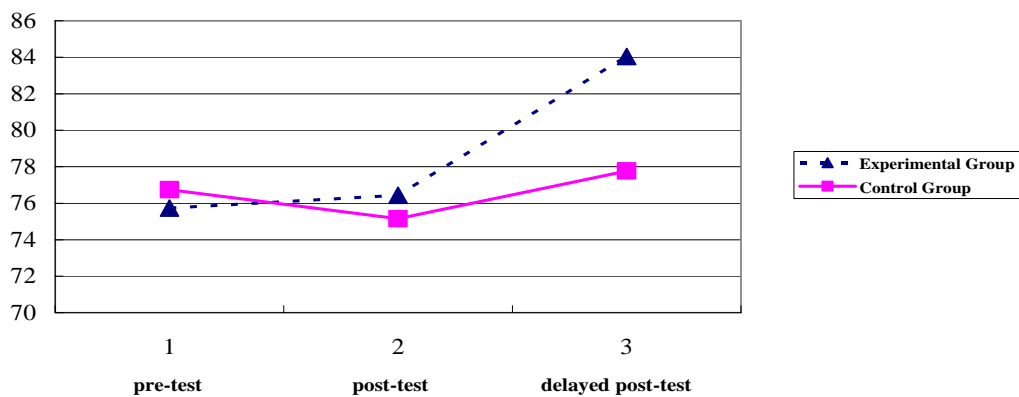


Figure 4.5 Overall Changes in Motivation in both Groups

*(e) Motivational Factor ‘Enjoyment’ for the Control Group*

The results of the motivational factor ‘Enjoyment’ in the pre-test, post-test and the delayed post-test for the control group are displayed in Tables 4.19 -1 and 4.19 -2.

The mean score of the pre-test was 25.362. The control group scored lower in the post-test after the nine-week intervention of the traditional grammar practice (25.362 versus 24.638, MD=0.723,  $p>0.05$ ). The scores improved between the post-test and the delayed post-test (24.638 versus 25.830, MD=-1.191,  $p<0.05$ ). However, in comparison to the pre-test, the control group did not make progress in the delayed post-test, and their scores on Enjoyment went backwards from their original scores in the pre-test (25.830 versus 25.362, MD=-0.468,  $p>0.05$ ). That is to say, the control group did not gain significant improvement in their motivational factor ‘Enjoyment’ after one semester intervention with the traditional practice. The changes in the Enjoyment of the control group are shown in Figure 4.2.

Table 4.19-1

*Mean Scores for the Factor Enjoyment in all Phases for the Control Group (n=47)*

Enjoyment	Mean	SD
Pre-test	25.362	3.510
Post-test	24.638	3.864
Delayed post-test	25.830	3.198

Table 4.19-2

*Paired-T-Test for the Factor Enjoyment in all Phases for the Control Group (n=47)*

Enjoyment	MD	<i>t</i>	Sig.
Pre-test – Post-test	0.723	1.605	0.115
Post-test– Delayed post-test	-1.191	-3.072	0.004*
Delayed post-test – Pre-test	-0.468	- 5.255	0.245

*(f) Motivational Factor 'Effort' for the Control Group*

According to the results in Tables 4.20-1 and 4.20 -2, the mean score of the pre-test was 26.975. Nevertheless, the control group scored slightly lower in the post-test after the nine-week intervention with the traditional practice (26.851 versus 26.975, MD=0.106,  $p>0.05$ ). No significant differences were found either between the post-test and the delayed post-test (26.851 versus 27.553, MD=-0.702,  $p>0.05$ ) or between the pre-test and the delayed post-test (26.975 versus 27.553, MD=-0.596,  $p>0.05$ ). It is noted that the control group did make some progress in the delayed post-test, and their scores on the motivational factor 'Effort' were slightly higher than in the pre-test (26.975 versus 27.553, MD=-0.596,  $p>0.05$ ). However, such difference was not statistically significant. That is to say, the control group did not gain significant improvement in their motivational factor 'Effort' after one semester intervention with the traditional approach. The changes in 'Effort' of the control group are shown in Figure 4.3.

Table 4.20-1

*Mean Scores for the Factor Effort in all Phases for the Control Group (n=47)*

Effort	Mean	SD
Pre-test	26.957	3.323
Post-test	26.851	3.244
Delayed post-test	27.553	2.955

Table 4.20-2

*Paired t-Test for the Factor Effort in all Phases for the Control Group (n=47)*

Effort	MD	t	Sig.
Pre-test – Post-test	0.106	0.262	0.794
Post-test – Delayed post-test	-0.702	-1.707	0.095
Delayed post-test – Pre-test	-0.596	-1.255	0.216

(g) *Motivational Factor ‘Capability’ for the Control Group*

The development of the motivational factor ‘Capability’ of the control group in the pre-test, post-test and the delayed post-test is displayed in Table 4.21 -1 and 4.21 -2. The mean score of the pre-test was 24.426. Nevertheless, the control group scored slightly lower in the post-test after the intervention with the traditional practice for nine weeks (23.660 versus 24.426, MD=0.766,  $p>0.05$ ). No significant differences were found either between the post-test and the delayed post-test (24.638 versus 25.830, MD=-1.191,  $p>0.05$ ) or between the pre-test and the delayed post-test (24.426 versus 24.383, MD=0.043,  $p>0.05$ ). It is noted that the control group did not make progress in the delayed post-test, and their scores on ‘Capability’ was lower than in the pre-test (24.426 versus 24.383, MD=0.043,  $p>0.05$ ). That is to say, the control group did not gain significant improvement in their motivational factor ‘Capability’ after the intervention with the traditional practice for one semester. The changes in the Capability of the control group are shown in Figure 4.4.

Table 4.21-1

*Mean Scores for the Factor Capability in All Phases for the Control Group (n=47)*

Capability	Mean	SD
Pre-test	24.256	2.998
Post-test	23.660	4.109
Delayed post-test	24.383	3.762

Table 4.21-2

*Paired t-Test for the Factor Capability in All Phases for the Control Group (n=47)*

Capability	MD	<i>t</i>	Sig.
Pre-test – Post-test	0.766	1.392	0.171
Post-test – delayed post-test	-0.723	-1.287	0.205
Delayed post-test – Pre-test	0.043	0.086	0.931

*(h) Overall Changes in 'Motivation' for the Control Group*

Paired t-tests were carried out to compare the students' overall change in motivation of the control students between the pre-test, the post-test, and the delayed post-test in the control group. As shown in Tables 4.22 -1 and 4.22 -2, the control group scored lower in the post-test after the nine-week intervention with the traditional practice (75.149 versus 76.745, MD=1.596,  $p > 0.05$ ). It is noted that a higher growth pattern was found between the post-test and the delayed post-test (75.149 versus 77.766, MD=-2.617,  $p < 0.05$ ). Nevertheless, in comparison to the pre-test, no significant difference was found between the pre-test and the delayed post-test, though the students' motivation for learning German was higher in the delayed post-test (MD=1.021). The mean difference of 1.021 did not reach a statistically significant difference. The control group did not gain significant improvement in their motivation toward learning German after one semester intervention with the traditional practice. The motivational change of the control group is shown in Figure 4.5.

Table 4.22-1

*Mean Scores for the Overall Change in Motivation for all Phases for the Control Groups (n=47)*

Motivation	Mean	SD
Pre-test	76.745	8.998
Post-test	75.149	10.274
Delayed post-test	77.766	9.013

Table 4.22-2

*Paired t-Test for the Overall Change in Motivation for all Phases for the Control Groups (n=47)*

Motivation	MD	<i>t</i>	Sig.
Pre-test – Post-test	1.596	1.267	0.211
Post-test – Delayed post-test	-2.617	-2.149	0.037
Delayed post-test – Pre-test	-1.021	-5.118	0.405

In contrast to the significant motivational improvement in the experimental group ( $p < 0.001$ ), there was no significant difference recorded in the control group in terms of motivational change ( $p > 0.05$ ), as shown in Tables 4.22-1 and 4.22-2. As reviewed in Tables 4.19-1, 4.19-2, 4.20, 4.21-1, 4.21-2, 4.22-1 and 4.22-2, the control group had some regression in the three motivational factors ‘Enjoyment’, ‘Effort’, ‘Capability’, and on the overall motivation in the post-test after the nine-week intervention. Statistically significant differences in ‘Enjoyment’ and in the overall motivation were only found between the post-test and the delayed post-test. However, in comparison with their own performance in the pre-test and the delayed post-test, the students in the control group did not have a significantly different motivational change between the two periods on all of the motivational factors and on the overall motivation as well (Figures 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, and 4.5).

**(i) Summary**

This section has explored the motivational change in each group. The findings indicated that there were significant differences between the pre-test and the delayed post-test for the experimental students, after the intervention with the game-based practice for one semester. However, the students in the control group did not have a significantly different motivational change after the intervention with the traditional grammar teaching practice. In



the following section, a comparison of the motivational change between the two groups will be examined.

### ***4.3.2 Inter-group Comparison of the Motivation between the Experimental Group and the Control Group***

#### ***(a) Comparison of the Motivational Factor ‘Enjoyment’ between the Experimental Group and the Control Group in all Three Phases***

An independent *t*-test was performed to compare the inter-group differences in the motivational factor Enjoyment. According to Table 4.23, the mean score of the pre-test in the experimental group was 24.826 and it was 25.362 in the control group. The mean difference between the two groups was not statistically significant ( $MD=0.536, p>0.05$ ). After the nine-week intervention with the two different grammar teaching practices, no significant difference was found between the two groups in the post-test ( $25.391\pm 3.505$  versus  $24.638\pm 3.863, p>0.05$ ). However, significant difference was found between the two groups in the delayed post-test ( $28.022\pm 3.429$  versus  $25.830\pm 3.199, p<0.05$ ), as shown in Table 4.23 and Figure 4.6.

Table 4.23

*Independent t-Tests for the Motivational Factor Enjoyment in all Phases for both Groups (n=93)*

Three Phases	Enjoyment					
	Experimental Group (n=46)		Control Group (n=47)		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Pre-test	24.826	3.427	25.362	3.510	-0.744	0.459
Post-test	25.391	3.505	24.638	3.846	0.984	0.328
Delayed post-test	28.022	3.429	25.830	3.199	3.189	0.002*

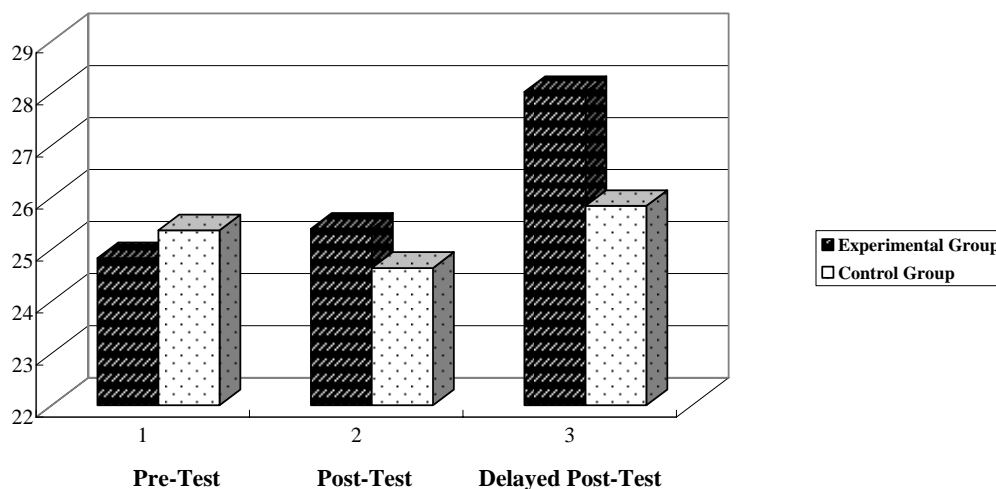


Figure 4.6 The Change of the Motivational Factor Enjoyment in both Groups

**(b) Comparison of the Motivational Factor 'Effort' between the Experimental Group and the Control Group in all Three Phases**

As Table 4.24 shows, there was no significant difference between the two groups in the terms of 'Effort' in the pre-test. The mean scores were 26.457 and 26.957, respectively. The mean difference between the two groups was not statistically significant ( $p>0.05$ ). After the nine-week intervention of the two different approaches, no significant difference was found between the two groups in the post-test ( $26.761\pm 4.089$  versus  $26.851\pm 3.244$ ,  $p>0.05$ ). Moreover, the mean difference between the two groups in the delayed post-test was 1.143: such a mean difference was statistically non-significant ( $28.696\pm 3.429$  versus  $27.553\pm 2.955$ ,  $p>0.05$ ), as shown in Table 4.24 and Figure 4.7.

Table 4.24

*Independent t-Tests for the Motivational Factor Effort in all Phases for both Groups (n=93)*

Three Phases	Effort					
	Experimental Group (n=46)		Control Group (n=47)		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Pre-test	26.457	2.904	26.957	3.323	-0.773	0.441
Post-test	26.761	4.089	26.851	3.244	-0.118	0.906
Delayed post-test	28.696	3.457	27.553	2.955	1.714	0.090

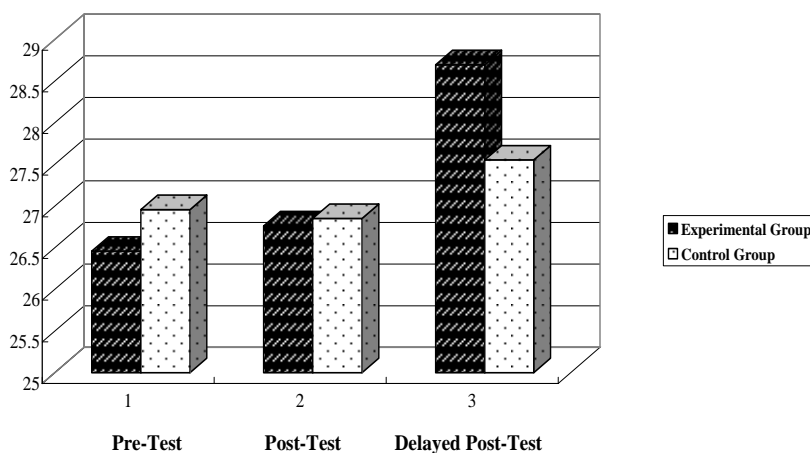


Figure 4.7 The Change of the Motivational Factor Effort in both Groups

**(c) Comparison of the Motivational Factor ‘Capability’ between the Experimental Group and the Control Group in all Three Phases**

An independent *t*-test was conducted to compare differences in the motivational factor ‘Capability’ between the two groups. As Table 4.25 indicates, there was no significant difference between the two groups in the terms of Capability in the pre-test (Mean= 24.457

versus 24.426, respectively). The mean difference between the two groups was not statistically significant ( $p>0.05$ ). After the nine-week intervention with the two different types of practice, no significant difference was found between the two groups in the post-test ( $24.2831\pm3.391$  versus  $23.660\pm4.109$ ,  $p>0.05$ ). However, a statistically significant difference was found in the delayed post-test ( $27.326\pm3.628$  versus  $24.383\pm3.762$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), as shown in Table 4.25 and Figure 4.8, in favor of the experimental groups.

Table 4.25  
*Independent t-Tests for the Motivational Factor Capability in all Phases for both Groups (n=93)*

Three Phases	Capability					
	Experimental Group (n=46)		Control Group (n=47)		t	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Pre-test	24.457	3.557	24.426	2.998	0.045	0.964
Post-test	24.283	3.931	23.660	4.109	0.747	0.457
Delayed post-test	27.326	3.628	24.383	3.762	3.839	0.000*

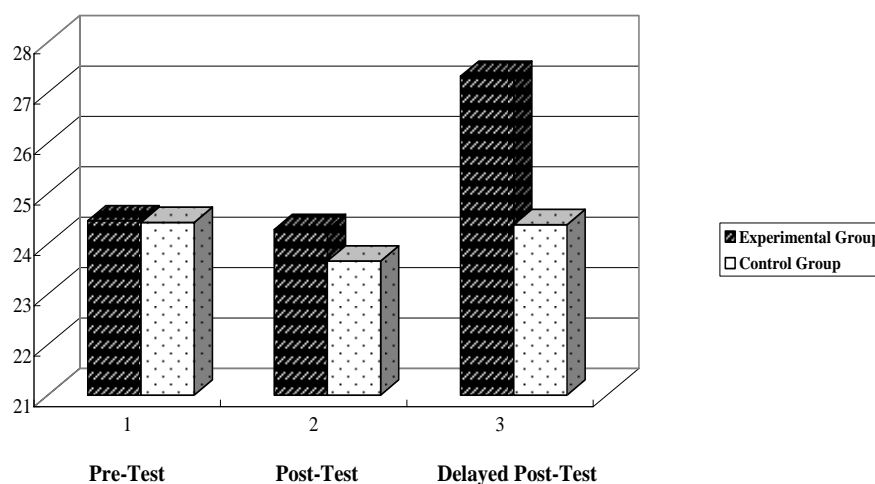


Figure 4.8 The Change of the Motivational Factor Capability in both Groups

(d) *Comparison of the overall Motivation between the Experimental Group and the Control Group in all Three Phases*

As the Independent t-test results in Table 4.26 indicate, the mean score on the overall motivation for the experimental group was 75.739 in the pre-test, while for the control group it was 76.745. This shows no significant difference in the overall motivation between the two groups in the pre-test ( $t=0.546, p>0.05$ ). Likewise, after the intervention with the two different types of grammar practice, no significant difference was found between the two groups in the post-test ( $76.435\pm 10.909$  versus  $75.147\pm 10.274, p>0.05$ ). However, the mean difference between the two groups in the delayed post-test was 6.271. Such a mean difference is statistically significant ( $84.044\pm 9.984$  versus  $77.766\pm 0.103, p<0.05$ ), as shown in Table 4.26 and Figure 4.9, in favor of the experimental group.

(e) *Summary*

To sum up, there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups for all three motivational factors as well as for overall motivation between the pre-test and the post-test (Tables 4.23, 4.24, 4.25 and 4.26; Figures 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, and 4.9). However, there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups in the delayed post-test, in overall motivation, and in two out of three motivational factors, namely 'Enjoyment', 'Capability'. No significant difference was found in the motivational factor 'Effort' in the delayed post-test, since both groups improved and made more effort to study. However, the experimental group scored 1.143 higher on the 'Effort' than the control group did. Nevertheless, the results of the intra-group comparisons of the three motivational factors, and the overall motivation, indicated that the experimental group improved significantly in all three motivational factors, Enjoyment, Effort, and Capability.

Table 4.26

*Independent t-Tests for the Overall Motivation in all Phases for both Groups (n=93)*

Three Phases	Motivation					
	Experimental Group (n=46)		Control Group (n=47)		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Pre-test	75.739	8.744	76.745	8.999	-0.546	0.586
Post-test	76.435	10.909	75.149	10.274	-0.585	0.560
Delayed post-test	84.044	9.984	77.766	9.013	3.184	0.002*

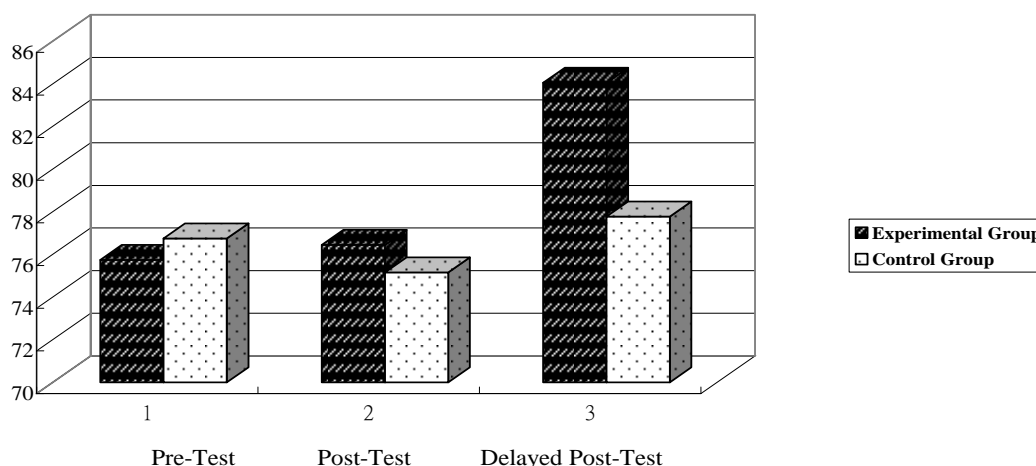


Figure 4.9 Motivational Changes in the Experimental Group and Control Group

### 4.3.3 Discussion of the Results on Students' Motivation

These results relate to the third research question of this study: “Does game-based grammatical practice enhance the students’ learning motivation?” Overall, the results from the questionnaire on motivation showed a statistically significant improvement in the experimental students (Table 4. 26, Figure 4. 9). These results confirmed my research hypothesis on the effects of games on students’ motivation. The experimental students experienced more

enjoyment (Table 4. 23, Figure 4. 6), made higher motivational effort (Table 4. 24, Figure 4. 7), felt more actively involved and more confident in language use (Table 4. 25, Figure 4. 8).

These findings were also consistent with most teachers' intuition and experience (Deesri, 2002; Gardner, 1987; Gaudart, 1999; Hong, 2002; Shie, 2003) and research results obtained by Nemerow (1996) and Jacobs and Jempsey (1993).

Researchers in social psychology and education have recognized the importance of motivation for successful L2 learning (Dörnyei, 2000; Gardner, 1985; Gardner & Clement, 1990; Krashen, 1985; Shie, 2003). Figure 4.2 reveals that the control students not only did not score any improvement in their enjoyment level, but also regressed, while the experimental students scored a statistically significant improvement as a result of the new type of grammatical practice. This confirms my hypothesis, which predicted a positive outcome on the enjoyment level after the use of games. The fact that a statistically significant improvement in motivation occurred in the delayed post-test seems to indicate that such a change cannot be expected in a relatively short period of time, but that it will be the result of protracted persistence over an extended period of time.

The fact that the control students' level of enjoyment actually regressed in the course of the program also confirms my own perception that my German students' level of enjoyment decreased as the program ran its course. Some of my language colleagues have confirmed that this is the case also with their students of German. They subscribe to the perception that it is very hard to maintain their students' enjoyment for the duration of a semester or a year, let alone see an improvement in the students' participation.

Given this situation, the positive outcome by the experimental students is very encouraging and points to a causal relationship between the level of enjoyment and the use of games in the practice phase of learning a foreign language. This result is in accordance with Tremblay's and Gardner's (1995) research finding that achievement is directly influenced by

motivational behavior. This finding is also inline with Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory (1985). According to Deci and Ryan's definition about motivation, intrinsic motivation is based on intrinsic interest in the activity pre se, because that it is enjoyable and satisfying to do (Noels, Clement & Pelletier, 1999, 2000).

The enjoyment aspect of learning a language through games is directly related to motivational factors. Ruben (1999) views games as "an attractive and novel alternative to traditional classroom lectures and other one-way information-dispensing methods" (p. 500). "Fun" and "interest" are the main elements of games and these can improve students' motivation to learn (Desseri, 2002; Macedonia, 2005). Games break the simple monotony of the traditional lecture method and bring the students into a happier mood in class time, as one of my students commented. These factors made my students' learning different and showed them that learning could be enjoyed. They stated that they could learn and would like to learn more through playing games (see chapter 5 for more comments from my students, p. 171-182 and Appendix I, pp. 300-301). Hajdu (2000) and Macedonia (2005) experienced the enjoyment from their students in the learning of second languages through games in the classroom.

In selecting my games, the learning environment that the experimental students were exposed to become more pleasant and relaxing, students' autonomy and familiarity with the target language were enhanced. Gary, Marrone and Boyles (1988) and Gaudart (1999) state that games allow second language learners to practise the target language, participating in the communicative process. Allery (2004) offers similar suggestions, writing that games provide a break from classroom routine, and that learning through games develops a non-threatening classroom atmosphere in which the skills can be enhanced. Moreover, Macedonia (2005) claims that games provide "entertainment. ... Their entertainment aspect is a positive side effect, and advantage over written exercises. Thus language games serve the function of redundant oral repetition of grammar structures (morphological, syntactic) and vocabulary in a playful



way. ... practice proves fun, repetition is not boring and declarative knowledge is converted into procedural knowledge, that is, into spoken language, and stored in procedural memory” (p. 138).

At this point it seems legitimate to establish a causal link between the use of games and better effort for my experimental students, considering that games constituted the only aspect missing in the program delivered to the control students, who did not improve on their motivational effort. I can also make a link between my students’ improvement in their effort and the learning flexibility of games, which allow students to learn according to their own personal style more easily than other types of classroom tasks.

As Oxford (1996), Oxford, Ehrman and Lavine (1991) have suggested, different students learn in different ways and are motivated by different factors; there is a positive relationship between learning style and positive outcomes. Due to their flexibility, games are more variable, versatile and adaptable than other forms of classroom tasks, as suggested by Jones, Mungai and Wong (2002). Allery (2004) also offers a similar suggestion, claiming that [games] provide “versatility throughout the programme, ... , provide a change of pace or variety to the teaching experience or can allow the facilitator to conclude the programme with a memorable summary of the learning” (p. 504). When constructed with different learning styles in mind, games can often accelerate the learning process (Jones, Mungai & Wong, 2002). In the focus group interviews, some students commented that learning through diverse language games catered to their learning style and that helped them to remain on task in class (see chapter 5, pp. 180-181).

I can also see a link between my students improved level of motivation and the engaging nature of games (Harvey & Bright, 1985). Language games encourage active participation in the learning process (Allery, 2004; Anderson, 1998; Thatcher, 1990).

Silberman (1996) emphasized the need for students to be given a more active role in the learning

process because only hearing something, or seeing something, is not enough to learn it. During a game, the students had active control of the learning process and received prompt feedback from their peers. Silberman (1996) states that “I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand”. Numerous comments by my students about the perceived benefits from games – such as their better exposure to and use of lexis and sentence structures, as well as their enhanced sense of self-confidence – support the statistical improvement of their motivation (see chapter 5 for direct quotations from students’ focus group interview, pp. 171-182 and Appendix I, pp. 300-301).

The positive results indicating a better level of overall motivation among the experimental students, after they had been exposed to a partly new practice approach where games were a substantial component, are very encouraging. As indicated earlier, the failure of the experimental group to achieve a statistically significant improvement in grammatical accuracy after treatment, disappointing as it is, is also understandable under the specific circumstances of this experiment.

The small improvement, however, that was achieved in accuracy is to be noted, when it is considered alongside the statistically significant improvement in student motivation. Even if the relatively small improvement in accuracy had been the only positive result of this experiment, it would have made the new type of practice worth introducing. It seems fairly clear that a change in motivation normally precedes a change in a related study field, and that a change in accuracy takes time and persistence. Looking at this experiment, the fact that a new type of practice over a period of a few months has produced improvement in both motivation level and grammatical accuracy constitutes a very positive result. I would expect, with good reason that if I continued in the use of games, the statistically significant improvement in my students’ motivation would translate into a similarly statistically significant improvement in accuracy. The qualitative data cited in this chapter and expanded on in chapter 5, point to this likely direction.

## **4.4 Results on Students' Perception of the Classroom Atmosphere**

### **(Research Question 4 and Hypothesis 4)**

The question of whether there were any differences in the classroom atmosphere between the experimental and the control groups was also one of the main concerns of this study (Research Question 4 and Hypothesis 4). The Questionnaire on Classroom Atmosphere was administered three times, during the pre-test phase, during the post-test phase, and during the delayed post-test phase. Students' perceptions of atmosphere in the German grammar classes were measured by four factors: (1) peer support, (2) teacher support, (3) satisfaction, and (4) class cohesion. The first comparison was on the intra-group classroom atmosphere in the experimental group and in the control group as well.

#### ***4.4.1 Intra-group Comparison of the Students' Perception of the Classroom Atmosphere in the Experimental Group and in the Control Group***

##### ***(a) Results of Within Group Peer Support in the Experimental Group***

A paired t-test was conducted to compare the students' perceptions of peer supports between the pre-test, the post-test, and the delayed post-test. According to the results shown in Tables 4.27-1, 4.27 -1 and Figure 4.10, 'Peer Support' was not significantly different between the pre-test and post-test in the experimental group (38.413 versus 39.304, MD=-0.891,  $p>0.05$ ). However, the results indicate a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and the delayed post-test (38.413 versus 44.630, MD=-6.217,  $p<0.001$ ). The findings indicated that the students in the experimental recorded a higher level of peer support after a one-semester intervention of the game-based practice.

Table 4.27-1  
*Mean Scores for Peer Support in all Phases for the Experimental Group (n=46)*

Peer Support	Mean	SD
Pre-test	38.413	5.414
Post-test	39.304	4.201
Delayed post-test	44.630	4.887

Table 4.27-2  
*Paired t-Test for Peer Support in all Phases for the Experimental Group (n=46)*

Peer Support	MD	t	Sig.
Pre-test – Post-test	-0.891	-1.635	0.109
Post-test – Delayed post-test	-5.326	-5.255	0.000*
Delayed post-test – Pre-test	-6.217	-5.930	0.000*

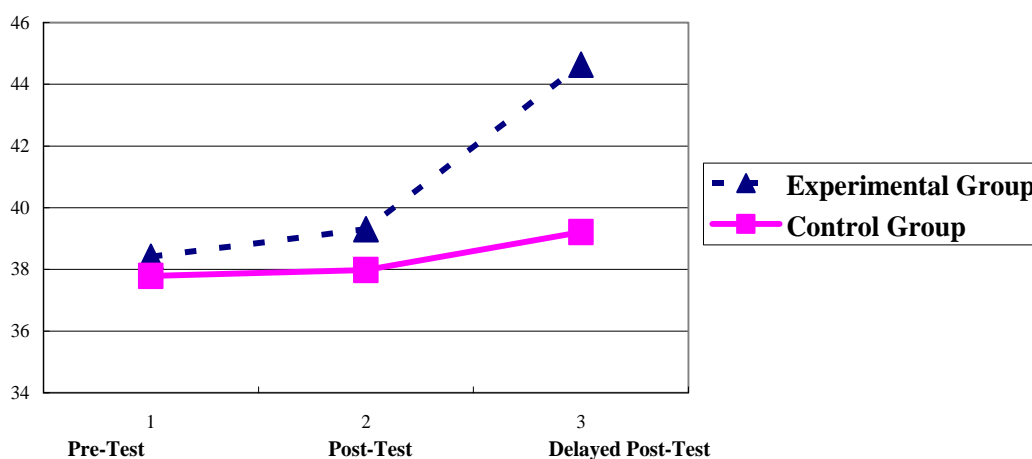


Figure 4.10 The Development of Peer Support in both Groups

**(b) Results of Within Group on ‘Teacher Support’ in the Experimental Group**

As shown in Tables 4.28-1, 4.28 -2 and Figure 4.11, there was no significant differences on ‘Teacher Support’ between the pre-test and the post-test (32.326 versus 32.304, MD=0.002,  $p>0.05$ ). However, the results of the statistical analysis show a significant difference on teacher support between the pre-test and the delayed post-test (32.304 versus 37.196, MD=-3.107,  $p<0.05$ ) as well as between the post-test and the delayed post-test (32.304 versus 37.196, MD=-3.796,  $p<0.05$ ). The results revealed that the students perceived a significantly higher level of teacher support after one-semester intervention with the game-based practice.

Table 4.28-1

*Mean Scores of Teacher Support in all Phases for the Experimental Group (n=46)*

Teacher Support	Mean	SD
Pre-test	32.326	4.104
Post-test	32.304	3.723
Delayed post-test	37.196	4.339

Table 4.28-2

*Paired t-test of Teacher Support in all Phases for the Experimental Group (n=46)*

Teacher Support	MD	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Pre-test – Post-test	0.022	-0.674	0.504
Post-test – Delayed post-test	-4.891	-3.107	0.003*
Delayed post-test – Pre-test	-4.869	-3.796	0.000*

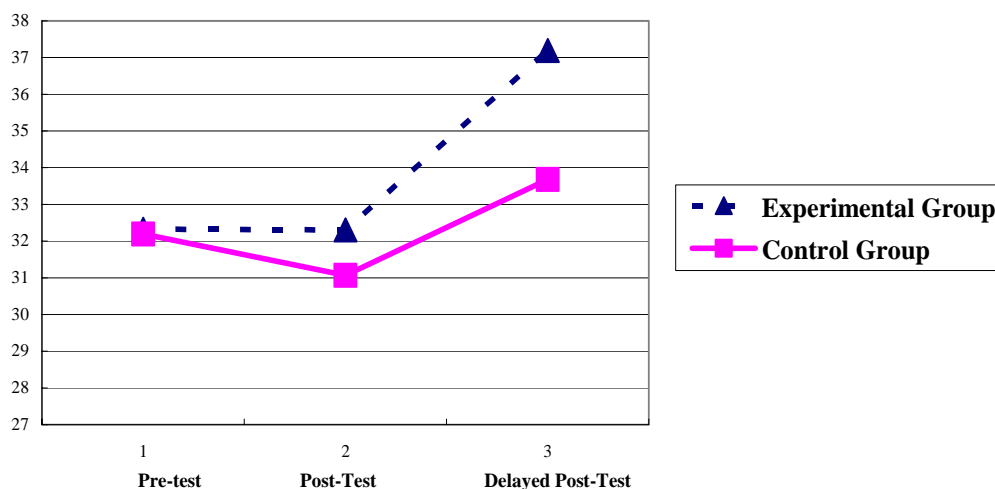


Figure 4.11 The Change of Teacher Support in both Groups

(c) ***Results of Within Group Students' Perception of 'Satisfaction' in the Experimental Group***

The experimental students' perception of satisfaction is displayed in Tables 4.29 -1, 4.29 - 2 and Figure 4.12. The experimental group scored almost similarly in the pre-test and the post-test (31.544 versus 31.391, MD= -0.174); no significant difference between these two periods was found ( $p>0.05$ ). An increase in 'Satisfaction' was, however, recorded between the post-test and the delayed post-test (31.391 versus 34.565, MD=3.304, MD=-3.304,  $p<0.001$ ), as well as between the pre-test and the delayed post-test (31.544 versus 34.565, MD=-4.952,  $p<0.001$ ). The results reveal that the students in the experimental group had a statistically significant higher level of satisfaction after one-semester intervention with the game-based practice.

Table 4.29-1

*Mean Scores for Satisfaction in all Three Phases for the Experimental Group (n=46)*

Satisfaction	Mean	SD
Pre-test	31.544	3.188
Post-test	31.391	3.574
Delayed post-test	34.565	3.686

Table 4.29-2

*Paired t-Test for Satisfaction in all Three Phases for the Experimental Group (n=46)*

Satisfaction	MD	t	Sig.
Pre-test – Post-test	-0.174	-0.363	0.118
Post-test – Delayed post-test	-3.304	-5.937	0.000*
Delayed post-test – Pre-test	-4.952	-4.952	0.000*

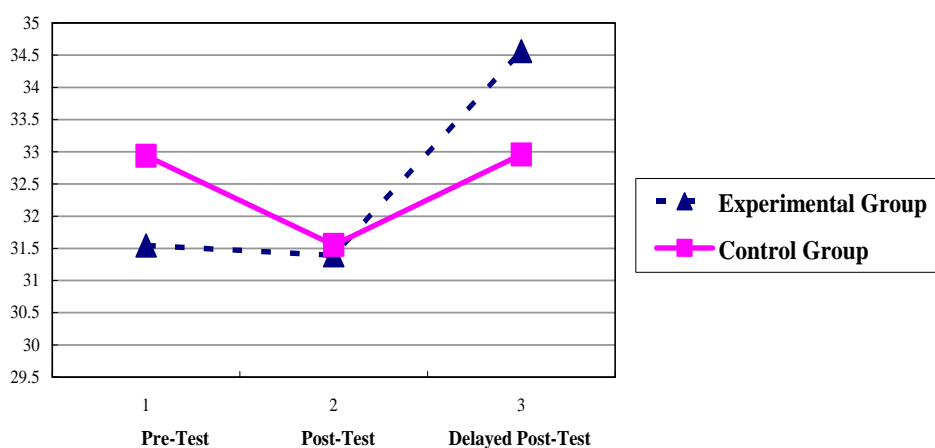


Figure 4.12 The Change of Satisfaction in both Groups

*(d) Results of Within Group ‘Class Cohesion’ in the Experimental Group*

The development of the experimental students’ perception of ‘Class Cohesion’ is displayed in Table 4.30 -1, 4.30 -2 and Figure 4.13. The experimental group scored almost similarly in the pre-test and the post-test (25.435 versus 25.413, MD=-0.696); no significant difference between these two periods was found ( $p>0.05$ ). The growth patterns, however, were found to be different between the post-test and the delayed post-test (25.413 versus 29.152, MD= -7.609,  $p<0.001$ ), as well as between the pre-test and the delayed post-test (25.435 versus 29.152, MD=-8.304,  $p<0.001$ ). The results revealed the students in the experimental group had significantly higher perception of class cohesion after one semester intervention with the game-based practice.

Table 4.30-1

*Mean Scores for Class Cohesion in all Three Phases for the Experimental Group (n=46)*

Class Cohesion	Mean	SD
Pre-test	25.435	3.124
Post-test	25.413	2.372
Delayed post-test	29.152	3.406

Table 4.30-2

*Paired t-Test for Class Cohesion in all Three Phases for the Experimental Group (n=46)*

Class Cohesion	MD	<i>t</i>	Sig.
Pre-test	-0.696	-0.045	0.964
Post-test – Delayed post-test	-7.609	-8.649	0.000*
Delayed post-test – Pre-test	-8.304	-6.387	0.000*



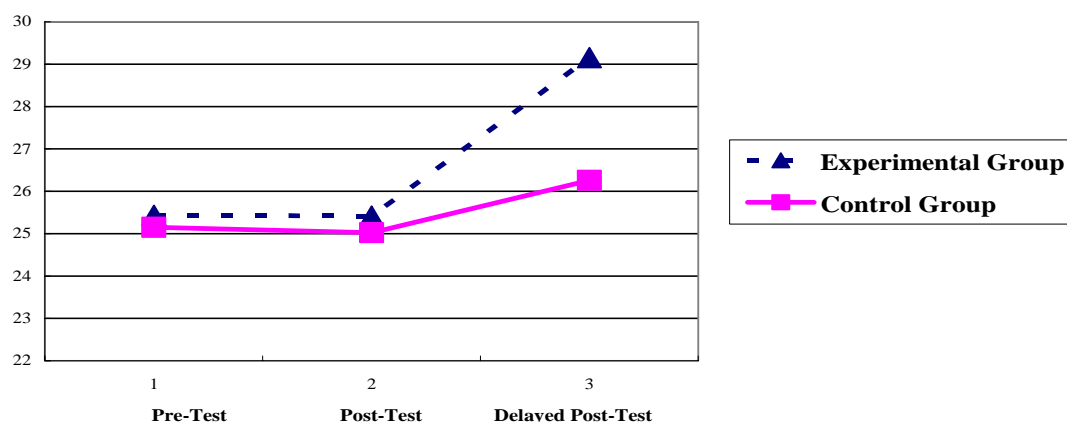


Figure 4.13 The Change of Class Cohesion in both Groups

(e) *Overall Change in Classroom Atmosphere for the Experimental Group*

The scores for classroom atmosphere were derived from the aggregated scores of four factors: peer support, teacher support, satisfaction, and class cohesion. As shown in Tables 4.31 -1 and 4.31 -2, the experimental group scored slightly higher in the post-test than in the pre-test (39.304 versus 38.413). The mean difference score of 0.891, however, indicates that there was no statistically significant difference ( $p > 0.05$ ). But when the post-test and the delayed post-test were compared, a statistically significant difference was found (39.304 versus 44.630,  $MD = -5.326$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). A significant difference was also found between the pre-test and the delayed post-test (38.413 versus 44.630,  $MD = -6.217$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). These results reveal that the experimental students perceived a more positive classroom atmosphere in their German grammar classes at the delayed post-test time (Figure 4.14).

Table 4.31-1  
*Mean Scores for Classroom Atmosphere in all Phases for the Experimental Group (n=46)*

Classroom Atmosphere	Mean	SD
Pre-test	127.717	13.114
Post-test	128.413	10.251
Delayed post-test	145.544	14.672

Table 4.31-2  
*Paired t-Test for Classroom Atmosphere in All Phases for the Experimental Group (n=46)*

Classroom Atmosphere	MD	t	Sig.
Pre-test – Post-test	-0.891	-1.635	0.109
Post-test – Delayed post-test	-5.326	-5.255	0.000*
Delayed post-test – Pre-test	-6.217	-5.930	0.000*

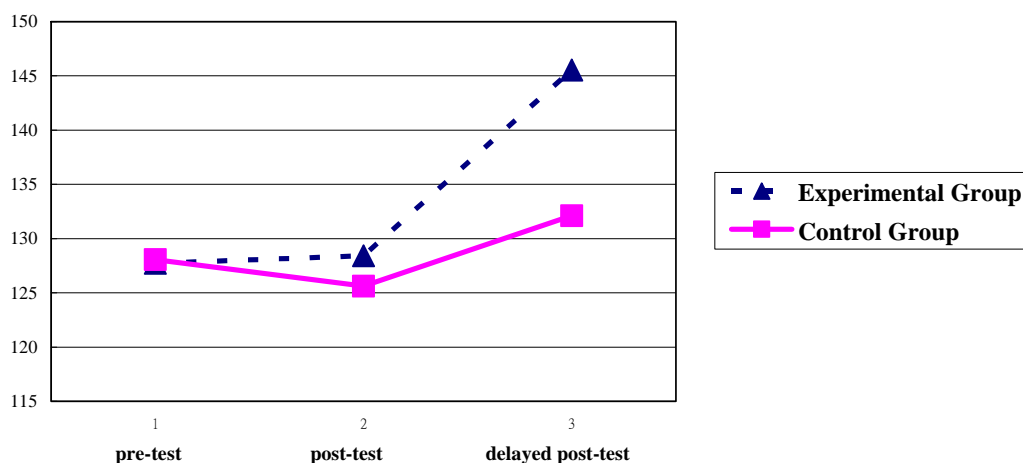


Figure 4.14 The Change of Classroom Atmosphere in both Groups

*(f) Results of Within-Group ‘Peer Support’ for the Control Group*

Tables 4.32 -1, 4.32 -2 and Figure 4.10 display the development of students’ perception of peer support in the control group. The control group scored almost similarly in the pre-test and post-test (37.787 versus 37.979, MD=-0.192); no significant difference between these two periods was found ( $p>0.05$ ). The growth patterns, however, were found to be different between the post-test and the delayed post-test (37.979 versus 39.2143, MD=1.234,  $p<0.05$ ). It is also noted that the control students’ perception of peer support increased between the pre-test and the delayed post-test (37.787 versus 39.213, MD=-1.426,  $p>0.05$ ), although no statistically significant difference was found. The results reveal that the students in the control group gave no significantly higher reports of peer support after one semester with intervention of the traditional type of practice (Figure 4.10).

Table 4.32-1

*Mean Scores of Peer Support in all Phases for the Control Group (n=47)*

Peer Support	Mean	SD
Pre-test	37.787	4.491
Post-test	37.979	4.789
Delayed post-test	39.213	4.912

Table 4.32-2

*Paired T-Test of Peer Support in all Phases for the Control Group (n=47)*

Peer Support	MD	<i>t</i>	Sig.
Pre-test – Post-test	-0.192	-0.253	0.802
Post-test – Delayed post-test	-1.234	-2.581	0.013*
Delayed post-test – Pre-test	-1.426	-1.935	0.059

**(g) Results of Within Group Teacher Support in the Control Group**

Tables 4.33 -1, 4.33 -2 and Figure 4.11 display the development of the control students' perception of teacher support. The mean score on teacher support in the pre-test was 32.192. However, the control group scored lower in the post-test (31.064 versus 32.192), and a statistically significant difference was found between these two periods ( $p < 0.05$ ). It is also noted, however, that the control students' perception of teacher support increased between the pre-test and the delayed post-test, to a statistically significant difference (33.681 versus 31.064,  $p < 0.001$ ). The results revealed that the students in the control group perceived higher teacher support after one-semester intervention of traditional practice.

Table 4.33-1

*Mean Scores for Teacher Support in all Phases for the Control Group (n=47)*

Teacher Support	Mean	SD
Pre-test	32.192	3.327
Post-test	31.064	4.316
Delayed post-test	33.681	3.951

Table 4.33-2

*Paired t-Test for Teacher Support in all Phases for the Control Group (n=47)*

Teacher Support	MD	<i>t</i>	Sig.
Pre-test – Post-test	1.128	2.104	0.041*
Post-test – Delayed post-test	-2.617	-4.332	0.000*
Delayed post-test – Pre-test	-1.489	- 2.891	0.006*

**(g) Results of Within-Group Satisfaction in the Control Group**

According to the data shown in Tables 4.34 -1, 4.34 -2 and Figure 4.12, there was a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test (32.936 versus 31.553, MD=1.383,  $p<0.05$ ). The control group scored a significantly lower level of satisfaction after nine-week intervention with the traditional type of practice. It is also noted that a growth pattern was found between the post-test and the delayed post-test (31.553 versus 32.957, MD=-1.404,  $p<0.05$ ). Nevertheless, in comparison to the pre-test, no statistically significant difference was found; the control students scored almost similarly in the delayed post-test (32.936 versus 32.957, MD=-0.021,  $p>0.05$ ). The results revealed that the control group appeared to be slightly less satisfied with their German grammar classes after one-semester intervention with the traditional type of practice.

Table 4.34-1

*Mean Scores for Satisfaction in all Phases for the Control Group (n=47)*

Satisfaction	Mean	SD
Pre-test	32.936	3.953
Post-test	31.553	3.308
Delayed post-test	32.957	3.303

Table 4.34-2

*Paired t-Test for Satisfaction in all Phases for the Control Group (n=47)*

Satisfaction	MD	<i>t</i>	Sig.
Pre-test – Post-test	1.383	2.785	0.008*
Post-test – Delayed post-test	-1.404	-2.615	0.012*
Delayed post-test – Pre-test	-0.021	-0.038	0.970

**(h) Results of Within Group on Class Cohesion in the Control Group**

The change in the students' perception of class cohesion in the control group is displayed in Tables 4.35 -1, 4.35 -2 and Figure 4.13. The control group scored similarly in the pre-test and post-test with no difference (25.021 versus 25.149, MD=0.128,  $p>0.05$ ). A significant growth, however, was found between the post-test and the delayed post-test (25.021 versus 26.255, MD=1.234,  $p<0.05$ ). Nevertheless no statistically significant difference between the pre-test and the delayed post-test was found ( $p>0.05$ ), though the scores were higher than that of the pre-test (26.255 versus 25.149). The results reveal the control group did not show significantly higher feelings of class cohesion or belonging after the intervention with the traditional approach over one semester.

Table 3.35-1

*Mean Scores for Class Cohesion in all Phases for the Control Group (n=47)*

Class Cohesion	Mean	SD
Pre-test	25.149	2.859
Post-test	25.021	3.220
Delayed post-test	26.255	3.287

Table 3.35-2

*Paired t-Test for Class Cohesion in all Phases for the Control Group (n=47)*

Class Cohesion	MD	<i>t</i>	Sig.
Pre-test – Post-test	0.128	0.226	0.822
Post-test – Delayed post-test	-1.234	-2.860	0.006*
Delayed post-test – Pre-test	-1.106	-1.938	0.059

**(i) Overall Change in Classroom Atmosphere for the Control Group**

The scores on classroom atmosphere were composed of four factors: peer support, teacher support, satisfaction, and class cohesion. As shown in Table 4.36 -1, 4.36 - 2, and Figure 4.14, the control group scored lower in the post-test than in the pre-test (128.064 versus 125.617). The mean difference of 2.477 was not statistically different ( $p>0.05$ ). However, when the post-test and the delayed post-test were compared, a significant difference was found (125.617 versus 132.106,  $p<0.001$ ). The pattern was also found to be significantly different between the pre-test and the delayed post-test (128.064 versus 132.106, MD=4.403,  $p<0.05$ ). The results revealed that the control students perceived a significant improvement in class atmosphere.

Table 4.36-1

*Mean Scores for the Overall Change in Classroom Atmosphere for all Phases for the Control Group (n=47)*

Classroom Atmosphere	MD	SD
Pre-test	128.064	1.350
Post-test	125.617	-4.468
Delayed post-test	132.106	-2.311

Table 4.36-2

*Paired t-Test for the Overall Change in Classroom Atmosphere for all Phases for the Control Group (n=47)*

Classroom Atmosphere	MD	<i>t</i>	Sig.
Pre-test – Post-test	2.447	1.350	0.184
Post-test – Delayed post-test	-6.489	-4.468	0.000*
Delayed post-test – Pre-test	-4.043	-2.311	0.025*

#### 4.4.2 Intra-group Comparison of the students' perception of the classroom atmosphere in the Experimental Group and in the Control Group

##### (a) Comparison of Peer Support Between the Experimental Group and the Control Group in All Three Phases

A *t*-test was used to analyze the students' perception of peer support between the experimental group and the control group in the pre-test, the post-test, and delayed post-test. Table 4.37 shows each group's pre-test, post-test, and the delayed post-test mean scores, standard deviation, *t*-value and *p*-value. There was no significant difference in peer support between the two groups in the pre-test ( $38.417 \pm 5.414$  versus  $37.787 \pm 4.491$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). After the intervention with the two different grammar types of grammatical practice for nine weeks, no significant difference was also found between the two groups in the post-test ( $39.304 \pm 4.210$  versus  $37.979 \pm 4.789$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). However, the results revealed that a statistically significant difference in peer support was found between the experimental group and the control group in the delayed post-test ( $44.630 \pm 4.887$  versus  $39.213 \pm 4.912$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Students in the experimental group, who had experienced the game-based practice, perceived significantly higher levels of peer support from their classmates in grammar classes than did the students in the control group.

Table 4.37

*Independent t-Test for Peer Support in all Phases for both Groups (n=93)*

Three Phases	Peer Support				<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	Experimental Group (n=46)		Control Group (n=47)			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Pre-test	38.413	5.414	37.787	4.491	0.607	0.545
Post-test	39.304	4.210	37.979	4.789	1.417	0.160
Delayed post-test	44.630	4.887	39.213	4.912	5.331	0.000*



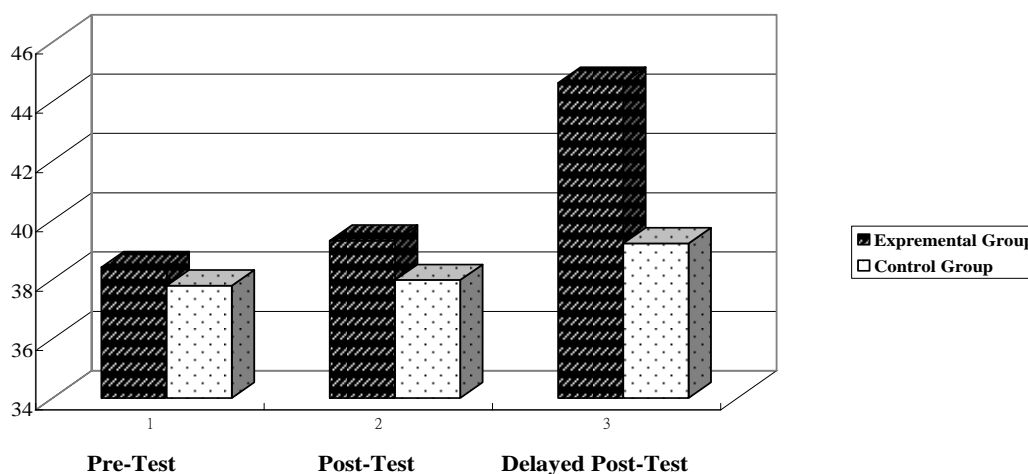


Figure 4.15 The Comparison of Peer Support between Two Groups

(b) ***Comparison of Teacher Support Between the Experimental Group and the Control Group in all Phases***

A *t*-test was employed to examine the data in relation to teacher support to determine the differences between the experimental group and the control group. The results are shown in Table 4.38 and Figure 4.16. As displayed in Table 4.38, teacher support was not significantly different in the pre-test between groups ( $p > 0.05$ ). The results revealed that students in both groups had similar perception of support from their teacher during the period prior to the intervention. After the intervention had continued for nine weeks, there was still no difference between the two groups in the post-test. However, when comparing these groups in the delayed post-test, there was a statistically significant difference between the experimental group and the control group in teacher support ( $37.196 \pm 4.339$  versus  $33.681 \pm 3.951$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The results indicate that the students in the experimental group experienced a significantly higher level of support during interaction with their teacher than the students in the control group.

Table 4.38

*Independent t-Test for Teacher Support in all Phases for both Groups (n=93)*

Three Phases	Teacher Support				<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	Experimental Group (n=46)		Control Group (n=47)			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Pre-test	32.326	4.104	32.192	3.327	0.174	0.862
Post-test	32.304	3.723	31.064	4.316	1.483	0.142
Delayed post-test	37.196	4.339	33.681	3.951	4.086	0.000*

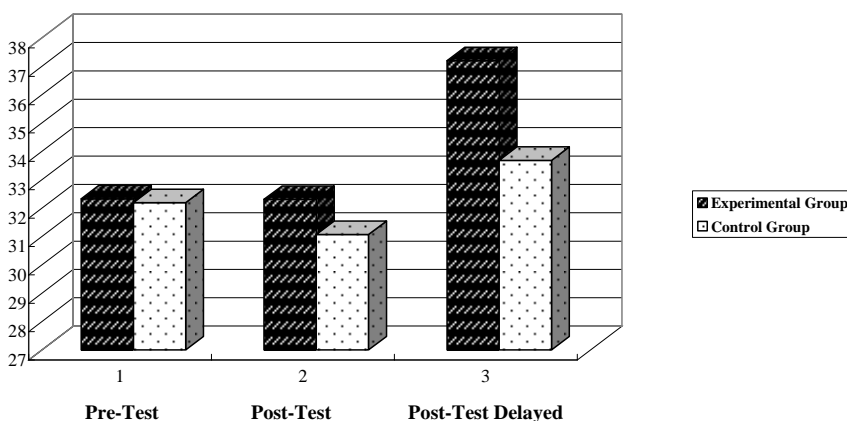


Figure 4.16 The Comparison of Teacher Support between Two Groups

**(c) Comparison of Satisfaction Between the Experimental Group and the Control Group in all Three Phases**

A *t*-test was conducted to examine the satisfaction level between the experimental group and the control group. As shown in Table 4.39, there was no significant difference between the two groups of students in terms of satisfaction in the pre-test, though the experimental students indicated a slightly lower level of satisfaction (31.544 versus 32.936,  $p>0.05$ ). Both groups of students had a similar indication after nine-week intervention with the

two different type of practice (31.391 versus 31.553,  $p>0.05$ ). Nevertheless, when comparing these groups in the delayed post-test, the mean score of the experimental group was 34.565 and 32.957 for the control group. A mean difference of 1.608 is statistically significant ( $p<0.05$ ), as shown in Table 4.39 and Figure 4.17. In other words, after the intervention, the results revealed significantly more satisfaction among the experimental group than in the control group.

Table 4.39  
*Independent t-Test for Satisfaction in all Three Phases for both Groups (n=93)*

Three Phases	Satisfaction				<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	Experimental Group (n=46)		Control Group (n=47)			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Pre-test	31.544	3.188	32.936	3.953	-1.868	0.065
Post-test	31.391	3.574	31.553	3.309	-0.227	0.821
Delayed post-test	34.565	3.686	32.957	3.303	2.216	0.029*

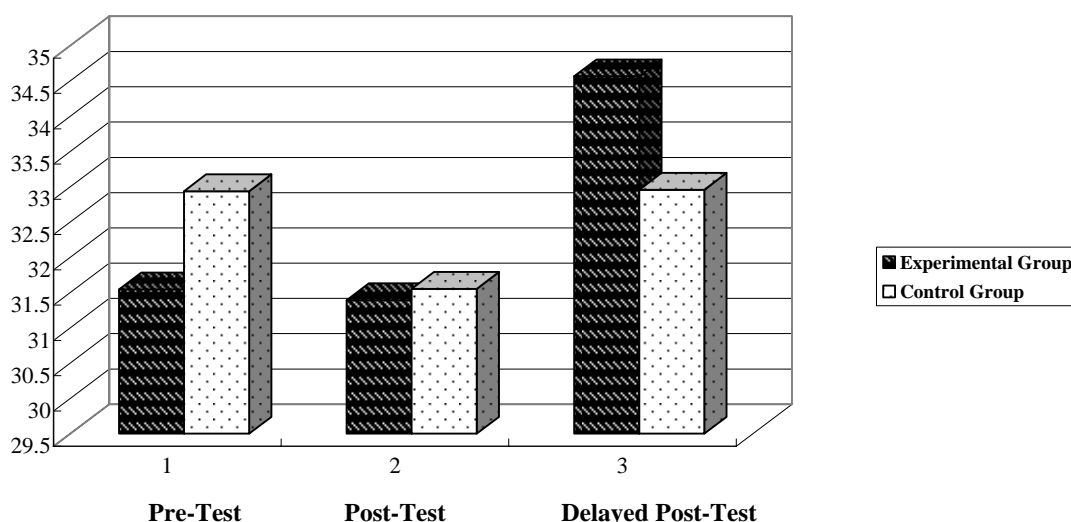


Figure 4.17 The Comparison of Satisfaction between Two Groups

(d) *Comparison of Class Cohesion Between the Experimental Group and the Control Group in all Three Phases*

As Table 4.40 indicates, there was no significant difference about class cohesion between the two groups of students in the pre-test ( $p=0.646$ ). The score of the pre-test on class cohesion of the experimental group was 25.435, while for the control group it was 25.149. There was also no significant difference between the two groups in the post-test ( $25.413 \pm 2.372$  versus  $25.021 \pm 3.220$ ,  $p=0.507$ ). But in the delayed post-test the mean score of the experimental group was 29.152, while for the control group it was 26.255. The mean difference between the two groups was 2.897. Such a mean difference is statistically significant (29.152 versus 26.255,  $p < 0.001$ ), as shown in Table 4.40 and Figure 4.18. At this point the students in the experimental group showed significantly greater levels of class cohesion than the students in the control group.

Once again, this shows a delayed change in student perception of another learning aspect, pointing to the interpretation that it is not realistic to expect the same changes to occur within a short time as occurred after the longer time involved in the delayed post test.

Table 4.40

*Independent t-Test for Class Cohesion in all Phases for both Groups (n=93)*

Three Phases	Class Cohesion					
	Experimental Group (n=46)		Control Group (n=47)		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Pre-test	25.435	3.124	25.149	2.859	0.460	0.646
Post-test	25.413	2.372	25.021	3.220	0.667	0.507
Delayed post-test	29.152	3.406	26.255	3.287	4.174	0.000*

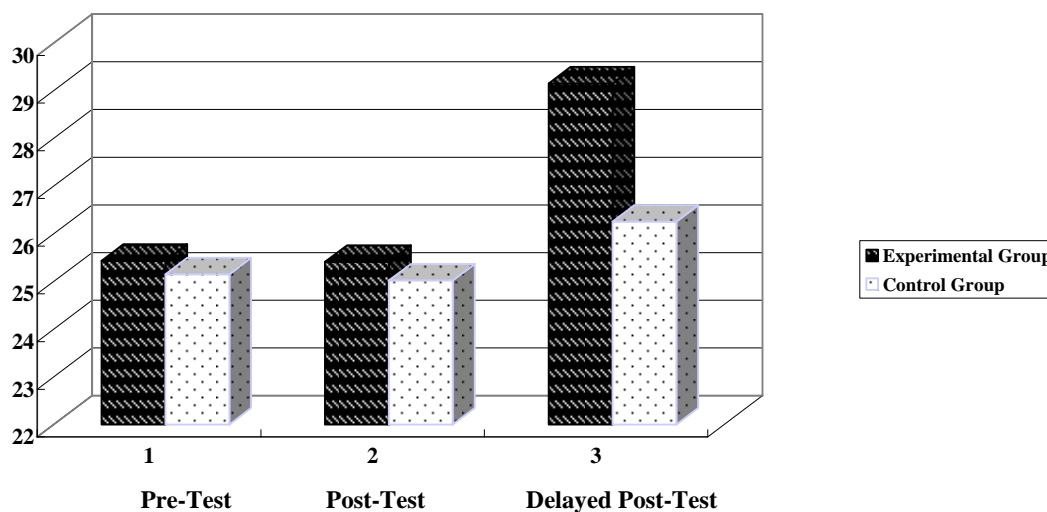


Figure 4.18 The Comparison of Class Cohesion between Two Groups

(e) *Comparison of Classroom Atmosphere Between the Experimental Group and the Control Group in all Three Phases*

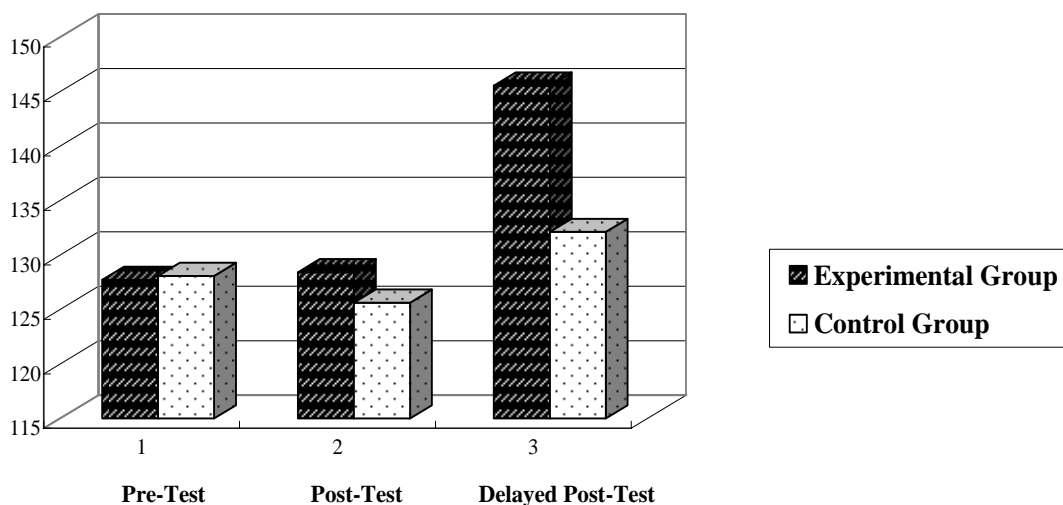
A *t*-test was conducted on perceived atmosphere in the German grammar-learning environment in order to compare differences between the experimental group and the control group. Classroom atmosphere was assessed through the four above discussed aspects: peer support, teacher support, satisfaction, and class cohesion. As shown in Table 4.41, perceived classroom atmosphere was not significantly different between the two groups in the pre-test. The results revealed that students in both groups had similar perceptions of classroom atmosphere (127.717 versus 128.064,  $p > 0.05$ ). There was also no significant difference found in the post-test (128.413 versus 125.617,  $p > 0.05$ ). However, there was a strong and statistically significant difference between the experimental group and the control group in the delayed post-test ( $145.543 \pm 14.672$  versus  $132.106 \pm 11.571$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The results indicated that the students in the experimental group expressed stronger levels of class cohesion and belonging than the students in the control group. They became more comfortable to be part of

a group by participating in learning activities, working together in groups, helping and supporting each other.

Table 4.41

*Independent t-Test for Classroom Atmosphere in all Phases for both Groups (n=93)*

Three Phases	Classroom Atmosphere					
	Experimental Group (n=46)		Control Group (n=47)		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Pre-test	127.717	13.114	128.064	11.119	-0.138	0.891
Post-test	128.413	10.251	125.617	12.543	1.176	0.243
Delayed post-test	145.543	14.672	132.106	11.571	4.910	0.000*



*Figure 4.19* The Comparison of Classroom Atmosphere between Two Groups

The fourth hypothesis in this study stated that students of the experimental group would record an improvement in the language class atmosphere as a result of the use of language games, while the control students would not. The results of the statistical analysis reported that the experimental students had higher score on the all four factors, namely ‘Peer Support’,

'Teacher Support', 'Satisfaction', and 'Class Cohesion' as well as on overall classroom atmosphere over the control group. Thus, my fourth hypothesis was confirmed.

#### ***4.4.3 Discussion on the Results on Students' Perceptions of Classroom Atmosphere***

These results relate to the fourth research question of this study: "Does game-based grammatical practice create a more positive classroom atmosphere during language lessons?" Overall, the results from the questionnaire on classroom atmosphere showed a statistically significant improvement in the experimental students' perceptions (Table 4.41, Figure 4.19): they experienced a significantly higher level of support during interaction with their teacher (Table 4.38, Figure 4.16) and registered a significantly greater level of satisfaction with their participation in classes (Table 4.39, Figure 4.17). These students also experienced stronger levels of cohesion and belonging (Table 4.40, Figure 4.18) and became more comfortable by working together in groups, helping and supporting each other more and registered a significantly greater level of peer support than the control students did (Table 4.37, Figure 4.15).

Such outcome can be explained through Dörnyei and Csizér's (1998) ten ways for ESL/EFL teachers to motivate their learners. The ten ways of motivating L2 students proposed by Dörnyei and Csizér (1998) included (1) setting an example through the teachers' own behavior, (2) creating a pleasant, relaxing atmosphere in the classroom, (3) presenting the tasks properly, (4) developing a good relationship with the learners, (5) increasing the learners' linguistic self-confidence, (6) making the language classes interesting, (7) promoting learner autonomy, (8) personalizing the learning process, (9) increasing the learners' goal-orientatedness, and (10) familiarizing learners with the target language culture. The use of language games in the experimental group seemed to echo most of the above-mentioned principles.

Classroom atmosphere was rank-ordered second among the motivational factors in a

Hungarian survey of teachers of English as a second language (Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998).

Other research studies indicate that the most crucial factors responsible for a positive classroom atmosphere are the teacher's rapport with the students and the students' relationship with each other (Dörnyei, 2001; Shie, 2003).

The personal characteristics of teachers (such as commitment, warmth, empathy, trustworthiness, competence) influence the rapport between teachers and students and are largely responsible for the facilitating the learning process. As Shie (2003) points out "methodological motivation" (p.110) generated by the teacher's pleasant personality and teaching enthusiasm can raise students' motivation levels. In this study, both groups of students registered a significantly higher level of teacher support (Tables 4.28-1 and 4.28-2, Tables 4.33-1 and 4.33-2) and many commented that their teacher's support contributed to their progress and helped to improve their motivation in learning German. The experimental students' comments on this emerged also in their comments during focus group interviews (see 5.1, pp. 171-173, 5.4, pp. 190-193 and Appendix I, p. 300), when they said that they enjoyed the German class and appreciated their teacher's attention, understanding, willingness, assistance, empathy, patience and encouragement.

In addition to the supportive personality of their teacher, most students said that they appreciated her because she provided language games in her classes. They said that games gave them many opportunities to practise the learned grammatical rules in a communicative way with classmates or helped them to reinforce the use German with peers in a less threatening, sometimes cooperative small group (see Chapter 5 for details of these comments, pp. 174-178 and Appendix I, pp. 300-301). It seems legitimate to conclude that the use of language games by the experimental group was the key reason why the experimental students recorded a significantly higher level of support during interaction with their teacher than did the control group.



The results in Tables 4.33-1 and 4.33-2 showed that the control students also recorded a significantly higher level of teacher support after one-semester's intervention with the traditional grammar practice. This result revealed that the control students had positive responses toward their grammar teacher. During their focus group interviews their comments focused on their impressions of their grammar teacher and on her teaching approach. They felt that their teacher's patience and efforts contributed to maintaining their motivation in learning German. They appreciated her way of presenting all the grammatical features in handouts, of explaining the grammatical rules clearly and systematically, and of sharing useful learning strategies. They said that this process helped them to understand the grammatical rules and to improve their learning of grammar. Moreover, many control students felt that their teacher interacted with them in a friendly, very welcoming and supportive manner. The control students also expressed their disappointment that their teacher did not provide them with interesting communicative activities, as she was doing with the experimental students. As a result, the control students perceived a higher level of teacher supports.

In addition to the relationship between the teacher and the students, the experimental students registered a significantly greater level of peer support than the control students did (Table 4.37, Figure 4.15). The reason for this improvement was attributed by the students to the student-student interaction during games.

The cooperative nature of most language games naturally encourages student-student interaction. Games are perceived by teachers as excellent tasks for encouraging shy students, since they require the participation of all the member of a team, group or pair (Hajdu, 2000; Lin, 2001; Rinvoluceri, 1995; Shie, 2003). As Lacey and Walker (1991) concluded in their research, students appear to participate in the learning process more and generate creative ideas more frequently when they work together with their peers towards a common goal. Vygotsky (1997) also stated that games, in providing interaction, create a zone of proximal development (ZPD),

which provides rich opportunities for learning. Hadju (2000) concluded in her research that group work in games can foster increasing self-regulation in the students' learning and an increasing appreciation of German.

In this study, language games have helped to build up a more relaxed learning environment, which allowed students to ask questions to their group members. As one student explained in the focus group interview: ("S" stands for "student" and the page number refers to the transcription folder of my students' focus group comments)

If I have any problems, my group members would teach me or they would correct my mistakes immediately. Beside, through games, we have more opportunities to get to know each other, to learn together, and share learning experiences, for example, Stefan taught and told me how to learn definite articles" (S7, p. 301).

Another student echoed the above comment by saying:

...In small-group interaction time [games], I become more cooperative with my classmates because they would encourage me to study. I can still remember that time; they '*encouraged*' (*in forced tone*) me to raise my hand to answer a teacher's question in order to earn points for my group. And this is the first time I spoke German in front of the whole class. I am happy to get one point for my group.... I won't be so scared to work with my classmates as before. I appreciated my group members very much (S8, p. 300).

[When playing games] ... We have to try to help each other. ... I actively participated in the game and encouraged my group members to work hard. I wanted my group to be the best group. ... We worked together, not for ourselves, but also for the group. (S4, p. 177)

This sort of peer support contributed to the more comfortable classroom atmosphere for learning. As one student commented:

At first, I hated to attend German grammar class because my German is so poor. But now I like German better because German classes are fun and I have several nice, helpful group members who are really concerned about me. It's good to have learning partners. (S2, p. 301)

In contrast to the experimental students, the control students complained about the lack of student-student interaction. As a student commented "The teacher talks and talks. I quite understand she [the teacher] tries very hard to explain the rules and sentences as clearly as possible. But she talks too much" (S8, p. 306).

The control students complained that they felt alone since they could not get support from their peers when they needed help from them. As a student explained

... I would not ask my classmates next to me, either. I am afraid that the teacher will think that we are chatting. Furthermore, the class is so quiet. So we could do nothing, but sit still [listening]. (S10, p. 307)

For the control students, in a teacher-centred classroom, it was hard to get support from peers, as one student commented "I could not get support from my classmates. I asked my classmates questions instead of the teacher, if I had questions. But they implied that we should discuss these later on after classes, not in class" (S4, p. 307).

Due to the fewer opportunities for interaction between students, the control students did not have the opportunity to work together or to build up a sense of class cohesion. The control group did not show significantly higher feelings of class belonging after the intervention with the traditional approach over one semester (Tables 4.35-1 and 4.35-2).

It was the experimental students who had significantly greater levels of class cohesion (Table 4.40, Figure 4.18). Games provided the learners with many opportunities to work together and encouraged interaction between them. They got to know each other and supported

each other in the learning process, thus building up a sense of belonging in which there was a strong ‘we’ feeling; they were happy to belong (Hajdu, 2000; Raffini, 1993).

A student described this strong feeling of belonging and class cohesion in a focus group interview: “By playing games, I get to know students in class, who I did not know before. Group members share happiness and sorrow together, and I like this sense of belonging (S7, p. 301). Another student explained

I like to play games in a group in order to learn German grammar ... We have to try to help each other. I really did get a warm feeling from the sense of the belonging I had in the group. I really enjoyed the atmosphere ... the sense of the belonging and cohesion. I found many of my group members had a similar sense of cohesion. (S4, p. 177)

This finding on the improvement of ‘Class Cohesion’ contributing to ‘Classroom Atmosphere’ corresponds to Raffini’s (1993) statement about the sense of belonging. Raffini identified the need to belong, as one of the chief psychological needs of all people. This was the need the students in this study sought to satisfy at school and elsewhere in their interactions with others. Some students found the sense of belonging through involvement in the games. Once they found that they could actually become involved and improve in class, their learning motivation would be boosted, as indicated in the statistical analysis of the questionnaire and of the students’ interviews.

Overall, the experimental students experienced a higher level of support during interactions with their teacher, and had positive responses toward their teacher’s personality and well-organized grammar teaching strategies. These factors contributed to their satisfaction with the grammar classes. They also experienced stronger levels of cohesion and became more comfortable to be part of their group by working together, helping and supporting each other in a less threatening learning atmosphere. That made their learning enjoyable and interesting. This explains why the experimental students registered a greater level of satisfaction with the

game-based grammar classes (Table 4.39 and Figure 4.17).

To create this kind of teaching atmosphere was not an easy task. It needed a lot of thinking, restructuring and choosing the right materials as well as the right delivery instruments. In order to produce learning climate orientated to arousing motivation, I tried to implement Dörnyei and Csizér's (1998) model of student motivation by emphasizing the importance of a caring, supportive, and relaxing environment.

The findings from this study favour the game-based grammar practice as a powerful instructional strategy as a replacement for the traditional Grammar Translation method teaching a second language in Taiwan. Given that the use of language games achieved such positive effects, especially in promoting a relaxing and supportive classroom atmosphere within such a short period of time, more powerful effects could be expected if this strategy were to be implemented over a longer time period, for example, one year, as suggested by Ortega and Iberri-Shea (2005). The finding that the improvement of classroom atmosphere emerged only during the delayed post-test supports what seems to be the realistic expectation that an extended period of teaching and much persistence are needed for this to occur.

#### **4.5 Results on the Two Types of Grammatical Practice (Research Question 5 and Hypothesis 5)**

In this section, students' responses toward the strategies used in practising grammar among each group are presented (Table 4.42). The fourteen items addressing the responses of both groups include those in favor of the type of grammatical practice used (Item 1, Item 2, Item 3, Item 4, Item 6, Item 7, Item 8, Item 9, Item 10, Item 11, Item 12, Item 13, and Item 14) and those against it (Item 5 and Item 14).

It should be noted that the data were simplified by collapsing the 5-point scale used to elicit responses (strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree) into a 3-point

scale (agree/strongly, undecided, disagree/strongly), in order to facilitate comparison between the two groups of students. In addition to a computer-generated frequency study for the student data using Crosstab, also Chi-Square Tests of Independence (Fisher's exact tests) were conducted to determine whether the experimental students' responses differed significantly from those of the control students' responses. The results were statistically significant for all items at the 0.05 level of confidence.

Table 4.42 presents the statistical results of all the items of the Questionnaire on the two types of grammatical practice. The rest of this section explains these results, which are then discussed in section 4.5.1.

Looking at the two groups' comparisons (Table 4.42), all fourteen items dealing with responses towards the grammatical practices show a relatively high level of discrepancy in agreement between the experimental and the control students, with the exception of Item 2 and Item 9, where 91.3% of the experimental students versus 85.1% of the control students agreed that "the grammatical practice used by my teacher enables me to learn the correct German grammar" (Item 2). The experimental group was more in favor of their type of grammatical practice by 6.2%. However, no statically significant difference was found between the two groups ( $p = 0.145$ ). This result revealed that both grammatical practices were perceived as being effective in helping students to learn German grammar.

Item 9 showed an 18% discrepancy rate between the experimental and the control students and a sizeable majority in both groups (90.4% versus 72.3%) felt that their type of grammatical practice could develop their writing ability. No significant difference was found ( $p = 0.107$ ). This result indicates that both the game-based grammatical practice of the experimental students and the traditional exercise-based practice of the control students were effective for developing students' writing skills.

Table 4.42

*Students' Responses towards the Type of Grammatical Practice (n=93)*[EG: Experimental Group; CG: Control Group. Comparisons are made using Chi Squared Tests with  $p < 0.05$  as the level of significance.]

ITEMS	Groups	1	2	3	4	5	Sig
		(SDA) [n/%]	(DA) [n/%]	(ND) [n/%]	(A) [n/%]	(SA) [n/%]	
1. The grammatical practice used by my teacher enables me to understand the rules of German grammar.	EG	0/0.0	1/ 2.2	1/ 2.2	25/54.3	19/41.3	0.006*
	CG	0/0.0	0/ 0.0	4/ 8.5	36/76.6	7/14.9	
2. The grammatical practice used by my teacher enables me to learn the correct German grammar.	EG	0/0.0	1/ 2.2	3/ 6.5	28/60.9	14/30.4	0.145
	CG	1/2.1	0/ 0.0	6/12.8	34/72.3	6/12.8	
3. I would like my teacher to keep using the current grammatical practice to teach us German grammar.	EG	0/0.0	0/ 0.0	4/ 8.7	20/43.5	22/47.8	0.000*
	CG	1/2.1	6/ 6.5	15/31.9	19/40.4	6/12.8	
4. I can use German fluently as a result of the practice my teacher uses.	EG	0/0.0	0/ 0.0	3/ 6.5	31/67.4	12/26.1	0.000*
	CG	0/0.0	6/12.8	15/31.9	25/53.2	1/2.19	
5. The grammatical practice my teacher uses reduces my learning effectiveness.	EG	0/0.0	0/ 0.0	2/30.0	30/65.2	14/30.4	0.004*
	CG	0/0.0	2/ 4.3	9/19.1	32/68.1	4/ 8.5	
6. The grammatical practice my teacher uses can improve my listening comprehension.	EG	0/0.0	1/ 2.2	11/23.9	24/52.2	10/21.7	0.000*
	CG	0/0.0	4/ 8.5	24/51.5	19/40.4	0/ 0.0	
7. The grammatical practice my teacher uses helps my ability in oral German.	EG	0/0.0	0/ 0.0	3/ 6.5	33/71.7	10/21.7	0.000*
	CG	1/2.1	6/12.8	25/53.2	14/29.8	1/ 2.1	

Table 4.42 (Continued)

*Students' Responses towards the Type of Grammatical Practice (n=93)*[EG: Experimental Group; CG: Control Group. Comparisons are made using Chi Squared Tests with  $p < 0.05$  as the level of significance.]

ITEMS	Groups	1	2	3	4	5	Sig
		(SDA)	(DA)	(ND)	(A)	(SA)	
		[n/%]	[n/%]	[n/%]	[n/%]	[n/%]	
8. The grammatical practice my teacher uses helps my German reading comprehension.	EG	0/0.0	1/ 2.2	9/19.6	26/56.5	10/21.7	0.014*
	CG	1/2.1	6/12.8	17/36.2	20/42.6	3/ 6.4	
9. The grammatical practice my teacher currently uses helps my German writing ability.	EG	0/0.0	0/ 0.0	9/19.6	25/54.3	12/26.1	0.107
	CG	1/2.1	3/ 6.4	9/19.1	29/61.7	5/10.6	
10. The grammatical practice my teacher uses enables me to like German more and to raise my interest in learning German.	EG	0/0.0	0/ 0.0	4/ 8.7	26/56.5	16/34.8	0.000*
	CG	0/0.0	4/ 9.8	16/34.0	12/25.5	5/10.6	
11. The grammatical practice my teacher currently uses is an incentive to learn German.	EG	0/0.0	0/ 0.0	3/ 6.5	27/58.7	16/34.8	0.000*
	CG	1/2.1	6/12.8	19/40.4	16/34.0	5/10.6	
12. The grammatical practice my teacher uses when encouraging students' interaction helps me to learn German.	EG	0/0.0	0/ 0.0	3/ 6.5	23/50.0	20/43.5	0.000*
	CG	1/2.1	2/ 4.3	16/34.0	28/59.6	0/ 0.0	
13. The grammatical practice my teacher uses creates an excellent atmosphere in class and it helps me to learn German.	EG	0/0.0	0/ 0.0	2/ 4.3	30/65.2	14/30.4	0.000*
	CG	0/0.0	9/19.1	11/23.4	19/40.4	8/17.0	
14. The grammatical practice my teacher currently uses brings no benefit to my German ability.	EG	0/0.0	0/ 0.0	0/ 0.0	15/32.6	31/67.4	0.000*
	CG	0/0.0	0/ 0.0	5/10.6	27/57.4	15/31.9	



Item 1 (“The grammatical practice used by my teacher enables me to understand the rules of German grammar”) showed little discrepancy between the two groups. A large majority of both the experimental and the control students (95.6% versus 91.5%, respectively) perceived their game-based and exercise-based practice as an effective way to understand the rules of German grammar. However, 41.3% out of 95.6% versus only 14.9% out of 91.5% indicated that they “strongly agree” with this statement: Table 4.42 shows the significant difference between the two groups on the “strongly” agree item ( $p = 0.006$ ). This result indicates that the experimental students perceived the game-based grammar practice as being more effective for understanding the rules of German grammar than did the control students for their traditional grammar practice.

Regarding Item 3, a very strong majority of the experimental students (91.3%) agreed that “I would like my teacher to keep using the current grammatical practice to teach us German grammar”, while only 52.8% of the control students agreed with that statement. There was a statistically significant difference in agreement between the two groups ( $p = 0.000$ ). The experimental students expressed a stronger preference for having the game-based grammatical practice for learning German grammar than did the control students for their exercise-based practice.

There was also a statistically significant difference between two groups in Item 4: 93.5% of the experimental students agreed that “I can use German fluently as a result of the practice my teacher uses”, whereas only 55.1% of the control students agreed with that statement ( $p = 0.000$ ). This result reveals that the experimental students felt more strongly about the game-based grammatical practice than did the control students about their exercise-based practice.

With reference to Item 5, the majority of the experimental students (96.6%) versus 76.6% of the control students disagreed with the statement that “the grammatical practice my

teacher uses reduces my learning effectiveness”. A statistically significant difference was also found here ( $p = 0.004$ ). That is to say, most of the experimental students viewed the game-based grammatical practice as a more effective way to learn German grammar than did the control students for their traditional grammar practice.

Items 6 through 9 elicited students’ opinion on the value of the grammatical practice for developing the four language skills, namely listening comprehension, oral ability, reading and writing ability. Regarding listening comprehension, 73.9% of the experimental students agreed with the statement that “The grammatical practice my teacher uses can improve my listening comprehension”, while only 40.4% of the control students agreed with that statement, thus providing another statistically significant difference ( $p = 0.000$ ).

In the oral ability, the largest discrepancy (61.5%) was found in Item 7 (“The grammatical practice my teacher uses helps my ability in oral German”). While 93.4% of the experimental group marked “strongly agree” or “agree” in favor of this statement, only 31.5% of the control group did so ( $p = 0.000$ ). The experimental students felt more strongly than did the control students that the game-based practice was more helpful for developing their oral ability.

Item 8 stated that “The grammatical practice my teacher uses helps my German reading comprehension”. Responses showed a discrepancy in opinion of 29.2%. Again, the experimental students, with a 78.2% agreement rate, clearly have been sided more in favor of the game-based practice in regard to the development of reading comprehension than the control group did with the exercise-based practice, with 49% agreement rate ( $p = 0.014$ ).

Item 10 showed that 91.3% of the experimental students felt that game-based grammatical practice could increase their interest in learning German, which is consistent with their significant improvement on the motivation scale (see 4.3). Only 36.1% of the control students perceived the traditional grammatical practice as a tool to increase their interest, which

is consistent with the results on the motivation scale (see 4.3). A statistically significant difference was also found here ( $p = 0.000$ ).

In answering Item 11, another very strong majority of the experimental students (93.5%) agreed that the game-based grammatical practice is an incentive to learn German, whereas only 44.6% of the control student believed that the traditional grammatical practice is helpful to learn German ( $p = 0.000$ ).

In Item 12, 93.5% of the experimental students agreed that the game-based practice, which encourages students' interaction, helps them to learn German, which is consistent with their indication of a significant improvement on the classroom atmosphere (see 4.4). This result contrasts with the 59.6% result of the control students for the same item ( $p = 0.000$ ).

In Item 13, 95.6% of the experimental students agreed that there was a better atmosphere in class when the teacher used games to practise grammar, while only 57.4% of the control students did ( $p = 0.000$ ). Therefore, these responses are consistent with the results on the classroom atmosphere (see 4.4).

With reference to Item 14, 100% of the experimental students disagreed that game-based practice brought no benefit to their German ability, whereas 89.2% of the control students did ( $p = 0.000$ ).

The fifth hypothesis was that the experimental students would provide more positive responses toward the game-based practice in their learning of German grammar than the students of the control group would toward the traditional grammar practice. The results of the statistical analysis of students' responses reported that the experimental students recorded more positive responses to the effective role of the game-based grammar practice in their learning of German grammar than the control students did. Therefore, the fifth hypothesis was confirmed by the results of this questionnaire.

#### *4.5.1 Discussion and Summary of the Results on the Questionnaire on the Two Types of the Grammatical Practice*

These results relate to the fifth research question of this study: “Will students in game-based grammar practice perceive grammar learning as more interesting and effective than those in the traditional grammar practice?” Generally speaking, the data from this questionnaire provided evidence of a strongly positive response on the part of the experimental students that the game-based grammatical practice played a positive and effective role in their learning of German grammar. The results of the analysis confirm similar results obtained by Hajdu (2000), Issacs (1979), Matheidesz (1988) and Miller (1992) in which the students had a positive attitude towards the use of games in their language-learning program.

Such feedback confirms the validity of a curriculum design based on the communicative grammar teaching approach and on the inclusion of games in L2 classrooms. This study also suggests that these findings can be applied to Taiwanese classroom settings, and probably to L2 classrooms generally. However, further research is needed on this point.

The design of this experiment included both the traditional explanations of grammatical rules and their application through a teaching strategy (i. e. the use of games) that was new and unfamiliar to my students, in order to introduce into my teaching an aspect of the communicative approach to the teaching L2 German. The evidence that the results of the experiment have provided towards the positive effect of this communicative aspect includes a better rate of student involvement, a higher level of student-to- student interaction, a better level of oral German, a very positive perception that games improve the students’ macro skills.

With regard to students’ motivation, their responses confirmed the findings of the game-designers, game-researchers and educators on the significant improvement of motivation (see. 4.3). Games are fun and can increase students’ motivation to learn (Deesri, 2002; Nemerow, 1996; Gaudart, 1999). The experimental students experienced a fun element in

games and felt that their interest improved and that this helped them to learn. The role of games as a motivator to learn was thus confirmed.

It is also worth to note that 89.2% of the control group disagreed with the statement “The grammatical practice my teacher currently uses creates no benefit to my German ability” (Item 14). The control students, furthermore, expressed their disagreement with the statement “The grammatical practice my teacher uses reduces my learning effectiveness” (Item 5). This means that 52.5% out of the control students indicated that they would like their teacher to keep using the exercise-based practice (Item 3).

Such a result did not surprise me. Indeed, this result supported the findings in Huang’s research (2004) and reflected the characteristics of L2 classroom in Taiwan: the exclusive focus-on-form by means of explanation of rules and supporting exercises. In form-based classes, learners learn grammatical knowledge. The control students in this study confirmed the strength of form-based method for the learning of grammar: they agreed that traditional grammar practice enabled them to “understand” the rules of German grammar (91.5%, Item 1), to “learn” the correct German grammar (85.1%, Item 2) and to develop their writing ability (72.3%, Item 9). Most students in Taiwan are accustomed to this approach and their teachers have as their main focus the development of grammatical accuracy.

However, in the field of L2 teaching, there is more than grammatical competence to be achieved (Krashen, 1982; Larsen-Freeman, 1995; 2001): competence in using a language for effective communication. The control students might have had a different perception about grammar instruction, if their teachers had provided them with a different type of grammar practice, one that encouraged also communication, as was the case with the game-based grammatical practice. The present study has provided some empirical evidence in favour of positive results towards the achievement of both grammatical and communicative competence through the use of games.

#### 4.6. Results on the Role of Grammar and Grammar Instruction

##### (Research Question 6 and Hypothesis 6)

As a way of complementing the students' data from this study, a further questionnaire asked for their perceptions regarding the importance of including grammar in L2 courses (Items 1-8), on the difficulties they were experiencing in dealing with grammatical rules (Items 9-13) and on their preference concerning the ways that grammar is taught (Items 14-20) (all items appear in Table 4.43). It should be noted that the data were simplified by collapsing the 5-point scale used to elicit responses (strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree) into a 3-point scale (agree/strongly, undecided, disagree/strongly). In addition to a computer-generated frequency study of the students' data using Crosstab, Chi-Square Tests of Independence were conducted to determine whether the experimental students' responses differed significantly for all items at the 0.05 level of confidence.

The results have been summarized in terms of frequencies and percentages in Table 4.43. The rest of this section reports the statistical results from all the items in the questionnaire (see Table 4.43). This is followed by a discussion of these results in 4.6.1.

Comparing the responses of the experimental and control students to Item 1 through to Item 20 on the role of grammar, the students' difficulties in learning grammar and their preference regarding the ways grammar is taught, there was a statistically significant difference only on two items between the two groups: 91.4% of the experimental students versus 85.1 % of the control students, agreed with the statement that "Learning grammar can help me to read German texts" (Item 5,  $p = 0.031$ ). This means that the majority of students in both group agreed that the study of grammar can improve their reading ability.

91.3% of the experimental students agreed that the study of grammar can improve their listening comprehension, while only 53.6% of the control students agreed with that statement (Item 6). A statistically significant difference was found here too ( $p=0.000$ ).

Table 4.43

*Students' Perceptions of the Role of Grammar and Grammar Instruction (n=93)*[EG: Experimental Group; CG: Control Group. Comparisons are made using Chi Squared Tests with  $p < 0.05$  as the level of significance.]

ITEMS	Groups	1	2	3	4	5	Sig
		(SDA) [ n/%]	(DA) [n/%]	(ND) [n/%]	(A) [n/%]	( SA) [n/%]	
<b><u>Importance of Learning German Grammar</u></b>							
1. Learning grammar helps me to understand German.	EG	0/0.0	0/ 0.0	4/ 8.7	24/52.2	18/39.1	0.376
	CG	0/0.0	1/ 0.0	4/ 8.5	31/66.0	12/25.5	
2. Learning grammar enables me to achieve high scores in German tests.	EG	0/0.0	0/ 0.0	11/21.7	20/43.5	14/30.4	0.958
	CG	0/0.0	1/ 2.1	10/23.4	22/46.8	13/27.7	
3. Learning grammar can help me to speak German.	EG	0/0.0	3/ 6.5	5/10.9	24/52.2	14/30.4	0.734
	CG	0/0.0	5/10.6	6/12.8	26/53.3	10/21.3	
4. Learning grammar can help me to write German.	EG	0/0.0	2/ 4.3	2/ 4.3	21/45.7	21/45.7	0.865
	CG	0/0.0	1/ 2.1	4/ 8.5	22/46.8	20/42.6	
5. Learning grammar can help me to read German texts.	EG	0/0.0	1/ 2.2	3/ 6.5	21/45.7	21/45.7	0.031
	CG	0/0.0	1/ 2.1	6/12.8	31/66.0	9/19.1	
6. Learning grammar can improve my listening comprehension.	EG	0/0.0	0/ 0.0	4/ 8.7	20/43.5	22/47.8	0.000*
	CG	1/2.2	6/12.8	15/31.8	19/40.8	6/12.8	
7. Learning grammar can help me to study German well.	EG	0/0.0	0/ 0.0	1/ 2.2	27/58.9	18/39.1	0.317
	CG	0/0.0	0/ 0.0	5/10.6	26/55.3	16/34.0	
8. Learning grammar is essential to eventual mastery of German.	EG	0/0.0	0/ 0.0	4/ 8.7	16/34.8	26/56.5	1.000
	CG	0/0.0	0/ 0.0	5/10.6	15/31.9	27/57.4	

Table 4.43 (Continued)

*Students' Perceptions of the Role of Grammar and Grammar Instruction (n=93)*[EG: Experimental Group; CG: Control Group. Comparisons are made using Chi Squared Tests with  $p < 0.05$  as the level of significance.]

ITEMS	Groups	1	2	3	4	5	Sig
		(SDA) [n/%]	(DA) [n/%]	(ND) [n/%]	(A) [n/%]	(SA) [n/%]	
9. We need to learn grammar because German is not our native language.	EG	0/ 0.0	5/10.9	2/ 4.3	20/43.5	19/41.3	0.257
	CG	0/ 0.0	4/ 8.5	8/17.0	16/34.0	19/40.4	
<b><u>Difficulties of Learning Grammar</u></b>							
10. German is Germany's native language, so German people do not have to learn grammar.	EG	12/26.1	22/47.8	6/13.0	2/ 4.3	4/ 8.7	0.236
	CG	8/17.0	19/40.4	12/12.5	6/12.8	2/ 4.3	
11. My German study may be better if I do not learn grammar.	EG	11/23.9	22/47.8	13/28.3	0/ 0.0	0/ 0.0	0.796
	CG	13/27.7	23/48.9	10/21.3	1/ 2.1	0/ 0.0	
12. Grammar impedes my German learning.	EG	13/28.3	19/41.3	10/21.7	4/ 8.7	0/ 0.0	0.935
	CG	11/23.4	22/46.8	10/21.3	3/ 6.4	1/ 2.1	
13. Learning grammar makes me less interested in learning German.	EG	6/13.0	15/32.6	11/23.9	12/26.1	2/ 4.3	0.527
	CG	4/ 8.5	12/25.5	19/40.4	11/23.4	1/ 2.1	
<b><u>Preferred Methods of Learning Grammar</u></b>							
14. The German teacher needs to teach German grammar in class.	EG	1/ 2.2	0/ 0.0	4/ 8.7	20/43.5	21/45.7	0.271
	CG	0/ 0.0	0/ 0.0	9/19.1	22/46.8	16/34.0	
15. It is necessary to learn grammar gradually from elementary grammar to advanced grammar.	EG	0/ 0.0	0/ 0.0	5/10.9	13/28.3	28/60.9	0.871
	CG	0/ 0.0	0/ 0.0	6/12.8	15/31.9	26/55.3	



Table 4.43 (Continued)

*Students' Perceptions of the Role of Grammar and Grammar Instruction (n=93)*[EG: Experimental Group; CG: Control Group. Comparisons are made using Chi Squared Tests with  $p < 0.05$  as the level of significance.]

ITEMS	Groups	1	2	3	4	5	Sig
		(SDA) [n/%]	(DA) [n/%]	(ND) [n/%]	(A) [n/%]	(SA) [n/%]	
16. Systematic teaching from the teacher can help me to learn German well.	EG	0/ 0.0	0/0.0	6/13.0	14/30.4	26/56.5	0.364
	CG	0/ 0.0	0/0.0	4/ 8.5	21/44.7	22/46.8	
17. Which item in the following list is the best help in learning grammar?	EG	38/86.4	3/6.8	3/ 6.8	0/ 0.0	0/ 0.0	
	CG	40/85.1	2/4.3	5/10.6	0/ 0.0	0/ 0.0	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sentence practice advised by the teacher</li> <li>2. Study grammar by yourself</li> <li>3. Talk to foreigners in German</li> <li>4. Practise with classmates in German</li> <li>5. Study the textbook</li> </ul>							
18. Which items should the German grammar teacher include in class?	EG	0/ 0.0	0/0.0	0/ 0.0	11/23.9	35/76.1	
	EG	0/ 0.0	0/0.0	0/ 0.0	6/12.8	41/87.2	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Only grammar</li> <li>2. Only reading texts</li> <li>3. Only German conversation</li> <li>4. Grammar and reading texts</li> <li>5. Grammar, reading texts, and conversation</li> </ul>							

Note: The numbers in questions 17-20 correspond to the horizontal numbers at the top of this table.

Table 4.43 (Continued)

Students' Perceptions of the Role of Grammar and Grammar Instruction (n=93)

[EG: Experimental Group; CG: Control Group. Comparisons are made using Chi Squared Tests with p<0.05 as the level of significance.]

ITEMS	GPS	1	2	3	4	5
		(SDA) [n/%]	(DA) [n/%]	(ND) [n/%]	(A) [n/%]	(SA) [n/%]
19. The grammar teaching method I prefer :	EG	3/ 6.5	2/ 4.3	41/89.1		
1. Communicative teaching approach by interactive learning with classmates	CG	4/ 8.5	4/ 8.5	39/83.0		
2. Teaching by the teacher and listening by the students.						
3. Combining teaching and listening with interactive practice among students.						
20. Which kind of tasks do you prefer during German grammar teaching?	EG	19/18.4	31/30.1	31/30.1	13/12.6	9/8.7
1. The teacher's teaching and student listening	CG	11/11.1	34/34.3	35/35.4	13/13.1	6/6.1
2. Team Discussion						
3. Games						
4. Paper test						
5. To praise test scores as encouragement						

Note: The numbers in questions 17-20 correspond to the horizontal numbers at the top of this table.

A majority of both the experimental and control students (91.3% and 91.5%, respectively) agreed with the statement that the study of grammar helps them to understand German (Item 1,  $p=0.376$ ). 73.9% of the experimental student versus 74.5% of the control students, respectively, believed that learning grammar enables them to achieve high scores in a German test (Item 2,  $p=0.958$ ).

Regarding the development of the four language skills, 82.6 % versus 74.6% agreed with the statement that the study of grammar enables them to improve their oral ability (Item 3,  $p=0.734$ ). Another very strong majority (91.4 % and 89.4%, respectively) agreed that “Learning grammar can help me to write German” (Item 4,  $p=0.865$ ): 91.4 % of the experimental students versus 85.1% of the control students believed that their writing improves if they study and practise the grammatical rules (Item 5,  $p=0.031$ ). This means that both groups of students agreed that the study of grammar can improve their reading ability. 91.3% of the experimental students agreed that the study of grammar can improve their listening comprehension, while only 53.6% of the control students agreed with that statement (Item 6). A statistically significant difference was found here too ( $p=0.000$ ).

A similar majority of both experimental and control students (98% versus 89.3%, respectively) agreed that the study of grammar can help them to study well (Item 7,  $p=0.317$ ). The students came to the conclusion that they believed that the study of grammar is essential to the eventual mastery of German (Item 8, 91.3% versus 89.3%, respectively,  $p=1.000$ ).

When comparing responses of the two groups on the items dealing with the difficulties of learning grammar (Item 9 through Item 13), the two groups of students showed relatively little disagreement. 85% of the experimental students and 74.4% of the control students agreed with the statement “We need to learn grammar because German is not our native language” (Item 9,  $p=0.257$ ). Both a majority of the experimental and the control students (73.9% versus 57.4%, respectively) also agreed with the statement, “German is Germany’s

native language, so Germans do not have to learn grammar” (Item 10,  $p=0.236$ ). Therefore, 71.7% of the experimental students versus 76.6% of the control students expressed their need for the study of grammar and disagreed with the statement “My German study may be better if I do not learn grammar” (Item 11,  $p=0.796$ ).

It is interesting to note that 45.6% of the experimental students disagreed with the statement “Learning grammar will make you less interested in learning German” (Item12), whereas only 34% of the control students did. This result indicates that more than half of both groups were not sure that the study of grammar was interesting for them. This result is consistent with the research findings in the literature and with my students’ perception that the teaching of grammar usually creates a boring classroom atmosphere (see 5.5).

In regard to Item 14 through to Item 20 on students’ preference for the ways grammar is taught, there was close agreement in perceptions between the two groups. No meaningful difference was found. A large majority of the both experimental and the control students (89.2% versus 80.8, respectively) believed that their German teachers need to teach German grammar in class (Item14,  $p=0.271$ ). Both groups (89.2% versus 87.2%, respectively) also agreed with the statement that it is necessary to learn grammar “gradually” from elementary grammar to advanced grammar (Item 15,  $p=0.871$ ). Another significant majority (86.9% versus 91.5%, respectively) agreed that “systematic” teaching by the teacher can help them to learn German well (Item 16,  $p=0.364$ ).

With regard to the aspects that their German grammar teacher should include (Item 18), 76.1% of the experimental students and 87.2% of the control students believed that their teacher should not only teach grammar, but also reading and conversation; 23.9% versus 12.8% wanted a combination of grammar and reading, and a zero percentage emerged for individual aspects (only conversation, only reading and only grammar).

The students’ preference for the ways that grammar is taught was elicited in Item 19:

their answers were consistent with Item 18: 89.1% of the experimental students and 83.0% of the control students indicated that they prefer a grammar teaching method that integrates focus-on-form into a communicative teaching approach; while only 6.5% of the experimental students and 8.5% of the control students liked to have a communicative teaching approach without focus-on-form. Only 4.3% versus 8.5% prefer the focus-on-form teaching approach, without focus on communication.

The students' preference for the activities during German grammar teaching was as follows: 30.1% of the experimental students and 35.4% of the control students indicated that they prefer grammar activities that include games, and ones which place them in teams (30.1% versus 34.3%, respectively). Only 18.4% of the experimental students and 11.1% of the control students like to listen to the teacher teaching; 12.6% versus 13.1% like to have a "paper test" to learn grammar. Only 8.7% versus 6.1% like to have their teachers praise their test scores as encouragement (Item 20). The low preference percentage in this item may be due to the fact that most Taiwanese do not feel confident enough in their language competence to deserve such praise.

The sixth hypothesis was that most students in both groups would indicate their belief that grammar needs to be taught in a second language program. The results of the statistical analysis reported that not only the experimental students but also the control students see an important role for grammar in their second language-learning program. Therefore, the sixth hypothesis for this study was supported.

#### ***4.6.1 Discussion of the Responses on the Questionnaire on the Role of Grammar and Grammar Instruction***

The questionnaire is related to the sixth research question: "Do second language students believe that grammar ought to be taught at all in language classes?" Overall, there was little disagreement between the experimental and the control students: not only the

experimental students but also the control students have similar attitudes towards the important role of grammar in their second language learning program and their preference for a type of grammar instruction.

The most noteworthy result from this questionnaire relates to three main aspects. The first is the strong agreement rate by both groups on the inevitability of including grammar in a L2 course, because it is a necessary element for the acquisition of all language skills. This overall response confirms my hypothesis 6 and is consistent with what most literature on the role of grammar indicates (see 2.3, p. 12). My results confirm similar results obtained by Yen (2002), Yu (2003) and Schulz (2001) who studied the students' perception of the role of grammar with ESL students, and Lai (2004), Schulz (2001), who studied teachers' belief concerning the role of grammar.

The second aspect is one that I was also expecting: that most of my students would confirm my perception that the studying of grammar is basically 'boring' for most students. It was my strong perception of my students' lack of interest in grammar which instigated the undertaking of this experiment, together with my hope that the raising of interest in grammar would translate to an improved rate of grammatical accuracy (Chapter 1, pp. 1-4).

The overall results of this experiment have realized a significant improvement in the level of interest in the studying of grammatical rules, and a limited but noteworthy improvement in their rate of grammatical accuracy.

The third aspect is that the communicative grammar teaching approach through games met the needs of my students. This is an important aspect of L2 teaching.

According to the results of the questionnaire on the role of grammar and students' preferences, both groups showed similar attitude toward the need of form-focused and communication-oriented instruction. The students in this study, on the one hand, thought that grammar is important; on the other hand, they strongly agreed that their teachers should explain

grammar rules whenever necessary within the framework of the communicative approach (Item 19). That is to say, the students hope that German grammar could be taught interactively and communicatively. Furthermore, the students also indicated that their teacher should explain grammatical rules “systematically” (Item 16) and “gradually” (Item 15); they would like to learn grammar in teams, as occurs in games (Item 20). Such opinions reinforce the validity of the present study.

The use of accurate grammar is important in the process of communication. Savignon (2000) claimed that “communication cannot take place in the absence of structure” (p. 7). The implication that is suggested by this study is not to eliminate grammatical explanations: these are necessary, especially for L2 learners (Item 9) or for more difficult features. But teachers must also bear in mind that the purpose of teaching grammar is to help students learn the language, and teachers must be wary of making grammar the end of their teaching: teachers have a responsibility to create the right atmosphere for the use of L2 for communication.

Based on the findings in this study, the game-based grammatical practice instruction can serve both the aim of facilitating students’ learning of grammar and the aim of developing the learners’ communicative competence.

#### **4.7 Summary**

I was disappointed that my first and second hypotheses for this study were not realised: my experimental students did not show a statistically significant improvement in their level of grammatical accuracy as a result of the use of games during the practice phase.

However, this chapter contains enough positive results in other aspects of the learning and teaching process monitored during this study to make this experiment worthwhile. In fact, all aspects of research questions 3 and 4 have obtained statistically significant improvements as a result of using games as the main teaching and learning strategy during grammatical practice. Furthermore, the experimental students also recorded strong positive responses toward the

game-based practice (Research Question 5). Both groups of students agreed that their language teachers should teach grammar of L2; communicative grammar activities including games are their preference (Research Question 6). Language games meet the need of the students.

Such improvements and positive responses did not occur easily and speedily, but only during the last phase of the experiment, as revealed in the post-test phases. Occur, though, they did, showing a consistent pattern in favour of a long-term approach and persistence. These aspects proved necessary ingredients in the changes that were recorded in terms of an increased level of student motivation, and their perception of an improved classroom atmosphere during my German lessons. This points to the important pedagogical conclusion that students' acceptance of a partially new teaching and learning approach to grammatical practice takes time and much effort to bring about. This militates against the unrealistic expectations of obtaining quick and large results from any experiment that aims at changing teaching and study habits in second language classrooms.

More evidence, of a qualitative nature, in support of these conclusions is presented in chapter 5. The qualitative data were gathered by means of focus group interviews and my field notes.



## CHAPTER 5

### QUALITATIVE RESULTS

#### 5.0 Introduction

This study has explored the effects of game-based practice in the teaching and learning of German grammar, its impact on the students' levels of motivation, and on the students' perception of classroom atmosphere. The students' attitudes towards their type of grammar practice and perceptions of the role of grammar were also investigated. Many researchers, for example, Tse (2000), recognize the importance of students' responses to their foreign language classroom experiences because of their theoretical, pedagogical and programmatic implications and because of their bearing on the students' L2 proficiency.

Thus, this study used focus group interviews with both the experimental group and the control group to explore the students' perceptions of their classroom experiences in the German grammar classes. The focus groups sought a variety of information including the students' opinions about teacher-student and student-student interaction, their views on the activities, and their level of satisfaction with the language-learning environment. In the focus group interviews, the students' attitudes towards the role of grammar were further investigated. In addition to the focus-group interviews, I recorded my observations in a series of field notes, commenting on the students' responses and perceptions and on the teaching and learning process.

This chapter presents the qualitative data that were gathered from both the focus group interviews and the field notes. These data are included because they offer extra confirmation and support to the results presented and discussed in Chapter 4.

During the focus group sessions the experimental and the control students were asked

to talk about their responses to eight open-ended questions regarding their experiences during the German grammar classes. The questions were:

1. How is your course 'German1' going?
2. What do you like about the course and the teacher?
3. What are some characteristics of the teacher's instructional style that work well?
4. What are some positive aspects of studying German this way?
5. What are some negative aspects of studying German this way?
6. What are some of the ways in which the course might be improved?
7. What do you think about the role grammar plays in your second language-learning program?
8. What are your preferred activities in class when you are learning the grammar of German?

Students were instructed to discuss all questions, although they could give particular emphases to those they felt were most relevant to their learning experience.

The students' responses fell into three categories: (a) positive aspects of learning German grammar through different types of grammatical practice, (b) negative aspects of learning German grammar and (c) attitudes toward the role of grammar in the learning of a second language.

Comments on each category are presented separately for the sake of clarity. Each participant was assigned a number for the sake of anonymity. "S" stands for "student" (i.e. S1 means "student 1"). The responses of the experimental students are reported separately from those of the control students, while the conclusion will compare the two groups. Some of the data to be reported is in informal or even slightly ungrammatical English. However, the importance of the original opinions means that some of the translations have been very direct or literal. Further quotations from students' comments are reported in Appendix I.

## 5.1 The Experimental Group's Positive Responses to Grammar Classes

### Where Games were Used

Among the positive reactions to German grammar classes that included the use of games during practice time, the most often-mentioned aspect related to teacher-student and student-student interaction. The students in the experimental group felt that the teacher's attention and understanding contributed to their progress and helped maintain their interest in learning German. One respondent from the experimental group commented,

I am fortunate to have Frau Yu, as my first German grammar teacher ... She showed a great level of patience and encouragement, which I feel, is vital, particularly in learning a foreign language. (S2)

Another student commented that it was the "willingness of the teacher to work with the class to make us understand certain aspects of the language" (S8) that contributed to her progress in learning German. Endorsing these sentiments, another student, who reported that he enjoyed his German grammar classes and had generally positive experiences, praised his teacher who was "very interested in us as students and involved us in her life" (S3). A further comment:

The teacher [Frau Yu] is concerned about my progress. I never thought that teachers would pay any attention to a low-achiever like me. After the first grammar quiz, she asked me whether I needed any help from her. She offered to give me extra help after class. Since that time, I have made various efforts to study the subject German grammar. (S8)

The experimental students seemed to agree that the positive personal characteristics of their teacher (e.g. level of motivation, warmth, empathy, commitment) seem to influence the rapport between the teacher and students and were largely responsible for improvement in their motivation (Christophel, 1990; Dörnyei, 2001,). The students were motivated to "make efforts to study the subject German grammar" (S8) and reported their significant improvement regarding motivational effort in Tables 4.16-1 and 4.16-2. As will be seen when I discussed

the control group, both groups responded positively to the teacher's approach; therefore it is not simply the use of games which created students' positive feeling.

However, students' comments also indicated that their teachers' verbal and non-verbal immediacy behaviours (the perceived physical and/or psychological closeness between people, Dörnyei, 2001) reduced the social distance between teacher and students during the games because the teacher was often circulating around the room. Thus, interactions with their teacher contributed to a less threatening environment for learning. The experimental students recorded a significantly higher level of teacher support after the one-semester's intervention with the game-based practice (see Tables 4.28-1 and 4.28-2). These comments also confirm the findings that the experimental students perceived that there was a more positive classroom atmosphere in the German grammar classes (see Tables 4.31-1 and 4.31-2).

In addition to providing assistance and showing empathy, the teacher, according to some other experimental students, prepared the classes so well that this factor contributed greatly to their learning of grammar. One student commented,

I like her handouts very much. From the handouts, we can tell that she planned all the grammatical features before the classes. I think she must have spent a lot of time editing the handouts. She has done a good job for students. (S1)

Two other students went on to elaborate this point, explaining that

Regarding the learning of grammar, I think it is one of good ways to learn language grammar. The teacher prepared the handouts. I know what I am going to learn. With examples and explanations of the teacher, it is not difficult for me to learn German grammar at all... The teacher explained very clearly by using simple language. Moreover, the teacher introduced the grammatical rules systematically... so that it takes me normally 10-20 minutes to review the information, if a quiz is given. (S8)

I liked the grammar instructional process because the instruction was very systematic and organized. Furthermore, there was lots of speaking or writing communicative grammar activities prepared by the teacher. I think that these kinds of activities, either speaking or writing grammar practice opportunities are very important in grammar learning process. (S4)

As noted above, it seems that both groups of the students have similar positive attitude regarding the teacher's teaching approach; therefore it is not simply the use of games which created students' positive feelings. As suggested in the literature, teachers may influence the level of students' motivation through appropriate task presentations: this is termed "methodological motivation" by Shie (2003). I called students' attention to the rules of German grammar by explaining grammar in a "gradual" and "systematical" way (S1, S8 and S4). This fits the characteristics of focus-on-form grammar instruction and also touches on the students' preference for learning grammar (Table 4.43). All results supported the statistically significant higher level of satisfaction as it appears in Tables 4.29-1 and Table 4.29-2.

In addition to the explanations for the grammatical rules, the most-mentioned classroom activities were the language games. Two students expressed their reactions in the following way:

All in all, I had a good experience learning German grammar and felt that my teacher did a good job ... letting us play games in the grammar class, ... because she made it fun to learn and she taught me the value in learning and to see a need for it in our lives and futures. (S7)

The teacher must have spent a lot of time planning the games and making the picture cards. She made the learning of German grammar more attractive. It was just fantastic. (S1)

In terms of the classroom activities that students in the experimental group liked, most of them mentioned that they appreciated having opportunities to speak German and to participate in language games. One student liked her teacher's encouragement to use German in the games. The teacher insisted "that we use German, as much as possible, in order to effectively further my abilities" (S4).

The students reported that their opportunities to speak German were increased by the classes in which games were a focus. Games created opportunities for practising the

grammatical rules, practising speaking German, and improving listening comprehension as group members discussed, interviewed each other or answered questions. As one student commented, “I like the grammar instruction provided in my grammar class a lot... because I can practise the learned grammar in a communicative way with classmates, which I think improves my German grammar a lot” (S2). Another student also said, “I like my grammar class because I am able to check my grammatical knowledge through lots of language games used there” (S5). These comments confirm the perception of teachers and researchers that games enable students to demonstrate and apply previously or newly acquired knowledge and skills (Gary, Marrone & Boyles, 1998; Gaudart, 1999; Macedonia, 2005).

Owing to intra-group cooperation and inter-group competition, the students encouraged or even compelled their group members to speak German (as in Games 1, 7, 8, 9, see Appendix H) or to present an oral report in front of the whole class, for example in Game 2, when the students were asked to introduce themselves or their classmates. In Game 13, the students were asked to introduce their family orally or in writing. Small-group interaction increased my students’ actual German language use as pointed by Bailey (1985), Long & Porter (1985) and Schultz (1988). They were actively involved in an authentic process of communication with group members. As some students reported:

Language learning games can offer us more opportunities to speak and practise German because you have to answer questions or ask questions, e.g. in the games ‘Wann machst du was?’, you have to talk and ask. At the end of each game, we have to raise our hands and give the correct answer in order to earn points for the group. (S11)

I really enjoyed having the language games more than the lecture. I found it easier to learn the information when I can see how it really applies to ‘real life’. I know how to communicate with the others in German. I can greet my friends in German. I can also make an appointment in German. (S6)

For another student, the opportunities to reinforce and to use German with peers in games were a major contributor to her interest in the grammar course and in learning German.

She commented,

Frankly, I don't like coming to German grammar classes... German grammar rules are so complicated that I felt I could never master the language. I struggled with the learning of verbs at the beginning of the semester... but I now have a better understanding and retain more. The difference was in the games learning activities, because of the student interaction in the class, others tried to help me to overcome the problem. This helped a great deal. (S8)

The cooperative nature of most language games naturally encourages student-student interaction. These types of games are excellent for encouraging shy students, since they require the participation of all the member of a team, group or pair (Hajdu, 2000; Liang, 2004; Rinvoluceri & Davis, 1995). As Hajdu (2000) concluded in her research, students appeared to participate in the learning process more and generate creative ideas more frequently. The students had to be willing to communicate with one another and that encouraged the feeling of comfort, low anxiety and perceived competence when they worked together with their peers towards a common goal. Vygotsky (1997) also stated that games, in providing interaction, create a zone of proximal development (ZPD), which provides an opportunity for learning. In this study, the experimental students seemed to perceive game-based grammar practice as good options for bringing about natural, meaningful and low-anxiety interaction in a formal linguistic environment, because games require pair or group work and were by their very nature 'informal' tasks. The use of group work could relax students by engaging them in stress-reducing tasks (Allery, 2004; Schultz, 1988). This also echoes Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1985) that a small group approach enables learners to attain greater language competence than a teaching methodology that stresses the memorization of grammar, vocabulary and drill exercises in isolation.

In addition to favouring group work in language games, two other experimental students made positive comments about the feedback they had received about the accuracy of their German utterances from their group members or the teacher. A student pointed out that

One of the best aspects of learning a language within a classroom setting is the class participation and discussion, but with the constant correction and supervision of teachers. Our mistakes can be corrected immediately during the games because the correct answers are printed on the reverse side of the game cards. My group members will correct me if I make a mistake. If we are not sure, she [the teacher] walks around the class, we may ask her right away. (S4)

Among the positive reactions to the German grammar classes, many students also mentioned student-student interactions. They indicated that they did not feel so anxious when speaking German in their game group. A lower achiever (S10) reflected, “I feel less nervous about practising during the German language games. I know my German pronunciation is not good. I have learned to relax and speak in the groups”. A higher achiever expressed his response by saying,

I am still afraid of speaking in front of the class, though I have no problem when it comes to speaking English. I feel that it was helpful, if I could practise German well, particularly in small groups, before I use it. (S3)

Stress is a major hindrance in the language learning process (Krashen, 1982; Schultz, 1988). The recognition, not only of the teacher but also of their peers was important to the students and also the feeling of competence (Hajdu, 2000). However, many students felt less threatened when consulting with classmates during language games. Talking or asking the teacher questions directly would cause more anxiety for the students. Learning through language games might cause less anxiety and stress than in the traditional, teacher-dominated language classroom and promote more effective learning (Gary, Marrone & Boyles, 1998; Hajdu, 2000; Sprenkel, 1994). Some of the students, who were afraid of approaching the teacher directly, experienced decreased anxiety in their interactions with classmates. As one student reported:

I dare not ask the teacher directly because I would feel nervous when talking to the teacher. If I have any questions or anything I don't understand, I ask my classmates while playing games. And sometimes, I can understand better. (S2)



As shown in Tables 4.27-1 and 4.27-2, the experimental students recorded a higher level of peer support after one semester's intervention of game-based practice. In this study, language games in groups seemed to build up a more relaxed environment, which allowed students to ask questions of their group members or the teacher. This was an important factor that contributed to the students' motivation to learn.

I also found that the students could use their own language to solve their problems.

As I wrote in my field notes on November 07, 2004:

Dirk told me how to learn the definite article for the noun 'Milch' (milk). He explained that only mothers have milk. So, the noun 'Milch' (milk) has the female definite article 'die' (the). I was very surprised to hear Dirk's wonderful idea. I never thought of that before. I just asked my students to memorize the definite articles for nouns. I asked Dirk to explain the idea to the whole class so that everyone could learn the word quickly. Stefan told me it is not Dirk's idea, but Tina's instead. Tina, a very shy girl, seldom spoke. The whole class praised her and appreciated her great idea. They learned the definite article for 'Milch' immediately. I learned a lot from the students, for example, the way they designed the vocabulary cards for Domino. The cards I designed were not as attractive as theirs. They proved that they had more potential than I expected.

In addition to the peer support, peer encouragement also influenced the students' willingness to learn and their motivation. It was more inspiring to study and learn with group members than to struggle alone. With peer support and encouragement, the students were motivated to study German harder. This is reflected in the following comments:

I think I become more confident. I know that I can represent my group in front of the whole class. I never realized that I was able to take or answer question in front of the class. I like to work in small groups. And the sense of success enhances my motivation to learn. (S10)

I like to play games in a group in order to learn German grammar because she [the teacher] insisted that we learn not only for ourselves but also for the other members of the group. We have to try to help each other. I really did get a warm feeling from the sense of the belonging I had in the group. So, I actively participated in the game and encouraged my group members to work hard. I wanted my group to be the best group. I really enjoyed the atmosphere...the sense of the belonging, of cohesion. I found many of my group members had a similar sense of cohesion. We worked together, not for ourselves, but also for the group. (S4)

Students' comments reveal that games provided them with the opportunities to work together and encouraged interaction between students. They got to know each other and supported each other in the learning process. Thus, the students built up the sense of belonging in which there is a strong 'we' feeling: the students were happy to belong (Raffini, 1993). A significantly higher perception of class cohesion was recorded by the experimental students (Tables 4.30-1 and 4.30-2). This sort of sense of belonging or class cohesion also contributed to the more comfortable classroom atmosphere for learning. This finding also explained the reason why the experimental students perceived a more positive classroom atmosphere in the German grammar classes (Tables 4.31-1, 4.31-2 and Table 4.42). These results also answered my research question 4 and supported my hypothesis that the students in the game-based grammar practice would perceive and respond to a more positive classroom atmosphere, especially if the games were played over a longer period of time, that is for more than a single semester.

Dörnyei and Csizér (1998) claimed that classroom climate was rank-ordered second among the motivation factors in a Hungarian survey of teachers of English. In a comfortable, supportive classroom atmosphere, the students of this study found that they were more motivated to learn (S8, S2) and indicated a higher degree of perceived competence (S2, S10, S8). The higher level of motivational effort and the higher level of perceived capability were also reported in Tables 4.16-1 and 4.16-2, Tables 4.17-1 and 4.17-2. These results confirmed also my research hypothesis that the students in the game-based grammar practice would have a statistically significant improvement on motivation (Tables 4.18-1, 4.18-2 and Table 4.42).

Regarding the affective issues, some students considered that they had obtained greater intrinsic motivation in learning German from the games-based practice. Before the experiment, the students' motivation was extrinsic rather than intrinsic. More specifically, the students' general reasons for learning German were that German was the compulsory subject

in the college, and they were required to study German rather than English because of their lower entrance examination scores.

However, as a result of this experiment some of the students indicated that their German learning motivation was enhanced because German classes were becoming more ‘colorful, ‘different,’ and ‘interesting’ due to the language games. Students’ comments reported on their increased enjoyment, as the following extract from the transcripts demonstrates:

I like playing games. The classroom atmosphere became active and colourful, and we students were in a happier mood in class time ... and we are not bored because of these interesting, exciting learning games. (S11)

Two high-achieving students considered that they had studied German as diligently as they had studied English previously. Their interest in second language learning remained the same, notwithstanding the teaching approaches. However, they agreed that grammar-learning activities should have the elements of ‘fun’ and ‘diversity’, which are helpful for their acquisition of grammar. As one of the students said,

I quite understand what I should do as a student. I have to study very hard, not for examinations, but for myself. I have studied very hard, no matter what teachers have done. However, of course, to study in a happy atmosphere would help students to learn more. (S7)

A game is to be enjoyed (Griffiths & Clyne, 1995). “Fun” and “interest” are the main elements of games and these can contribute to improving students’ motivation to learn: they break “the simple monotony” of the traditional lecture (S2) and bring the students into “a happier mood in class time” (S11). This made my students’ learning different: learning could also be interesting and could be enjoyed. The more important issue for me is that it made my students learn. This finding might minimize some language teachers’ concern that games connote fun and are not therefore serious enough to be used in the classroom. The comments by my experimental students should confirm the perception that students can learn or would

like to learn more through playing games (S7, S12): my students were motivated to put in more effort to learn (S12, S5). This is shown by a significant improvement in motivational effort in Tables 4.16-1 and 4.16-2.

The experimental students expressed their enjoyment of the games not only here, but also in the Enjoyment Scale of the Questionnaire on Motivation (Tables 4.15-1 and 4.15-2). The overall findings on motivation show that it is related to success in L2 learning (Gardner, 1985). My results confirm Krashen's "Affective Filter": when students' affective filter is down, as during games, it allows more information to be acquired. Games seem to make remembering of the information easier, as found in Nemerow's research (1996) and Hajdu's research (2000). The slight outperformance of the experimental students on grammar accuracy (Table 4.13 and Figure 4.1) provides more evidence to support the claim that games can improve students' learning outcomes (Allery, 2004; Gaudart, 1999; Hajdu, 2000; Macedonia, 2005; Shie, 2003; Thatcher, 1990).

Another two students mentioned that the types of games they played contributed to their involvement and learning. A student with kinesthetic learning style reported his experience in the following way:

I like to learn grammar through games. I used to doze off when the teacher talked alone. I like to move around. I just don't like to sit still for a long time. It was different in the games. You are allowed to stand up and move around to conduct an interview or to ask some other students on the other corner of the class. Moreover, you don't need to sit still as you play the games. It is more comfortable. The movement kept me awake... it did help me to pay attention to what's going on in class. (S2)

Another student with a more visual learning style found picture games contributed to her learning of vocabulary and sentence structure. As she reported:

I like language games, in especially picture games. In this semester, we have played a lot of picture games, for examples, Game 3, Game 5, and Game 6... I can remember the words or sentences better, if I see the pictures of the words or of the sentences. So, I found I could retain more and longer through playing games. (S12)

One student explained that she liked the Game ‘DIY Domino’ the most because she liked to design games and to draw. As she commented, “I like brainstorming. I also like to learn by doing. Thus, it’s fun to have the opportunity to design games for ourselves and also for our classmates” (S6).

Recent educational theory has found that people learn in a variety of ways. Different students learn in different ways and are motivated by different factors. As Jones, Mungai and Wong (2002) have suggested, there is a positive relationship between learning style and positive outcomes. Allery (2004) and Gary, Marrone and Boyles (1998) claim that games can be intrinsically motivating and can adapt to different styles of learners, as well as different learning styles. My students thought that learning through diverse language games catered to their learning style and that helped them to remain on task in class, as stated by Oxford, Ehrman and Lavine (1996).

Learning through games also helped the students to perceive German grammar, learning activities, their peers and their teacher more positively. These changes in attitudes influenced their motivation and their academic achievement. The use of language games resulted in an increase in satisfaction with the German grammar class.

In my field notes, I wrote the following comment:

I felt more relaxed and encouraged to teach this class [the experimental group]. I did not have to spend a lot of time on classroom management. Because we had so many group games going on in classes, the students became more and more creative, spontaneous, and most of all, attentive. Almost all of the students were on-task and engaged in class. There was hardly any students falling asleep, dozing off, or being absent-minded. Most of the students were busy with games. (on November 13, 2004)

I noted in my field notes that it seemed to me that they were keen on German – even after class. On November 20, 2003 we finished Game 6. The students asked to play the game again in the next session. Due to the schedule, we had to begin the next grammar unit. Therefore, the students asked to borrow the game cards after class. After Game 5, the

students kept asking to continue with games every time I announced that it was time to finish off. I saw real motivation in this situation. The most important sign I have experienced in my classes was the students smiling and laughing. My concern with the three ‘S’ principles practised by my students in classroom, - (1) keep silent in order to hide boredom or anxiety; 2) smile in order to hide embarrassment for not being able to answer any question; 3) sleep because of lack of interest and lack of motivation to learn in Chapter 1) - became less of a problem because students had more positive attitudes towards the learning of grammar with the use of language games. The students were willing to engage in learning ‘for its own sake’ and enjoy it. This proved that intrinsic motivation occurs. Finocchiaro (1989) observed that in many instances the motivation to learn a target language can be fostered and enhanced even in learners who do not have a strong initial interest. In my experience of the experimental students I was able to see that their “compulsory motivation” (Shie, 2003) was turning into intrinsic motivation by integrating games into their grammar classes (Deci & Ryan, 1985). It is as part of this type of motivation that games have a vital role to play.

These and similar comments help to explain the growth in motivation and in positive classroom atmosphere that emerged from the questionnaire on motivation and classroom atmosphere (see Figures 4.9 and 4.19). However, the students of the experimental group also reported some unfavorable reactions to the game-based practice, although they expressed high satisfaction with the new approach to the learning of German grammar. These unfavorable reactions are reported in the next section.

## **5.2 Unfavourable Responses of the Experimental Group to the Grammar Classes where Games were Used**

Although some students were less positive about aspects of the games and about the new classroom approach, their perceptions were not wholly negative. Rather, they gave qualified answers, making many suggestions as to how the games could be improved or the

classroom activities modified. Some students complained about the organization of games. They suggested that it would have worked better if the students had chosen their own groups. As some students commented:

She [the teacher] always assigned us into a small group of four. The group members are the classmates who sit around you. You have no choice. For me, it would work better to work with someone I am familiar with. I met someone who was so quiet and not willing to play with; even if you encouraged or invited her. It made me frustrated. And you will also lose your interest to play and do nothing. Of course, you learned less in that case than you expected. (S2)

Other students complained that it was difficult to work with some students because they usually misbehaved, such as chatting with some students and then probably bothering others. I have also noted certain tensions within groups and the choice of group members. I found that a few students did not really get involved while playing during the initial phase of this experiment. In my field notes on November 15, 2004, I wrote:

It seemed that the students were not clear about what to do or how to play the game. The rules did not seem to be for the students. They were just sitting there.... I could hardly hear their voices. The classroom was so quiet... I hardly saw any real interaction between them.

In Game 2 'Interview' (see Appendix H), the students were asked to conduct interviews with classmates other than their group members. However, during the game only one student moved around the class to conduct an interview. The rest of the class just stayed in their own group. This would have occurred because of the unfamiliarity with each other, since they were all new to each other at the beginning of the semester. It could also have occurred due to the students' unfamiliarity with the game. In order to minimize the organizational problem, the students asked me whether they could play outside the classroom when they played Game 6 'Quartet'. The students had the opportunity to choose their own group members. It was really impressive to see that most of the students actively participated in the game and were completely on task. They sat on the floor and played cards. They

laughed and spoke German. From that time, the students participated much more actively. It finally worked much better, from Game 5 onwards. Therefore, I changed my mind and let the students choose their group members when Game 7 was being implemented. However, surprisingly, they chose the students sitting around them as their team's members. Two students explained:

We got to know each other better in the past six weeks. So, we are familiar with each other. Therefore, it won't be a problem any more to work with anyone in this class. (S1)

The organizational problems seemed to be solved at this point, because the relationship between the students and their familiarity with games were established. This helps to explain why the students' motivation increased as did their perception of a more positive classroom atmosphere over the course of the semester: both improved significantly (see Table 4.18 and 4.31).

Many students said that they wished to have more time to play games and more games to play. The students explained their needs in the following way:

It's too hard to keep up with all the information we have to know by playing around in class. It was fun and I hope we do more games for one grammar unit. It could be helpful for me, if I could practice more in different games. (S6)

In my field notes, I have written down a conversation I had with Friedrich. In Game 6 on November 07, 2003, I found that the Friedrich's group finished the game very quickly, while most other groups were still playing. I encouraged Friedrich's group to play the game once again. However, they said that they had learned the words well and were unwilling to play the game once again. In order to show me how well they had worked, they even asked to give them some questions to examine their learning outcomes. I was glad that the students were so confident. The students really knew the words after I gave them some questions to answer. "I am really proud of your group. Well done!", I said to the group and reminded



myself of their progress in my notes: my students were not so afraid of showing me their knowledge of German. Such improvement of higher level of self-evaluated capability confirmed the findings in the motivational factor 'Capability' (Tables 4.17-1 and 4.17-2). And I tried to add more cards or design more variations for a game from that time on, in order to minimize problems of students' finishing early.

Some students complained that the classroom was noisier than it had been in the past.

A student pointed out her concern and commented in the following way:

It is fun to learn through games. However, I found that our classmates were getting out of control more often. Some groups laughed loudly or spoke loudly. The students made noises when they had a chance to move around the class. It disturbed not only the other groups, but also even the classes next to us. I think the teacher needs to do some classroom management or we should learn to control ourselves while playing games. (S10)

Discipline in the classroom is a particular issue in the Taiwanese context, where both the teachers and the students seem to expect classrooms to be quiet and orderly, with learners focused on the largely silent task of reading or writing exercises. In many language classrooms, oral language is practised by using controlled, predictable dialogues. Hence, in my classes there was some tension between carrying out game activities and maintaining a quiet environment. In Game 5, the 'Match Game', two groups laughed and spoke German so loudly that the whole class was a little bit annoyed by the noise: this game lent itself to over-excitement and provoked excessive noise. These students tried to control themselves and lowered their voices. However, it began again after a while. This time, more groups got involved and did the same thing. I quite understand that it is unavoidable to have a certain level of noise when playing games, or when students are talking, and walking around, as pointed out by Kuo (1990), Richard-Amato (1996) and Gaudart (1999). But I also considered the issue to what extent the noise is constructive. I always reminded the students not to make much noise before the game and told them that they should talk more softly and keep noise

within reasonable levels.

Although I was aware of the risks associated with the use of games, such as noise and the lack of discipline, I did not lose sight of the pedagogical value of games in second language teaching (Gaudart, 1999; Kuo, 1990; Richard-Amato, 1996). One of the solutions that I am planning to implement in the future, in order to meet these challenges, is to use my college hall and sports grounds for some games, as I believe that taking the students out of the classroom gives them a welcome change of scenery as suggested by Gaudart (1999). It is interesting that the problem of noise has become less of a concern over one school semester. With regard to the problem of organization and discipline, game-playing enhances students' interaction so that the students have more opportunity to know each other. Furthermore, the students were encouraged to participate actively and were also motivated to learn together. The problem of organization and discipline, fortunately, became less of a problem as the semester progressed.

### **5.3 Experimental Students' Attitude Towards the Role of Grammar in a Second Language**

In this section, the experimental students' attitudes towards the role of grammar and grammar instruction have been explored. Although all the interviewees pointed out that they needed a certain amount of grammar instruction in their classes, their views on its role differed from person to person. Some students thought it was very important; some thought it was important but should not be overemphasized, while none thought that grammar teaching should be minimized in class. These are some of the reasons the students gave in favor of the role of grammar:

Native speakers don't need to study grammar. It seems reasonable because we don't need to study Chinese grammar, either. But we can speak and write Chinese fluently and accurately. We are not speakers of German. Therefore, we need to study German grammar if we want to master the German language. (S8)

The structures in Chinese and German are different; without learning grammar, students would be unable to write or make sentences because we would not know what was grammatical and what was not. We would probably write sentences, which resembled a direct translation from Chinese. (S9)

Overall, the students seemed to have positive attitudes towards the importance of grammar and thought that grammar would support their learning of German, be conducive to their German learning and help them to master the German language. As a result, they also thought it was necessary for teachers to teach grammar. The students thought that knowledge of German grammar would help them with their written communication more than with their oral communication. Regarding the purposes of grammar instruction, these students explained their perceptions in the following ways:

The general purpose of learning grammar is to achieve accurate and more fluent German in either writing or speaking. (S4)

Grammar is learned for writing and speaking skills of German, because German grammar is completely different from Chinese. German grammar is also very important to learn for the development of reading and listening skills. Overall, I think that grammar is learned to strengthen the four skills of German [listening, speaking, reading, and writing]. (S10)

Although the students represented above assigned an important role to grammar for developing all four-language skills, some of them noted that grammar was not the only thing that was significant and that it should not dominate class time. Teaching should also focus on meaning and content of the materials as well. For example, one student said:

Learning German is not restricted to learning the language. The teachers should not teach grammar separately all the time. They should incorporate grammar into other activities such as reading, listening, and speaking practice. (S5)

The comments of the students on the purpose of grammar confirmed the results in the Questionnaire on the role of grammar (Table 4.43). In Item 18, 100% of the experimental students believed that their teacher should not only teach grammar, but also reading and conversation as a whole. That was because the students believed that the study of grammar

would enable them to improve their four language skills (Item 3 to Item 6). Hence, the students came to the conclusion that they believed that the study of grammar was essential to eventual mastery of German (Item 8).

As far as these students were concerned, grammar facilitated language learning, especially in reading and writing, when accuracy, rate of learning, and the pursuit of a higher level of proficiency were concerned. Nevertheless, not all of them considered grammar helpful in developing accuracy or fluency in speaking. Some students thought that grammar could help with speaking, but students needed to do a lot of oral practice before they could apply their grammatical knowledge in actual situations.

As to the ways of learning grammar, most students agreed that the teacher's guidance in learning grammar would help them learn best. They also considered that grammar should be taught step by step. Hence, for these students, it is necessary to learn grammar "systematically" (Item 16) and "gradually" from elementary grammar to advanced grammar (Item 15).

It is apparent that the students realized the importance of authentic language use and this suggests that learning German should require not only context but also communication because language is a tool of communication, as claimed by Krashen (1985) and Prabhu (1987). When asked how grammar should be taught, many students cited their current grammar instruction as a good example of grammar instruction in general. Typical comments were as follows:

I think that the systematic organization and presentation of any grammar point and intensive exercises on that grammar in the chosen textbook really helps any grammar instruction. Diverse exercise types on any learned grammar are important for students to digest and practice the already learned grammar either through speaking or writing activities. Just direct rules explanation and memorization by the students should not be the only focal activities of grammar lessons. (S7)

One student summed up the experimental students' attitudes and perspectives regarding grammar instruction by saying that

Grammar is essential for most students to learn a foreign language in the language classroom. I think grammar should be used in everyday life and that is the most important part to improve my grammar. By doing this, grammar learning and use become a natural experience and through this, I think grammar can be remembered and learned a lot until later when lots of time went by. On this point also, I wish to have diverse and interesting communicative grammar practice activities where I can practise the learned grammar in communicative way with classmates. I think it improves my German Grammar a lot. (S5)

It is noted that the experimental students talked freely about their perceptions of the role of grammar and their perceptions of grammar instruction, which they thought to be of use for their acquisition of German grammar. The comments of the experimental students on the role of grammar and their preference were consistent with the findings in the Questionnaire on the role of grammar (Table 4.43): most of students showed positive attitudes toward the needs of form-focused and communication-oriented instruction (Item 19). On one hand, the students thought that grammar is important; on the other hand, they agreed that their teachers should explain grammar rules whenever necessary within the framework of communicative approach, as claimed by many researchers such as Lando (1999), Lightbown (1998), Norris and Ortega (2000). Furthermore, the students expected their teacher to use diverse and interesting grammar exercises other than exercise-based practice to sustain their interest in learning. Games and teamwork were suggested by the students in this interview and also in Tables 4.42 and 4.43. Such opinions reinforce the validity of the present study.

In the following section, the positive reactions of the control group to the traditional grammar instruction used in this study will be explored.

#### 5.4 The Control Group's Positive Responses to the Grammar Classes

The reactions of the students in the control group fall into affective, cognitive, and metacognitive domains. On the whole, the control group's comments focused on their impression of their grammar teacher and on the approach used by their teacher. They felt that the teacher's patience and efforts contributed partly to their progress and helped maintain their motivation in learning German. Many responded positively to the fact that the teacher frequently encouraged them to talk to her about any problem that occurred in the learning and in the use of the grammar taught in class. One student said:

I like my grammar teacher because she always answers in a very friendly manner any grammatical question. I really feel comfortable about asking her any grammatical questions. (S3)

Regarding the instructional process, most students commented that the way the teacher explained the German grammatical rules, using both deductive and inductive methods, was helpful for them to develop a good understanding of German grammar.

I like my grammar teacher because she distributed a lot of handouts that I liked and was very helpful for my acquisition of German grammar.... Her handouts presented a grammar point in a systematic and organized way and lots of practice exercises followed her explanation of grammar. I think, in this way, my understanding of the grammar taught was improved. (S12)

In addition to the clear and direct explanations of grammar, many students perceived the handouts that I prepared as a very positive resource and thought the handouts were another key factor for contributing to better understanding of German grammar. Some students commented on the benefit of the handouts in relation to their learning of grammar in the following extracts:

She [the teacher] made a good decision in that she did not always use the set textbook to introduce grammar. The textbook did not present a grammar point in a systematic and organized way. The book is more communication-based. Without her systematic and organized grammar handouts, it would have been very difficult to understand German grammar, especially for beginners like me. (S12)

One student found the grammar classes interesting. The reason for this was that she needed a very systematic teaching approach as a beginner. Regarding her grammar instructional process and her grammar teacher, she commented:

I think the teacher's role at my level is very important. The teacher taught and focused very much on what I should learn as a German beginner. The deductive grammar presentation method from my teacher's part is not bad. She used a very systematic teaching approach and taught grammar systematically. Especially in relation to this part of her teaching, she did play her role well. (S9)

In addition to the systematic teaching instruction, some students liked their grammar classes because the teacher gave students a test after each grammatical unit. In this way, the students were able to check their grammatical knowledge and their progress as well. One student explored the issue further by saying:

I know we don't like to have tests or exams. We have already had too many examinations in the past nine school years. However, if the teacher did not give us test or exam, we would not study. Then, we would never know what we have learned or what we have missed. So, the teacher used tests or examinations as a learning strategy to make me learn. These strategies are really helpful for the learning of grammar. (S3)

It was surprising to hear such a positive attitude expressed toward examinations by the students. Normally, students in Taiwan complain they have many tests and examinations and that these make them less interested in the learning. However, like other teachers in Taiwan, I am aware of the fact that most Taiwanese students will not study if they do not have examinations, even if they are at a higher educational level. It is therefore pleasing to have students' perceptions suggesting that tests and examinations are tools for them to 'check their grammatical knowledge and their progress' (S3). This also explains the reason why 12.6% of the experimental students and 13.1% of the control students liked to have "paper tests" among their preferred grammar learning activities (Item 20). Therefore, I planned tests and examinations in all my teaching schedules in order to check the students' learning progress

and my teaching outcomes as well.

Another student was very satisfied with his grammar teacher because the teacher shared useful learning strategies with her students, which made their learning of grammar easier. Two students commented on these strategies:

The grammar teacher gave her students some learning strategies in addition to grammar instruction; these were helpful to me because she reminded me of the way I should go about improving my own grammar. She reminded us of some techniques, for example, the verb ending for 'du' (informal you) is '-st', du sounds like 'kill' in Taiwanese; and '-st' sounds like 'dead'. If you were killed, then you will be dead. So 'du' has the verb ending 'st'. It was interesting and easy to learn the verb ending. (S3)

[The teacher] shared the following learning strategy: how to learn the definite article to the noun 'Milch' (milk). The noun 'Milch' (milk) has the definite article 'die' (the) because only mothers (female) have milk. I think that this contributed to my learning of German grammar. It also inspired me to formulate my own learning strategies. (S7)

The comments in this section show that the students in the control group appreciated their grammar class teacher. On the whole, the control group's comments focused on their impression of their grammar teacher, and focused on the approach used by their teacher. They felt that the teachers' patience and efforts contributed partly to their progress and helped maintain their motivation in learning German. Many responded positively to the fact that the teacher frequently encouraged the students to talk to her about any problem that occurred in the learning and in the use of the grammar taught in class, although it was not as successful when it came to encouraging the students to oral practice. This was a commonality with the experimental group.

In an interesting contribution to the literature, Chambers (1999) claimed that the students considered the teachers' own behaviour to be the single most important motivational tool. Such behaviour was described in terms of care for the students' learning, warm interactions with the students, an empathic manner, mutual trust and respect. I focused students' attention on the rules of German grammar by planning all the grammatical features



in handouts (S12, S13, S5), explaining the grammatical rules “clearly” (S5) and “systematically” (S8, S12), and by sharing useful learning strategies (S3 and S7). This process, as the students commented, was quite helpful when it came to understanding the grammatical rules (S8, S13) and improving their learning of grammar (S11, S12), particularly for the beginners (S9 and S8). This fits the characteristics of focus-on-forms grammar instruction and also touches on the students’ need for the grammar and their preference for learning grammar (Table 4.43).

Moreover, many students felt that their teacher interacted with them in a “friendly” (S3), “very welcoming” (S6) and “supportive” (S1) manner. Each aspect contributed to the students’ overall satisfaction with their teacher. Such satisfaction was confirmed by the findings in the Questionnaire pertaining to Classroom Atmosphere. The control students perceived higher teacher support after one semester’s intervention using traditional teaching strategies (Tables 4.33-1 and 4.33-2). The control students’ comments revealed that the personal characteristics of their teacher (e. g. motivation, warmth, empathy and commitment) seemed to reinforce the rapport between the teacher and student and was largely responsible for their learning and motivation (Dörnyei, 2001; Chambers, 1999; Christophel, 1990).

However, the control students did not record higher satisfaction with their grammar class in the Questionnaire on the Classroom Atmosphere (Tables 4.34-1 and Table 4.34-2). Nor did the control class report higher level of motivation in the Questionnaire on the Motivation after one semester’s intervention with the traditional grammar practice (Tables 4.22-1 and Table 4.22-2). In the following section, the control students comment critically on the grammar activities and the learning environment in the grammar classes. The students’ concerns regarding their motivation and perception about the classroom atmosphere are explored in greater detail.

### 5.5 Unfavourable Responses of the Control Group to the Grammar Classes

The students in the control group reflected the typically problematic learning atmosphere of grammar classes in Taiwan. There is hardly any teacher-student or student-student interaction during or after class in such traditional learning contexts. ‘Dead air’ prevails in classrooms, as an often-used Chinese expression has it. The students in the control group also made critical comments about their experiences in the German grammar classes. They received the same grammar teaching program as the experimental students, but instead of the game-based practice they were involved in completing traditional grammar-based exercises.

Most of the students were dissatisfied about the fact that their teacher usually did not touch on the type of communicative practice activities that might have increased their acquisition of German grammar and also their interest. The two most often mentioned aspects were (a) the lack of focus on communication and oral language development and (b) the monotonous atmosphere of the classes, due to the paucity of teacher-student and student-student interaction.

All interviewees mentioned this. The sentiments expressed by the students are captured in the following comment:

Both the teacher and the students rarely spoke in class; when the students did speak, it was only to read answers from the textbook exercises or homework aloud. Although the language itself interested me greatly, my experiences in the German grammar classes left me bored, frustrated, and unable to communicate orally. (S5)

According to the teaching program, the control students did have some drill practice. However, it seemed that it was not successful in encouraging the students to engage in oral practice. Therefore, a number of students felt that without a focus on their oral language ability, they were not able to make use of the months of instruction they had received. One

student (S7) commented that her language classes “did not prepare me for the practical use of the language. My German teachers taught the rudiments of reading and writing, but did not focus much on speaking”.

Another student stated that he felt that

We have learned a lot of words and grammatical rules. However, they were seldom used, I mean, practised, and therefore it was not useful for me. I do not know when to use the rules or how to use them when I have to use them. (S8)

Yet another student felt that the vocabulary that the teacher focused on was not practical. She complained,

The teacher seemed to focus upon making us memorize words, which were not relevant to learning German. Knowing what kind of article should be used for a noun or how a sentence was built up isn't as important as learning how to ask for directions or assistance. (S6)

A student (S12) summed up these sentiments by saying that “Classes that involved realistic situations and interaction were instrumental to my success; classes where I ‘filled in the blanks’ were less productive for me”.

One student also supported this with her perception that

I met one of the German teachers at the campus. I knew it was a good opportunity to practise German, particularly the grammatical sentences that I had learned in classes. But I was unable to open my mouth to speak German. The German teacher encouraged me to speak, even a few German words. But I still could not... I was so afraid of speaking, even though I knew the answer. So, I answered in English. I have not practised that well. I wondered why did I learn German? It is useless for me. I started to ask myself whether I should continue to study it. I know it is my own problem. But I think the teacher could help us to solve this problem, if she plans enough opportunities for us to practice the language. (S9)

All the concerns of the students touched on both the strengths and the inevitable weakness of a grammar-based practice. As most of the literature reviewed in 2.4.1 suggested, isolated grammar lesson can have a negative effect on students' writing (Braddock, Lloyd-Jones & Schoer, 1963; Hillocks, 1986; de Silva & Burns, 1999). Echoing the results in the

literature, the control students in this study had lower scores in the grammar tests and examinations than the experimental students who had experienced the game-based practice (Table 4.13). Moreover, de Silva and Burns (1999), Krashen (1985), Macedonia (2005), Nunan (2005) and Petruzzella (1996) stated that isolated grammar drills are unlikely to lead to the effective communicative use of a language, because learners may not have any way of transferring their knowledge of grammatical structures appropriately to a range of communicative situations. Learning grammar in isolation also detaches the grammatical aspects from the meaning-making aspects of language. Based on their awareness of weaknesses of the traditional approach, Lightbown (1998), Ellis (1991) and Lando (1999) suggested that the focus on form needs to be incorporated into communicative practice, in a balanced integration of both aspects, each with its own clearly defined space, but with constant and protracted opportunities for their implementation within relevant communicative contexts.

Moreover, the opportunity for practising foreign language structures effectively is very important in language teaching (Foto, 1993; Gaudart, 1999; Larsen-Freeman, 1995; Macedonia, 2005) reflecting the main concern of the majority of the control students. However, teacher-centered classrooms do not allow learners the time necessary for practising their second language structures or participating in the communicative process in the fill-in-exercises and multiple choices exercises (Gaudart, 1999).

In addition to the lack of effective practice, the control students revealed also their need for engaging in the learning. Specht and Sandlin (1991) found that there are mainly visual and auditory components in traditional lecture formats and that these encourage passive learning (Sprenkel, 1994). Merely hearing something or seeing something is not enough to learn the target language. Silberman (1996) and Anderson (1998) emphasize the need for students to be given a more active role in the learning process so that this can contribute to

greater retention and more satisfactory learning outcomes (Holler, 1996). In the traditional teacher-centered classroom, teachers usually explain and talk; students often just listen. According to Holler's statement, students remember only 10% of what they read, 20 % of what they hear, 30 % of what they see, 50% of what we both hear and see, 70% of what they say, but 90% of what they do. This explains why the learning outcomes could be limited in traditional lecture situations, as also shown in the less successful learning outcomes of the control students of this study (Table 4.13).

The control students continued complaining that they were unable to practise grammar in writing or in speaking because the teacher did not offer these opportunities. They attributed their ineffective learning to this point. As one student complained:

Grammar is some kind of rule acquisition and remembering and so the best way to remember that rule is to use it in everyday life, not by memorizing it in rote fashion. I don't like the grammar class because the teacher did not offer enough writing or speaking opportunities to practise or apply the newly learned grammar. I think, in this way, grammar could not be learned effectively. (S2)

A student (S6) commented: "I remember my classes being concentrated on grammar and vocabulary. They got to be boring after the first couple of textbook chapters". As one student (S11) stated, she remembered very little from her classes in German because they were "monotonous and uninteresting". A student commented:

I know we should study hard and pay attention to the teacher. I felt guilty if I did not listen to the teacher. I always reminded myself that is the responsibility of the student. But I could not help myself from falling asleep once in the class... It was so boring. Furthermore, it was easy to be influenced by your classmates who sat next to you or around you. If they dozed off, then you were the next one. (S9)

Another student responded differently from S4, commenting

The teacher or some classmates scolded me very often in this semester. I was scolded in almost every class. Whenever I made some noise, the teacher would stop her lecture and ask me to be quiet. You know, it was very boring listening to the teacher talking and talking. I did not understand what she said,

particularly when she explained in German. There was nothing I could do in class. When I got bored, I started flipping over my drawer, swinging my pen, or sending messages to my friends. Sometimes, the classmates blamed me for making a noise. I tried to control myself because I wanted my classmates to like me. (S6)

Many students commented that they “did not like” grammar classes (S8) because the classes were “boring” (S9, S7) and “quiet” (S10). The students could not help themselves, but became bored (S6) or even “dozed off” (S6). For the control students, the teacher-centered teaching meant that the class was not enjoyed or even interesting. The students were not motivated to learn. These comments were consistent with the results in the motivational scale ‘Enjoyment’ (Tables 4.19-1 and 4.19-2). The control students did not make progress in their motivation factor ‘Enjoyment’ after one semester’s intervention with the traditional approach. In this situation, the students had a high affective filter so that their boredom or anxiety increased and hindered their learning (Krashen, 1982). As the results showed, the control group did not make significant improvement in their motivation factor ‘Effort’ after one semester’s intervention with the traditional practice (Tables 4.20-1 and 4.20-2). The control students were not motivated to learn more or make more effort to learn.

Moreover, the control students complained that they felt alone since they could not obtain support from their peers when they needed help from them. This is recorded in the scale “Peer Support” in the Questionnaire of the Classroom Atmosphere (Tables 4.32-1 and 4.32-2). As a result, some students even felt “rejected” or were afraid of being “rejected” by their classmates (S4 and S5), as the control students indicated that they did not show higher feelings of class cohesion or belonging after the intervention with the traditional practice over a period of one semester (Tables 4.35-1 and 4.35-2).

Even though I was in a teaching role, I also experienced a similar sense of frustration to that expressed by the students. I felt sad to experience the students’ negative feedback. Early in the beginning of the semester, about one month after the school began, the students in

the control group found out that the other class, namely the experimental group, were learning grammar through language games. The classroom of the experimental and control groups were located next to each other. The students also heard the noise made during the games. The students expressed their disappointment and anger at missing out on the new program to both their class teacher and the chairperson of the German Department. I was fortunate to have ongoing support from the class teacher and the chairperson since they were aware of my experimental study. They tried hard to calm the control students and asked me to have another talk with the whole control group. I was enthusiastic about letting the students make further comments in writing, even though the students were well informed before the experiment started. At that time, I found that the atmosphere was tense, with less interaction between the students and me. I could also read the dissatisfaction and discomfort on their faces. This dissatisfaction was demonstrated in the post-test results of the Questionnaire on Motivation and the Questionnaire on Classroom Atmosphere (see Tables 4.22-1, 4.22-2, 4.36-1 and 4.36-2), particularly in the scales showing 'Teacher Support' (Tables 4.33-1 and 4.33-2), 'Satisfaction' (Tables 4.34-1 and 4.34-2), 'Enjoyment' (Tables 4.19-1 and 4.19-2), and 'Capability' (Tables 4.21-1 and 4.21-2). In these results, the students of the control group recorded even lower scores than in the pretest. After explanations from their class teacher and me, the students seemed to be more accepting of the grammar class. As one student explained:

I quite understood that we as students have to study on our own. We should not blame the teacher all the time, since she has done her part as a teacher well, I mean, she explained the grammar systematically and clearly. We should take on our part, our responsibility to study. I think, if the other class could learn well with the teacher, we could also learn well. Moreover, some of my friends in the other class [the experimental class] were not so interested in playing games. So, I told some close classmates that we should study on our own. And I was glad that some accepted my suggestions and studied together instead of complaining. (S9)

As the above-mentioned student (S9) explained, the control students took on the responsibility of studying and made similar efforts to learn, instead of simply attributing their

lower achievement to their teacher. Thus, the control students scored similarly on the motivational factor 'Effort' in the post-test as in the pretest (Tables 4.20-1 and 4.20-2).

Checking with the results of the delayed post-test in the Questionnaire on Motivation and on Classroom Atmosphere, all scores went backwards from their original scores in the pre-test. Some even gained improvement (Tables 4.19-1 to 4.22-2 and Tables 4.32-1 to 4.36-2). All results indicated that the students seemed to be more accepting of grammar classes, though the control students still did not have a significantly higher motivation.

From then on I tried harder to address questions by the students and encouraged them to speak. However, I was unable to elicit responses and my questions were met by a stony silence or, as the Chinese say, 'dead air'. Sometimes, I tried hard to elicit student talk by appointing some students to talk and tried hard also to maintain the students' attention, but the questions were often met with a muffled reply and averted eyes. I was frustrated and noted the following in my field notes on December 19, 2003:

Why are they getting passive and quieter than before? I know it's hard for students to ask questions, if they do not understand. But I try to encourage them to ask. It hurts when I see their confused or impatient faces. I am sure some of them did not understand. But what didn't they understand? If they do not tell me, how can I know?

A student tried to explain the reasons why they were behaving in this way:

The teacher encouraged us very often to ask question if we didn't understand what she said. However, it was still very hard for me to ask questions in front of the class. I thought that I was the only one who did not understand. I feel ashamed. If my classmates knew that, they would laugh at me or look down on me. Therefore, I would approach the teacher after classes. In this way, I felt more comfortable. (S13)

These students reflected the typical problematic learning atmosphere in grammar classes in Taiwan. There is hardly any student-student interaction during or after class in such traditional learning contexts. 'Dead air' was evident across the whole classroom. Sometimes, I felt alone during classes. The students looked very tired and were often off task. I could



only see their black hair: I was not able to see their faces because many of them were dozing off during lessons. Some students would not look at the teacher because they were afraid that the teacher would ask them to answer questions. I am aware of the relationship between teachers and students in the traditional Chinese culture. As Gary, Marrone and Boyles (1998) observed, Asian students avoid taking educational risks in relation to peers. Asking direct questions or quizzing participants in front of peers is considered threatening and is a potential cause for loss of face, or embarrassment. For the same reasons, the students in this study were unlikely to volunteer questions openly. My students prefer individual recognition or face-to-face interaction rather than other forms of communication. However, how could I help them to be attentive and encourage them to interact with me or other students? I wrote in my reflective notes: “The weather was so bad. The classroom atmosphere was so quiet. My mood was so down” (on December 20, 2003).

From the results of the interview with the control group and my own field notes, it was confirmed that such a traditional lecture approach to teaching German grammar lacked effective teaching strategies to enhance the students’ learning motivation. Neither did this method of learning provide positive learning attitudes nor a safe, comfortable authentic language-learning environment that was able to create opportunities to practise and communicate. The weakness of the traditional grammar teaching approach found in this study is consistent with a great many research findings in the literature (de Silva & Burns, 1999; Krashen, 1985; Nunan, 2005).

I felt very discouraged that my students still had to practise the three “S” principles that I have described in Chapter 1 of this study: 1) keep silent in order to hide boredom or anxiety; 2) smile in order to hide embarrassment for not being able to answer any question; 3) sleep because of lack of interest and lack of motivation to learn. In the words of Nemerow (1996), “lack of motivation is probably the greatest obstacle to learning” (para. 7). Veenman

(1984) has found that teachers ranked problems about motivating pupils as the second most serious source of difficulty, preceding other obviously important issues such as the effective use of different teaching methods, knowledge of the subject matter, and the effective use of textbooks and curriculum guidelines. The question of how student motivation can be increased remains an ongoing issue for seasoned practitioners as well, since student lethargy and non-achievement norms in the classroom are regularly reported to be basic hindrances to effective teaching.

### **5.6 Control Students' Attitude towards the Role of Grammar in Learning a Second Language**

In this section, I am reporting comments by the students of the control group on their attitudes towards the role of grammar and grammar instruction. Regarding the need for teaching German grammar, all the interviewees commented that they needed an amount of grammar instruction in their classes, as they pointed out in the Questionnaire on the Role of Grammar (Table 4.43). The main reasons that the students gave for the importance of teaching grammar are covered in the following extracts from the focus group interviews:

Learning German here in Taiwan is different from learning German in Germany. Students hardly get a chance to use the language outside the classroom. According to my experiences in the learning of English, I am quite sure that it is necessary for us to learn the grammar of any foreign language. (S9)

The control students also expressed their learning difficulties in the learning of German because they were not Germans (Item 9 and 10). If they did not study German grammar, they would have difficulties learning German (Item 11, Item 12). The students also realized that “communication cannot take place in the absence of structure” (Savignon, 2000, p. 7). Therefore, the control students seemed to have positive attitudes towards the importance of grammar and also thought that grammar would support their learning of

German (Item 7 and 8). Thus, it was necessary for teachers to teach grammar in their learning of German.

In relation to the purposes of grammar instruction, these students considered that knowledge of German grammar would help them with their four language skills. Among the four language skills, knowledge of German grammar is more helpful for the development of writing ability than that of oral ability. That these students assigned an important role to grammar for developing all four-language skills is demonstrated by their high agreement rate in Table 4.43: 89.4% of the control students agreed that the study of grammar could help them to write German (Item 4); 85.1% agree that the study of grammar could improve their reading ability (Item 5); 74.6% that the study of grammar could improve their oral ability (Item 3); only 53.6% agreed that the study of grammar could improve their listening comprehension (Item 6). These students explained their perceptions in the following way, supporting the results in Table 4.43:

The aim of grammar learning should be to support the acquisition of the target language. When I learned grammar, I should also have learned how to apply it to my oral communication in daily life situations. I think the purpose of learning a second language is to be able to use the language to communicate with people. (S2)

The primary purpose of learning German grammar is for good writing and reading skills. Grammar should be used to analyse text and to get a better understanding of written materials. I would be unable to write, 'produce' a sentence, if I did not study German grammar. I would also be unable to understand what the others said in German and even to express myself correctly. Therefore, it is very important to learn grammar. (S7)

Furthermore, the control students also made suggestions regarding ways in which teachers could teach grammar effectively. In relation to the various ways to present grammar, the students thought that teachers should plan in advance the grammatical features to teach and when to teach them, as well as using more Chinese:

I would learn [the grammar] better, if teachers analysed structures and told us the rules as clearly as possible. Teachers should try to use more Chinese than German when teaching grammar, and then let us do related exercises. (S4)

If teachers use too much German, particularly when explaining grammar rules, I really feel it is more difficult to understand what the teacher says. Therefore, teachers should try to use Chinese and less grammatical terminology in the Beginner Course. (S1)

The control students tended to agree with the explicit, and the deductive approaches.

Regarding students' attitudes towards the medium of instruction, more than half of the students supported the use of using Chinese as the medium of instruction. However, the students thought that an emphasis on grammar should not override an emphasis on meaning. The students expressed the belief that focusing on meaning and providing students with abundant exposure to German are as important as grammar instruction. Moreover, they agreed that grammatical knowledge could be applied in real communication if teachers exposed them to German more, e.g. practised grammatical rules in real communicative situations. Most students expressed their agreement regarding the incorporation of repetitive pattern practices and the inclusion of communicative grammar practice. At this point, the control students came to express their preference for the learning of German: the students wanted German grammar to be taught both interactively and communicatively. This response was also recorded in the Questionnaire on the Role of Grammar (Item 19). Fotos and Ellis (1991) stated that

[Communicative grammar tasks] may contribute directly by providing opportunities for the kind of communication which is believed to promote the acquisition of implicit knowledge, and they may also contribute indirectly by enabling learners to develop explicit knowledge of L2 rules which will alert facilitate the acquisition of implicit knowledge. (p. 622)

Many students emphasized the importance of interesting and active classes to facilitate students' language learning. In this respect, the following comments were typical:

But I think teachers should not only provide form-based exercises, but also communicative practice for students. (S13)

I really agree with this point. It's really boring to sit there listening to the teacher all the time, though I knew s/he works very hard. I would like to participate in learning activities, e.g. games, discussion, role-play, singing songs, etc. Grammar classes should be more than listening to the teacher, but something different. More communicative or interactive. (S 7)

The students commented on the classroom atmosphere in the exercise-based practice with the words "boring" (in my words "dead air"). Nevertheless, the control students appeared to be slightly less satisfied with grammar classes (Tables 4.34-1 and 4.34-2). Therefore, they called for "fresh air" and "a happy atmosphere" for their learning environment.

Among the various communicative grammar activities, many students suggested that the affective issues should not be ignored while teachers plan their grammar lessons. A high achiever commented:

I used a rote memorization strategy for grammar rules and I could almost always get good grades. But I was not happy at all. I felt that I was studying just for examinations. But I think that learning German should be more than getting good grades. Sometimes, it should also sustain your interest and motivation. In that way, you may learn it for longer. (S9)

The comments of most control students reveal, on one hand, their needs to be motivated to learn or to make their learning interesting; on the other hand, their exercise-based practice failed in arousing their motivation. This lack of motivation also emerged in the post-test results of the Questionnaire on Motivation (Tables 4.22-1 and 4.22-2), as well as in the Questionnaire on the Type of Grammatical Practice (Table 4.42). The control students' score of grammar tests were lower in average than the experimental students with the game-based practice. In my role of researcher and teacher, I observed that my students were easily distracted by external factors, such as the unexpected noise of the patrol of the school administrators outside the classroom. Furthermore, while students were doing drills or exercises, related to the target structure during the instructional period, some repeated the answers after their teacher, but most of them just sat and listened. Therefore, affective factors

such as low motivation, impatience, and unwillingness affected the control students' concentration and performance while being instructed and completing the post-tests. The control group did not gain significant improvement in their motivation with the traditional practice. Indeed, such a concern was part of the justification for the present study. This is also a major concern of many language teachers (Dörnyei, 2001; Keller, 1983) and me. The control students wanted interesting, diverse and communication-rich activities, such as games. Their preference for the communicative activities, such as games or teamwork, echoed their answers in the Questionnaire on the Role of Grammar (Item 20).

In general then, the control students tended to agree that grammar helped them learn German. Without learning grammar, they thought they might not be able to express themselves in German accurately. However, they also thought that an emphasis on grammar should not override emphasis on meaning. The students said that focusing on meaning and providing students with abundant exposure to German are as important as grammar instruction. Moreover, they agreed that grammatical knowledge could be applied in authentic communicative situations especially if teachers exposed them to German more frequently. Most students expressed their agreement regarding the incorporation of repetitive pattern practice and the inclusion of communicative grammar practice. The positive attitudes of the control students towards the teaching of grammar were consistent with the results found in the Questionnaire on the Role of Grammar (see Table 4.43) and the perceptions both of the teachers and students in the literature (Gao, 2001; Schultz, 2002; Yen, 2002; Yu, 2003).

### 5.7 Summary

By analyzing all the interview data collected from 12 experimental students and 13 students from the control group during the focus group sessions, I found that each student had his/her German language learning experiences to relate, and various attitudes towards the role of grammar in their foreign language-learning program. Therefore, it was somewhat difficult

to draw conclusions about their German language learning experiences. Table 5.1, and following comments, summarize the data explored in this chapter.

Table 5.1

*Summary of the Interviews with the Experimental Group and the Control Group*

Issues	EG	CG
Satisfaction with the grammar teacher	+	O
Efforts made in the grammar classes	+	O
Self-evaluated capability in German language	+	—
Perception of motivation	+	—
Teacher-student interaction	+	O
Student-student interaction	+	—
Satisfaction with the type of grammar practice	+	O
Classroom cohesion	+	—
Perception of classroom atmosphere	+	—
Importance of grammar	+	+
Communicative grammar teaching approach/activities	+	+

Note: 1. EG = The Experimental Group

2. CG = The Control Group

3. + = Positive perception

4. O = Ambivalent perception

5. — = Negative perception

The indicators listed in Table 5.1 show a clear advantage for the Experimental Group over the Control Group on most items, in terms of overall level of satisfaction, enjoyment, self-evaluated capability, increased motivation, improved student interaction and positive classroom atmosphere

As all the comments have shown, the experimental students reported that they have experienced more enjoyment; made more effort; felt more confident in language use and were more actively involved than the control students. Overall, the motivation of the experimental students improved.

In addition to the improvements in motivation, the results of the focus group interviews also showed an improvement in the experimental students' perception of classroom atmosphere. They experienced a higher level of support during interaction with their teacher and registered a greater level of satisfaction with the game-based grammar classes. The experimental students also experienced stronger levels of cohesion and belonging and were more comfortable in their groups when working together, helping and supporting each other more than the control students reported.

With the exploration of the role of grammar in the learning of foreign languages, the students, whether they were from the experimental or the control group, had positive attitudes towards grammar and thought that grammar was important for their learning of a foreign language. The students pointed out that they needed a certain degree of grammar instruction in their classes. Some students thought it was very important, some thought it was important but that grammar should not be overemphasized. However, none thought that grammar should play an insignificant role in a language learning class. Some students perceived that the purpose of learning grammar was increasing their oral skills and literacy skills. Many students pointed out that grammar was not helpful for increasing speaking proficiency when students have few opportunities to practise the newly learned grammar.

Many students wanted grammar to be taught in a relaxed classroom atmosphere where students could interact freely with both the teacher and with other students. Therefore, the students suggested that teachers should use diverse and interesting communicative grammar activities that would be helpful not only for their acquisition of grammar, but also for developing oral skills and skills in reading and writing. Interesting and challenging, communicative and interactive grammar practice activities, such as group work, role-play, language games, dialogues, and videos, were suggested by the students.

These positive results are in line with my expectations, as formulated in Hypotheses 3



4, 5 and 6 for this study- i.e.

Hypothesis 3:

Students in the experimental group will show a greater degree of motivation with regard to grammar after having been exposed to language games.

Hypothesis 4:

Students of the experimental group will record an improvement in the language classroom atmosphere as a result of the use of language games, while the control students will not.

Hypothesis 5:

Students in the experimental group will provide more positive responses toward the game-based practice in their learning of German grammar than the students of the control group will toward the traditional grammar practice.

Hypothesis 6:

Most students of both groups will indicate their belief that grammar needs to be taught in a second language program.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **CONCLUSION: PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS,**

### **LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH**

#### **6.0 Introduction**

This chapter deals with the overall conclusions to be drawn from this study. Section 6.1 summarizes the aims and the procedure of the study. Section 6.2 summarizes the main findings. The pedagogical implications are presented in Section 6.3. The limitations of the study are presented in Section 6.4. Finally, the recommendations for future research are considered in Section 6.5.

#### **6.1 Aims and Procedure of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of the use of language games as a teaching strategy for raising the grammatical accuracy level in the writing by students of German as a second language. It also sought to explore the effects of game-based grammar instruction on both the students' motivation and the classroom atmosphere. To achieve this purpose, the following experiment was carried out over one school semester: I taught two groups of students, the Control group and the Experimental group, by using the same teaching program with one difference; the difference was the use of game-based practice for the experimental group, while the control group performed a traditional grammar-based exercise program only.

To collect data, I used grammar tests and examinations, a questionnaire on motivation, a questionnaire on classroom atmosphere, a questionnaire on grammatical practice, a

questionnaire on the role of grammar and grammar instruction, focus group interviews, and my field notes. All data were analysed and discussed in relation to my research questions and hypotheses.

## 6.2 Summary of the Main Findings

The experimental students reported that the games provided them with welcome communication-rich grammar practice activities. These activities (games) were enhanced, in the students' perception, by a more positive classroom atmosphere and a supportive spirit, whereby students were more willing to help one another, and the teacher was more readily available to offer support and answer any questions (see 5.1). My students' perceptions confirmed that games as teaching-learning strategies are fun and create a non-threatening learning environment that encourages interactions between students and teachers, enhances communication and teamwork, encourages active participation and enables students to demonstrate and apply previously or newly acquired language knowledge and skills, as a number of educators reported in the literature review have claimed (Deesri, 2002; Garcia-Carbonell, Rising, Montero & Watts, 2001; Gaudart, 1999; Hong, 2002; Macedonia, 2005; Shie, 2003).

It is also to be noted that the results on the level of grammatical accuracy in the grammar tests and examinations (Research Question 1) show that there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups of students (Tables 4.13, 4.14, and Figure 4.1). These results were consistent with the research findings obtained by Gardner (1987) and Miller (1992). However, this main finding does not support the common perception regarding the validity of games as a recommended learning and teaching strategy that emerged from most of the literature review, presented in chapter 2 (for example: Garcia-Carbonell, Rising, Montero & Watts, 2001; Gaudart, 1999; Macedonia, 2005; Shie, 2003) and

the research findings obtained by Cortex (1974), Issacs (1979), and Wrucke-Nelson (1992).

However, in spite of the statistically non-significant advantage registered by my experimental students over the control students, it is important to note that the experimental group recorded a small improvement in their accuracy level over the control group. This happened in spite of the experimental students having spent much less time on exercise-based grammatical practice. This small improvement points to a positive result in favour of the game-based teaching of a second language.

My second research hypothesis was also not supported by the results. The results regarding the level of grammatical accuracy in the grammar tests and examinations (Research Question 2) show that there was no statistically significant difference between the experimental language levels and the control language levels of students (Tables 4.13, 4.14, and Figure 4.1). However, it emerged from the post-test of the experimental students that the middle and low levels of these students showed a higher rate of improvement in accuracy than the top students. This result is noteworthy because it seems to imply that the use of games could be more beneficial to students with generally lower academic ability, as suggested by Gaudart (1999). The call by Shie (2003) for further research to examine whether weaker students benefit from the use of games as much as other students has been answered by this study with an empirically positive result. Given this situation, the positive outcome is very encouraging and suggests a causal relationship between the improvement rate of lower-achieving students and the use of games in the practice phase of learning a second language. Nevertheless, at this stage such an implication is based on evidence of this experiment only, and will need to be further tested in future research studies, as I have not found any evidence in my literature review of any other study that has reported a similar result.

The effects on the level of students' motivation in language classes (Research

Question 3) recorded a statistically significant improvement by the experiment group (Table 4.26 and Figure 4.9). The results confirmed my research hypothesis regarding the impact of games on students' motivation. The experimental students reported that they experienced more enjoyment (Table 4.23, Figure 4.6); made higher motivational effort (Table 4.24, Figure 4.7); felt more confident in language use (Table 4.25, Figure 4.8) and were more actively involved than the control students (see 5.1, pp. 171-182 and Appendix I, pp. 300-301). These results are in accordance with Anderson's (1998), Gardner's (1987) and Nemerow's (1996) research findings and also support many language educators' perceptions of the main advantage of games on students' motivation (Allery, 2004; Garcia-Carbonell, Rising, Montero & Watts, 2001; Rinvolucris & Davis, 1999; Shie, 2003; Ur, 1999).

The results from the questionnaire on classroom atmosphere (Research Question 4) showed a statistically significant improvement in the experimental students' perceptions (Table 4.41 and Figure 4.19). The results supported my research hypothesis on the effects of games on classroom atmosphere. The experimental students experienced a significantly higher level of support during interactions with their teacher (Table 4.38, Figure 4.16) and registered a significantly greater level of satisfaction with their participation in classes (Table 4.39, Figure 4.17). The students also experienced stronger levels of cohesion and belonging (Table 4.40, Figure 4.18). They reported feeling comfortable with each other as a result of working together, helping and supporting each other (Table 4.37, Figure 4.15).

The experimental students reported that the games provided them with welcome communication-rich grammar practice activities. These activities (games) were enhanced, in the students' perception, by a more positive classroom atmosphere and a supportive spirit, whereby students were more willing to help one another, and the teacher was more readily available to offer support and answer any question (see 5.1, pp. 171-173). My students'

perceptions confirmed that games as teaching-learning strategies are fun and create a non-threatening learning environment that encourages interactions between students and teachers, enhance communication and teamwork, encourage active participation and enable students to demonstrate and apply previously or newly acquired language knowledge and skills, as a number of educators claimed in the literature review (Deesri, 2002; Gary, Marrone & Boyles, 1998; Gaudart, 1999; Garcia-Carbonell, Rising, Montero & Watts, 2001; Macedonia, 2005; Shie, 2003).

It is also to be noted that the less positive comments by the students on the games related to organisational and disciplinary weaknesses rather than presenting objections to the use of games as such. One of the solutions that I am planning to implement, in order to obviate these difficulties, is to use my college hall and sports grounds for some games, as I believe that taking the students out of the classroom gives them a welcome change of scenery as suggested by Gaudart (1999). It is interesting that the problem of noise has become less and less of a major concern over one school semester. Games enhance students' interaction and encourage active participation. Students are motivated to learn together. The problem of organization and discipline, fortunately, has become less of a problem for my students (see 5.2).

Overall, the experimental students recorded strong positive responses towards the game-based grammar practice. Such positive perceptions have supported my fifth hypothesis, which expressed the expectation that the experimental students would provide more positive responses toward the game-based grammatical practice in their learning of German than the students of the control group would toward the traditional grammar practice. Table 4.42 shows that there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups of students on this score. The results of the analysis confirm similar results obtained by Hajdu (2000),

Issacs (1979), and Miller (1992), in which the students in the game-groups had a more positive attitude towards the use of games.

In the final research question of the present study, it was hypothesized that the majority of the students in both groups would indicate that grammar needs to be taught in a second language program. The results of the statistical analysis in Table 4.43 reported that the students of both groups had positive attitudes towards grammar and thought that grammar was important for their learning of a language. Many students in each of the two groups wanted grammar to be taught in a comfortable classroom atmosphere, where they could interact freely both with the teacher and with each other. Therefore, interesting and challenging communicative and interactive grammar practice activities including games, were suggested by the students (see 5.3, p. 192 and 5.6, pp. 211-212).

My results confirm similar results obtained by Yen (2002), Yu (2003) and Schulz (2001) who studied the students' perceptions of the role of grammar with ESL students, and Lai (2004) and Schulz (2001), who studied teachers' beliefs concerning the role of grammar. My students' comment on their preference for communicative interactive grammar instruction echoed a number of language educators' perceptions that the focus-on-form needs to be incorporated into communicative practice (Ellis, 2001; Klapper & Rees, 2003; Lando, 1999; Lightbown, 1998).

Although no statistically significant improvement in accuracy was recorded as a result of the use of games with the experimental students, the positive results in all other aspects of this are significant enough to warrant the conclusion that a more protracted use of games will result in an improvement also in grammatical accuracy. This is because games provide the appropriate grounding for accuracy to improve: better motivation, improved classroom atmosphere and interaction.

### 6.3 Pedagogical Implications

The overall positive effects of the use of games in the teaching of grammar as they emerged from this study have important implications for second language teachers, curriculum designers, textbook writers, and language teachers' associations.

The first implication is that language teachers ought to seriously consider introducing games as a regular and integrated strategy, in order to improve both their students' grammatical accuracy and their use of the language, thus improving their correctness and their listening/speaking competence, as suggested for example by Garcia-Carbonell, Rising, Montero and Watts (2001), Hong (2002), Macedonia (2005), Gaudart (1999) and Shie (2003).

The second implication to flow from the introduction of games relates to a much-improved level of student motivation to study a language. This implies that language teachers who commonly experience difficulties with students' apathy, disinterest, passivity and boredom during language classes could find a partial solution when games are an integrated part of teaching and learning. Motivated learners means engaged learners, and engaged learners means more successful learners. In the words of Gaudart (1999), "With practice comes progress, with progress comes motivation, and with motivation comes more learning" (para. 43).

In fact, the learners in my experimental group said that they were not only more motivated by being exposed to the use of games, but also more active and happy to be in their language classes, more ready to help each other, more willing to use German in order to improve their speaking skills, as well as their written skills.

A crucial pedagogical implication, therefore, points to the positive effect of the regular use of games on the improvement of students' oral competence. This also touches at the core of many language teachers' concerns, especially when they have to deal with large classes:



how to foster, not only the students' written ability, but also their oral skills. The use of games seems to offer a good starting point for ensuring that oral practice occurs in language classes. This was possible to do in my large class of 46 experimental students particularly through the use of pair and group work, as suggested by Gaudart (1999) and Nemerow (1996). The positive results stemming from this experiment were obtained in spite of a large class of students. Apart from providing useful indications to teachers of similarly big classes, these results augur well for smaller L2 classes, as is the case, for example, with Australian classes.

The third implication is that curriculum designers ought to consider integrating more communicative activities, including games, into their language teaching programs. Due to the overall positive effects of the use of language games, it is important to integrate them into the regular syllabus and curriculum in appropriate ways. As Deesri (2002) and Gaudart (1999) suggested, games should be regarded an integral part of the language syllabus, not an amusing activity for the end of the term.

A fourth important pedagogical implication touches on the need to revise the content and approach of language textbooks. Textbook writers would be advised to consider the first two implications and to include a variety of language games in what they write. Again, what is called for is not a sporadic presence of a few games, but rather a substantial and pervasive integration of games into every chapter.

It is a well-known fact that textbook editors provide the kind of texts that are likely to sell well. It is, therefore, the language teachers' role to ensure that they exercise their buying preference for the texts that respond to the inclusion of communicative activities such as games.

In other words, textbooks should contain both focus-on-forms and communicative tasks, as widely suggested by much literature on the successful combination of these two

crucial aspects (Ellis, 2001; Klapper & Rees, 2003; Lando, 1996,1999; Li, 2003). This approach is likely not only to lead the learners to notice linguistic forms, but also to help them use the target language in a meaning-oriented way. Hence, textbooks need to have explicit references to grammatical features while maintaining a communicative focus, which will interest learners. This will allow teachers to sequence the content of their lessons as they deem appropriate. The inclusion of games will thus allow the use of authentic language, out of which students can discover grammatical features inductively. The segments of a text containing grammatical explanations can be used by the teachers to show students how to apply the rules in communicative language. The kind of integration of formal and communicative elements in texts is already happening, as can be seen in German textbooks such as “*Ping Pong I*” (Kopp & Fröhlich, 1997), “*Passwort Deutsch I*” (Albrecht, et al., 2001), and “*Sowieso*” (Hermann & König, 1995).

A further pedagogical implication suggested by the results of this study relates to the field of teacher training in Taiwan and in places where games have not been adopted as yet. Games as learning and teaching strategies that can effectively motivate learners are introduced into classes with a great deal of fear and trepidation. It is a pity that games have been sidelined for a very long time in Taiwan. The Goethe Institute in Taipei in May 2005 offered a professional development course for German teachers with a focus on the use of games in German classes. In this training course German teachers were encouraged to play games and design their own games. Most teachers came to notice the value of language games and were going to try them in their own classes.

Student teachers of second languages need to be explicitly trained to use communication-based strategies, if they are to respond to their potential students’ need to be exposed to sound teaching approaches, which will enhance both accuracy and communicative

ability, in a positive, engaging and supportive atmosphere. Games offer the advantage of practising both oral and written skills. They are helpful for the development of these two skills because the negotiation of meaning and better expression of ideas in speaking are likely to help a similar negotiation of meaning and better expression of ideas in writing: oral presentations on topics students are planning to write, or are in the process of writing, and dialogue and journal activities in which students interview another person, are all activities where writing skills could be developed in combination with the speaking process.

Lastly, the study suggests that the attitude of the teacher towards the whole class and towards the individual students within the class is of great significance to the learning of a second language in a non-immersion context. Clement, Dörnyei and Noels (1994), Chambers (1999) and Christophel (1990) considered the teacher's own behaviour to be the single most important motivational tools. This was echoed by the term "methodological motivation" by Shie (2003). The comments of my students in both groups supported the important role of teacher in their learning process (see 5.1 and 5.4).

#### **6.4 Limitations of this study**

This experiment focused on a semester program. This allowed me to concentrate my teaching using a new approach in an intensive manner. While this can be viewed as a limitation on the experiment, it was the best I was allowed within the overall curriculum followed by my students. As language acquisition and language learning both occur over time, the brevity of the time period does limit the study.

The conclusions and the implications to emerge from this experiment are presented in full awareness of these limitations.

### 6.5 Recommendations for the Further Research

In spite of the reasons offered here to explain the inconclusive advantage of games in raising the level of grammatical accuracy, such an outcome needs to be taken seriously. Given the strength of the common perception by language teachers about the usefulness of games as a teaching strategy, the fact that the non-significant improvement recorded in this study failed to provide a more definite confirmation is a challenging result. It gives rise to a serious doubt about a type of activity that has been adopted as one of the best teaching practices, as was pointed out in the literature review (Chapter 2). The limitations under which this experiment was conducted need to be adjusted or supplemented by further research on this subject.

Firstly, this study focused only on the level of accuracy of grammatical rules of L2 German. Not only writing skills development, but also speaking skills development, is a concern of second language teachers. Future studies need to focus also on students' performance in their oral production. Therefore, an investigation of how speaking skills improve over time through the use of games will provide extra information on how to improve L2 education.

Secondly, future studies could also focus on other grammatical features to see how, and to what extent, the adoption of games influences both the rate of accuracy and the communicative production requiring the inclusion of those features. This could be done particularly with features that are very different from those of the learners' first language. Only when more grammatical features are tested alongside the main language skills will a more complete picture on the use of games be provided. Hopefully, future experiments will also provide a variety of settings, i.e. different countries, a variety of L2 learners at different levels of competence.

The issue relating to the generally perceived usefulness of games in improving the accuracy rate of a L2 remains basically untested, as this experiment can only indicate some future directions for its likely confirmation. The other more positive and significant results on the use of games, though, provide a strong indication in favor of other very crucial aspects of L2 classroom courses, which are also likely to lead, in time, to a more substantial improvement also in grammatical accuracy. The improvement in my students' overall motivation as well as in classroom atmosphere, as a result of games, the raising of their level of interest in their study of German, their strong perception of an increase in both teacher-to-students and student-to-student interaction, all augur well for the integration of games into grammatical practice. These strongly positive results pave a way that L2 teachers may decide to follow in their search for a more effective and satisfying approach to deliver grammar to their students.

Lastly, this study was conducted for the duration of one semester and monitored the short-term results of the use of games on grammatical accuracy, classroom atmosphere and level of motivation. In order to obtain further confirmation of the positive effects of games that emerge from my data, future studies could test also these effects over a longer period of time as suggested by Ortega and Iberri-Shea (2005). Ortega and Iberri-Shea (2005) suggest that SLA researchers should “increasingly seek to look at second language and literacy development longitudinally. Ultimately, longitudinal findings can have a central place in advancing our SLA theories and research programs” (p. 42). My hypothesis, based on the results of this experiment, is that long-term effect of games will prove beneficial for both accuracy and other classroom-related aspects.

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## **APPENDIX A**

### **Individual Demographic Information**

## Individual Demographic Information

Please fill in your responses to the items below. Use an “x” to mark where boxes are provided. Thank you!

1. Your student No.: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Gender: 1.  Male      2.  Female
3. Your Entrance Examination Scores:  
Total Score: \_\_\_\_\_, Chinese Score: \_\_\_\_\_, English Score: \_\_\_\_\_,  
Math Score: \_\_\_\_\_, Biology Score: \_\_\_\_\_, History Score: \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Is German your 1<sup>st</sup> priority? 1.  Yes      2.  No
5. Have you studied German before? 1.  Yes. For how long ? \_\_\_\_\_ 2.  No.
6. Have you used games during formal class teaching of a second language at school?  
1.  Often                      2.  Sometimes                      3.  Never  
In which subjects have games been used? \_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Questionnaire on Motivation**

### Questionnaire On Motivation (for Pilot Study)

	Agree	Strongly Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	4	3	2	1
1. "German I" is one of the subjects I am most interested in.	4	3	2	1
2. I like to discuss German grammar with my classmates.	4	3	2	1
3. I often participate in discussion about the contents of German grammar.	4	3	2	1
4. I study German grammar more diligently than any other subjects.	4	3	2	1
5. I ask someone for advice when I have problems with German.	4	3	2	1
6. It is worthwhile to dedicate more time to study German grammar.	4	3	2	1
7. I am very satisfied with my performance in "German I".	4	3	2	1
8. I believe that I can help my classmates to learn German.	4	3	2	1
9. I am able to use German grammar.	4	3	2	1
10. I find a way to solve my problems, if I cannot understand German in class.	4	3	2	1
11. I will try to work harder on the required assignments of the German course.	4	3	2	1
12. No matter what a test result is, I can still study German hard.	4	3	2	1
13. No matter what my German ability is, I believe I can study it well.	4	3	2	1
14. I hope to learn more German and its grammar.	4	3	2	1
15. I would like to spend more time learning German.	4	3	2	1
16. When studying German in "German I", I always feel that time passes quickly.	4	3	2	1
17. I feel the materials used in the German course are easy.	4	3	2	1
18. I feel that the materials used in the German class are interesting.	4	3	2	1
19. When learning German, I try my best to use correct German.	4	3	2	1
20. I will try my best to finish my German assignments.	4	3	2	1
21. I think that I can understand the contents taught in class.	4	3	2	1

## Questionnaire On Motivation

This questionnaire consists of 21 items. Please choose the number that matches your opinion and experience: “5” means “Strongly Agree”, “4” means “Agree”, “3” means “Unsure”, “2” means “Disagree” and “1” means “Strongly Disagree”. Please circle the number selected. Please answer all questions.

	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Unsure</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
1. “German I” is one of the subjects I am most interested in.	5	4	3	2	1
2. I like to discuss German grammar with my classmates.	5	4	3	2	1
3. I often participate in discussion about the contents of German grammar.	5	4	3	2	1
4. I study German grammar more diligently than any other subjects.	5	4	3	2	1
5. I ask someone for advice when I have problems with German.	5	4	3	2	1
6. It is worthwhile to dedicate more time to study German grammar.	5	4	3	2	1
7. I am very satisfied with my performance in “German I”.	5	4	3	2	1
8. I believe that I can help my classmates to learn German.	5	4	3	2	1
9. I am able to use German grammar.	5	4	3	2	1
10. I find a way to solve a problem, if I cannot understand German in class.	5	4	3	2	1
11. I will try to work harder on the required assignments of the German course.	5	4	3	2	1
12. No matter what a test result is, I can still study German hard.	5	4	3	2	1
13. No matter what my German ability is, I believe I can study it well.	5	4	3	2	1
14. I hope to learn more German and its grammar.	5	4	3	2	1
15. I would like to spend more time learning German.	5	4	3	2	1

- |     |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 16. | When studying German in “German I”, I always feel that time pass quickly. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 17. | I feel the materials used in the German course are easy.                  | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 18. | I feel that the materials used in the German class are interesting.       | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 19. | When learning German, I try my best to use correct German.                | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 20. | I will try my best to finish my German assignments.                       | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 21. | I think that I can understand the contents taught in class.               | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

## **APPENDIX C**

### **Questionnaire on Classroom Atmosphere**

### Questionnaire On Classroom Atmosphere (for Pilot Study)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	4	3	2	1
1. My classmates help one another during German activities.	4	3	2	1
2. My classmates share their experiences of learning German among themselves.	4	3	2	1
3. My classmates care about our progress in German when we study together.	4	3	2	1
4. My classmates care about my correct use of German grammar.	4	3	2	1
5. My classmates care about my feelings about learning German.	4	3	2	1
6. My classmates praise me when my performance in German is good.	4	3	2	1
7. My classmates expect me to have a good performance in German.	4	3	2	1
8. My classmates encourage one another to study German more diligently.	4	3	2	1
9. My classmates are satisfied with their own performance in German.	4	3	2	1
10. The activities used in learning German make us more familiar with one another.	4	3	2	1
11. My classmates get along better when studying German together.	4	3	2	1
12. My classmates would like to share their learning experience with our teacher.	4	3	2	1
13. I have achieved a lot in German classes.	4	3	2	1
14. My classmates like the learning activities in class.	4	3	2	1
15. My classmates feel happy when learning German.	4	3	2	1
16. My classmates wish that the way of studying every subject could be the same as in the German class.	4	3	2	1
17. Teaching with specific and concrete contents benefits our learning of German grammar.	4	3	2	1



- |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 18. The learning activities used in the German class are well organized.                              | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 19. My classmates like to participate in every class activity.  | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 20. My classmates feel that we can master German very well.   | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 21. The teacher cares about classroom management when we learn German.                                | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 22. The teacher often offers us opportunities to practise speaking German.                            | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 23. The teacher helps us to study more efficiently.   | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 24. The teacher praises our performance when we make progress.  | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 25. The teacher encourages us to discuss our problems and learn together.                             | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 26. The teacher values our feelings when we learn German.   | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 27. The teacher often praises our responses during German classes.                                    | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 28. The teacher is friendly during the German class.  | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 29. I can have important experiences in learning German from my classmates.                           | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 30. My classmates have the same attitude to the study of German.                                      | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 31. When encountering difficulties in learning German, we help one another.                           | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 32. To learn German together will enables us to get along better.                                     | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 33. My classmates find it interesting to learn German.  | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 34. My classmates would like to follow the rules for the German activities decided in class together. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 35. If a classmate has not participated in some activities, the others help him to catch up.          | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

## Questionnaire On Classroom Atmosphere

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	5	4	3	2	1
1. My classmates help one another during German activities.	5	4	3	2	1
2. My classmates share their experiences of learning German among themselves.	5	4	3	2	1
3. My classmates care about our progress in German when we study together.	5	4	3	2	1
4. My classmates care about my correct use of German grammar.	5	4	3	2	1
5. My classmates care about my feelings about learning German.	5	4	3	2	1
6. My classmates praise me when my performance in German is good.	5	4	3	2	1
7. My classmates expect me to have a good performance in German.	5	4	3	2	1
8. My classmates encourage one another to study German more diligently.	5	4	3	2	1
9. My classmates are satisfied with their own performance in German.	5	4	3	2	1
10. The activities used in learning German make us more familiar with one another.	5	4	3	2	1
11. My classmates get along better when studying German together.	5	4	3	2	1
12. My classmates would like to share their learning experience with our teacher.	5	4	3	2	1
13. I have achieved a lot in German classes.	5	4	3	2	1
14. My classmates like the learning activities in class.	5	4	3	2	1
15. My classmates feel happy when learning German.	5	4	3	2	1
16. My classmates wish that the way of studying every subject could be the same as in the German class.	5	4	3	2	1

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 17. Teaching with specific and concrete contents benefits our learning of German grammar.             | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 18. The learning activities used in the German class are well organized.                              | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 19. My classmates like to participate in every class activity.  | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 20. My classmates feel that we can master German very well.   | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 21. The teacher cares about classroom management when we learn German.                                | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 22. The teacher often offers us opportunities to practise speaking German.                            | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 23. The teacher helps us to study more efficiently.   | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 24. The teacher praises our performance when we make progress.  | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 25. The teacher encourages us to discuss our problems and learn together.                             | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 26. The teacher values our feelings when we learn German.   | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 27. The teacher often praises our responses during German classes.                                    | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 28. The teacher is friendly during the German class.  | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 29. I can have important experiences in learning German from my classmates.                           | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 30. My classmates have the same attitude to the study of German.                                      | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 31. When encountering difficulties in learning German, we help one another.                           | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 32. To learn German together will enables us to get along better.                                     | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 33. My classmates find it interesting to learn German.  | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 34. My classmates would like to follow the rules for the German activities decided in class together. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 35. If a classmate has not participated in some activities, the others help him to catch up.          | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

## **APPENDIX D**

### **Questionnaire on the Two Types of Grammatical Practice**

## Questionnaire on the Two Types of Grammatical Practice

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
		5	4	3	2	1
1. The grammatical practice used by my teacher enables me to understand the rules of German grammar.	5	4	3	2	1	
Please specify the reason: _____						
2. The grammatical practice used by my teacher enables me to learn the correct German grammar.	5	4	3	2	1	
Please specify the reason: _____						
3. I would like my teacher to keep using the current grammatical practice to teach us German grammar	5	4	3	2	1	
Please specify the reason: _____						
4. I can use German fluently as a result of the practice my teacher uses.	5	4	3	2	1	
Please specify the reason: _____						
5. The grammatical practice my teacher uses reduces my learning effectiveness.	5	4	3	2	1	
Please specify the reason: _____						
6. The grammatical practice my teacher uses can improve my listening comprehension.	5	4	3	2	1	
Please specify the reason: _____						

7. The grammatical practice my teacher uses helps my ability in oral German. **5 4 3 2 1**  
Please specify the reason: \_\_\_\_\_
8. The grammatical practice my teacher uses helps my German reading comprehension. **5 4 3 2 1**  
Please specify the reason: \_\_\_\_\_
9. The grammatical practice my teacher currently uses helps my German writing ability. **5 4 3 2 1**  
Please specify the reason: \_\_\_\_\_
10. The grammatical practice my teacher uses enables me to like German more and to raise my interest in learning German. **5 4 3 2 1**  
Please specify the reason: \_\_\_\_\_
11. The grammatical practice my teacher currently uses is an incentive to learn German. **5 4 3 2 1**  
Please specify the reason: \_\_\_\_\_
12. The grammatical practice my teacher uses when encouraging students' interaction helps me to learn German. **5 4 3 2 1**  
Please specify the reason: \_\_\_\_\_
13. The grammatical practice my teacher uses creates an excellent atmosphere in class and it helps me to learn German. **5 4 3 2 1**  
Please specify the reason: \_\_\_\_\_
14. The grammatical practice my teacher currently uses brings no benefit to my German ability. **5 4 3 2 1**  
Please specify the reason: \_\_\_\_\_
15. Do you have any suggestions about this teaching method?

## **APPENDIX E**

### **Questionnaire on the Role of Grammar and Grammar Instruction**

## Questionnaire on the Role of Grammar and Grammar Instruction

How to fill in the questionnaire:

For each item please circle the number. Answer all items!

Thank you for your cooperation!

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<hr/>						
<b><u>Importance of Learning German Grammar</u></b>						
1. Learning grammar helps me to understand German.	5	4	3	2	1	
3. Learning grammar enables me to achieve high scores in German tests.	5	4	3	2	1	
4. Learning grammar can help me to speak German.	5	4	3	2	1	
5. Learning grammar can help me to write German.	5	4	3	2	1	
6. Learning grammar can help me to read German texts.	5	4	3	2	1	
7. Learning grammar can help me to study German well.	5	4	3	2	1	
8. Learning grammar is essential to eventual mastery of German.	5	4	3	2	1	
<b><u>Difficulties of Learning Grammar</u></b>						
9. We need to learn grammar because German is not our native language.	5	4	3	2	1	
10. German is Germany's native language; so German people do not have to learn grammar.	5	4	3	2	1	
11. My German study may be better if I do not learn grammar.	5	4	3	2	1	
12. Grammar impedes my German learning.	5	4	3	2	1	
13. Learning grammar makes me less interested in learning German.	5	4	3	2	1	



### **Methods of Learning Grammar**

14. The German teacher needs to teach German grammar in class. **5 4 3 2 1**
15. It is necessary to learn grammar gradually from elementary grammar to advanced grammar. **5 4 3 2 1**
16. Systematic teaching from the teacher can help me to learn German well. **5 4 3 2 1**
17. Which item in the following list is the best help in learning grammar?
1.  Sentence practice advised by the teacher
  2.  Study grammar by yourself
  3.  Talk to foreigners in German
  4.  Practise with classmates in German
  5.  Study the textbook
18. Which items should the German grammar teacher include in class:
1.  Only grammar
  2.  Only reading texts
  3.  Only German conversation
  4.  Grammar and reading texts
  5.  Grammar, reading texts, and conversation

Why? Please write down your comments.

- 
19. The grammar teaching method I prefer :
1.  Communicative teaching approach by interactive learning with Classmates.
  2.  Teaching by the teacher and listening by the students.
  3.  Combining teaching and listening with interactive practice among students.

Why? Please write down your comments.

- 
20. Which kind of tasks do you prefer during German grammar teaching?
1.  Teaching by the teacher and listening by the students
  2.  Team Discussion
  3.  Games
  4.  Paper test
  5.  Praise of test scores as encouragement

## **APPENDIX F**

### **Focus Group Interview Questions**

### **Focus group questions**

1. How is the course going?
2. What do you like about the course and the teacher?
3. What are some characteristics of the teacher's instructional style that work well?
4. What are some positive aspects of studying German this way?
5. What are some negative aspects of studying German this way?
6. What are some of the ways in which the course might be improved?
7. What do you think about the role grammar plays in your second language-learning program?
8. What are your preferred activities in class when you are learning the grammar of German?

**APPENDIX G**  
**Teaching Program**

## Teaching Program

Units	Date	Themes	Grammatical Features	Activities			
				Control Group		Experimental Group	
	15.09. ~21.09. 2003	Orientation week					
	09.22 ~ 09.28 2003	Orientation week (Administration of Questionnaires)					
1	09.29 ~10.14.2003 (12 hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greetings</li> <li>• To get to know each other</li> <li>• To introduce someone else to a group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pronouns: ich, du, er, sie, es, ihr, Sie</li> <li>• Verb endings for the pronouns</li> <li>• Word order: subject+ verb</li> <li>• Question words: wo, woher, was, wie</li> <li>• Integrative sentence</li> <li>• W-questions</li> </ul>	Stage	hours		
				1	4	Direct and in-depth explanation of rules with examples	Direct and in-depth explanation of rules with examples
					2	Dialogue	Dialogue
				2	4	Exercises + drills from textbook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Game 1</li> <li>• Game 2</li> </ul>
				1	1	Test 1 (10.13.2003)	Test 1 (10.13.2003)
					1	Discussion	Discussion

## Teaching Program

Unit	Date	Themes	Grammatical Features	Activities			
				Control Group		Experimental Group	
2	10.15 ~ 10.19 10.27 ~ 11.03.2003 (9 hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enquiring and answering about what people do</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Irregular verbs: sein (to be), fahren (to drive), schlafen (to sleep), haben (to have), sprechen (to speak), lesen (to read), sehen (to see), essen (to eat), nehmen (to take), laufen (to run)</li> </ul>	Stage	hours	Direct and in-depth Explanation of rules with examples  Text	Direct and in-depth Explanation of rules with examples  Text
				1	3 1		
				2	3 1 1	Exercises + drills from textbook  Test 2 (10.3.2003)  Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Game 3</li> <li>Game 4</li> </ul> Test 2 (10.31.2003)  Discussion
	10.22 ~ 10.25 2003	Wenzao Week ( no class)					

## Teaching program

Units	Date	Themes	Grammatical Features	Activities			
				Control Group		Experimental Group	
3	11.04 ~ 11.08 11.18 ~ 11.24. 2003 (9 hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Naming objects and people in German</li> <li>• Making requests</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The gender of nouns</li> <li>• The definite articles: der, die, das</li> <li>• Singular and plural forms of nouns</li> </ul>	Stage	Hours	Direct and in-depth Explanation of rules with examples  Text	Direct and in-depth Explanation of rules with examples  Text
				1	2		
				2	3	Exercises + drills from textbook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Game 5</li> <li>• Game 6</li> <li>• Game 7</li> </ul>
				1	1	Test 3 (11.21.2003)	Test 3 (11.21.2003)
				1	1	Discussion	Discussion
	11. 10~ 11.16. 2003	Mid-term Examination week					

## Teaching Program

Units	Date	Themes	Grammatical Features	Activities			
				Control Group		Experimental Group	
				Stage	Hours		
4	11.25. ~ 12.08. 2003 (10 hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Naming objects of stationery, food and drink</li> <li>• Describing people, things or places</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The indefinite article: ein, eine, × (a, an)</li> <li>• Negative: nicht, kein-</li> <li>• Pronoun (sie, er, es)</li> <li>• Yes/no question:</li> <li>• Verb+subject..?</li> <li>• Negative sentences</li> </ul>	1	3	Direct and in-depth Explanation of rules with examples	Direct and in-depth Explanation of rules with examples
					2	Text	Text
				2	3	Exercises + drills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Game 8</li> <li>• Game 9</li> </ul>
					1	Test 4 (12. 05. 2003)	Test 4 (12.05.2003)
					1	Discussion	Discussion



## Teaching program

Units	Date	Themes	Grammar Structures	Activities			
				Control Group		Experimental Group	
5	12.09 ~ 12.10.2003 (3 hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Activities and hobbies: say what you like or dislike; how often you engage in the activities</li> <li>Time (official)</li> <li>Timetables</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reinforcement of some regular weak verbs and irregular verb forms</li> <li>Word order: adverbs with the verb -gern, nicht gern/oft, manchmal, selten</li> </ul>	Stage 1	Hours 2 1	Direct and in-depth Explanation of rules with examples  Exercises + drills	Direct and in-depth Explanation of rules with examples  Exercises + drills
	12.11 ~ 12.22. 2003 (8 hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Timetables</li> <li>When do you do what?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Separable verbs: ankommen, abfahren, stattfinden, ausfuellen, mitspielen, mitsingen, mitbringen, nachsprechen, vorlesen, anfangen, einladen</li> </ul>	2	3 3 1 1	Direct and in-depth Explanation of rules with examples  Exercises + drills  Test 5 (12.24.2003)  Discussion	Direct and in-depth Explanation of rules with examples  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Game 10</li> <li>Game 11 (4 sessions)</li> </ul> Test 5 (12.24.2003)  Discussion
	12.23.2003 (2 session)	Christmas party					

## Teaching Program

Units	Date	Themes	Grammar Structures	Activities			
				Control Group		Experimental Group	
				Stage	Hours		
6	12.25.2003 ~ 01.07.2004  (8 hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Family</li> <li>• Form of a letter</li> <li>• Describe your family</li> <li>• Talk in some detail about your family members</li> <li>• Write a letter about your family</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The possessive adjective in all genders</li> <li>• Form of a letter</li> <li>• All sentence structures taught in the semester</li> </ul>	1	3	Direct and in-depth Explanation of rules with examples	Direct and in-depth Explanation of rules with examples
					2	Text	Text
				2	3	Exercises + drills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Game 12</li> <li>• Game 13</li> </ul>
					1	Test 6 (01.05.2004)	Test 6 (01.05.2004)
					1	Discussion	Discussion
	01.12 ~ 01.16. 2004	Final-examination week					

## **APPENDIX H**

### **Language Games used in the Study**

## Game 1                      Snakes and Ladders

**Grammar:** To reinforce the usage of subject pronouns, present tense of verbs and the sentence structure for question and answers.

The German pronoun and verb ending of regular verb forms; e.g. ich komme (*I come*), du kommst (*you come*), er kommt (*he comes*), sie kommt (*she comes*), wir kommen (*we come*), ihr kommt (*you come*), sie kommen (*they come*)

Sentence structure: subject + verb + object

Gabi lernt hier Englisch. (*Gabi learns English here.*)  
Er heisst Willi. (*His name is Willi.*)

W-questions: question words and structure:

wie, woher, wo, was + verb + subject ? e. g.  
Wie heissen Sie? (*What is your name?*)  
Woher kommst du ? (*Where do you come from?*)  
Wo wohnt ihr? (*Where do you live?*)  
Was macht Gabi hier? (*What are you doing here?*)  
Wer ist das? (*Who is it?*)

Prepositions: in (*in*), aus (*from*)

Gabi kommt aus Hamburg und wohnt jetzt in Bonn.  
(*Gabi comes from Hamburg and lives now in Bonn.*)

**Function:** To enquire and respond

**Skills:** Speaking and writing, partly reading and listening

**Class Organisation:** Groups

**Time:** 50 minutes

**Preparation:** A SNAKE AND LADDERS board  
A die and 4 markers  
A deck of playing word-cards:  
The white cards have fill-in exercises with correct verb endings.  
The blue cards have fill-in exercises with correct prepositions.  
The orange cards have fill-in exercises with correct question words.  
The green cards have exercises to build correct questions.

**Procedure:** Students take turn placing a marker on the starting place and tossing the dice.

The students then move their marker the appropriate number of spaces. The colour on the spaces where they land decides which playing cards students choose.

Students are permitted to move by giving a correct answer to the question. If a student lands at the base of a ladder and gives the right answer, he may climb up to the top of the ladder and continue from there to the next turn; if the answer is not correct, he just does not proceed any further.

If a student lands on the tail of a snake and gives the right answer, he is permitted to move forward to the head of snake. If the answer is incorrect, he moves three spaces back. If he lands on the head of snake and gives the right answer, he may stay on the same spot; otherwise, he has to slide down to the tail of the snake and continues from there on the next turn.

The first person to reach the endpoint, wins.

### Yellow cards

Wo ist der Zug?	Der Zug ist <u>in Deutschland</u> .	Wie heißt das Mädchen?	Das Mädchen heißt <u>Lisa</u> .
Woher kommt er?	Er kommt <u>aus Kopenhagen</u> .	Was lernt Thomas?	Thomas lernt jetzt <u>Chinesisch</u> .
Wo liegt Deutschland.	Deutschland liegt mitten <u>in Europa</u> .	Wohin fahrt ihr?/ Wohin fahren Sie?	Wir fahren <u>nach Japan</u> .
Wohin fahren viele Mensch?	Viele Menschen fahren <u>nach Paris</u> .	Was machst du?/ Was machen Sie?	Ich <u>spiele Karten</u> .
Woher kommt das Bier?	Das Bier kommt <u>aus Deutschland</u> .	Wo arbeitest du? Wo arbeiten Sie?	Sie arbeiten <u>in Kaohsiung</u> .

## Blue cards

Lisa a _____ in Frankfurt.	arbeitet	A _____ ihr auch in Leipzig?	arbeitet
Frau Mohr w _____ in Berlin.	wohnt	Frau Miller m _____ in Italien Urlaub.	macht
Herr Schmidt _____ aus Dortmund.	kommt	Wir f _____ nach Moskau.	fahren
Das Kind h _____ Tobias. Und wie h _____ du?	heißt	Du _____ Maria?	bist/heisst
Ihr _____ auch Karten?	spielt	Wir _____ sehr viel.	reisen/arbeiten
Ich _____ jetzt Deutsch.	lerne		

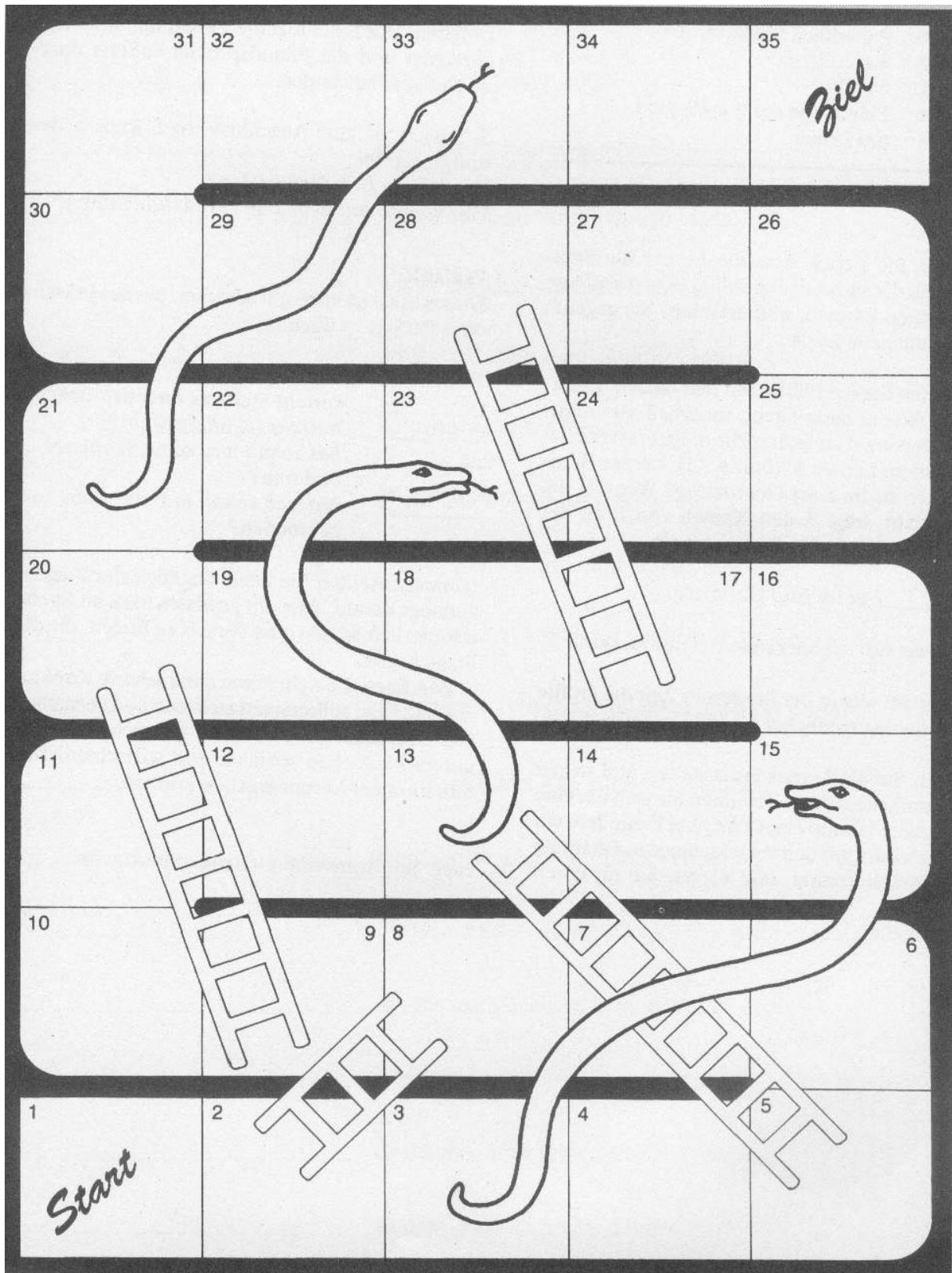
## Green Cards

Wir machen Urlaub _____ Österreich.	in	Der Zug ist _____ Deutschland.	in
Anna und Thomas fahren _____ Suddeutschland.	nach	Deutschland liegt _____ Europa.	in
Ich komme _____ Australien.	aus	Frau Hansen wohnt _____ Frankfurt.	in
Tobias lernt Deutsch _____ Köln.	in	Der Tee kommt _____ Asien.	aus
Die Züge fahren _____ Genf.	nach		

## Red Cards

_____ kommst du? Aus Deutschland.	Woher	_____ machen Sie in England?  Urlaub machen	Was
_____ arbeiten Sie? In England.	Wo	_____ fahren Sie? Nach München.	Wohin
_____ lernt ihr hier? Deutsch und Chinesisch.	Was	_____ liegt Deutschland? Mitten in Europa.	Wo
_____ heisst du denn? Willi Baumann.	Wie	_____ reist viel? Thomas.	Wer
_____ wohnen Herr und Frau Baumann? In Bonn.	Wo	_____ ist deine Telefonnummer? 3426032	Wie
_____ ist Ihre Adresse? Min Tzu Straße 900.	Wie		





This board card is adopted from '66 Grammatik Spiele' by Rinvoluceri and Davis (1999), p. 19.

**Game 2****Interview (Kennenlernenspiel)***Grammar:*

To reinforce the usage of subject pronouns, present tense of verbs and the sentence structure for questions and answers.

A Wie heißt du? or Wie ist dein Name? (*What is your name?*)

B Ich heiße xxx. or Mein Name ist xxx. (*My name is xxx.*)

A Woher kommst du? (*Where do you come from?*)

B Ich komme aus xxx. (*I come from xxx.*)

A Wo wohnst du? or Wie ist deine Adresse?  
(*Where do you live? Or what is your address?*)

B Ich wohne in xxx. (*I live in xxx. or my address is...*)

A Was machst du hier? or Was lernst du hier?  
(*What are you doing here?*)

B Ich lerne Deutsch. (*I learn German.*)

*Function :*

To introduce oneself and someone else to a group

*Skills:*

Speaking, writing and listening

*Class Organisation:*

Pairs, groups

*Preparation:*

As many identity cards as there are students

*Time:*

40 minutes

*Procedure:*

The students are grouped in pairs of four and each receives a blank identity card.

The four students now interview each other in order to fill in the blanks on the identity card.

Each student introduces his partner to the group using the identity card as a memory aid.

Winner: the first student to finish the task.

*Variation:*

Each student interviews another 3 classmates out of his group.



Each student introduces himself to the class and then introduces one of his interviewed classmates to the class.

*Source:* This game was adapted from the game “Das Kennlernenspiel” as found in the German text book ‘*Passwort Deutsch I*’ (Albrecht, et al., 2001, pp. 103-104)

## Ein Zug in Deutschland (Wechselspiel)

Lesen Sie die Beispielsätze. Fragen und antworten Sie bitte.

Partner A	Partner B
Woher kommt <b>Martin Miller</b> ?	Er kommt aus ...
Versteht <b>Anna Goraj</b> Deutsch?	Nein, ...
...	...
Wie ist die Adresse von ...	Die Adresse ist ...
...	...
Woher kommen <b>Sie/kommst du</b> ?	...

<b>A</b>	<b>Martin Miller</b> 	<b>Anna Goraj</b> 	<b>Ihr Partner/ Ihre Partnerin</b>	<b>Ich</b>
<b>Woher?</b> (kommen)		Polen		
<b>Deutsch?</b> (verstehen)	Ja, sehr gut.			
<b>Wo?</b> (wohnen)		Bremen		
<b>Adresse?</b> (sein)	Pfalzburger Straße 8			
<b>Telefon- nummer?</b> (sein)		0421/330175		
<b>Wohin?</b> (fahren)	Köln			
<b>Was?</b> (machen)		Deutsch lernen		

*Grammar:* Irregular verbs and verb forms: sein (*to be*), fahren (*to go*), schlafen (*to sleep*), sprechen (*to speak*), lesen (*to read*), sehen (*to see*), essen (*to eat*), nehmen (*to take*), laufen (*to run*)

Sentence structure: questions with question words and answers

Examples: A Was machst du ? (*What are you doing?*)

B Ich lese Bücher. (*I am reading books.*)

A Wie kommt Gabi zur Schule?

(*How does Gabi come to school?*)

B Sie fährt mit dem Bus. (*She comes by bus.*)

B Sie nimmt den Bus. (*She takes the bus.*)

A Was essen Sie gern? (*What do you like to eat?*)

B Ich esse gern Fisch. (*I like to eat fish.*)

A Wer ist das? (*Who is that?*)

B Das ist Frau Baumann. (*It is Mrs. Baumann.*)

*Function:* Enquiring and answering about what people do

*Skills:* Listening, speaking

*Class Organisation:* Pairs, groups

*Preparation:* A board card, a dice and 4 markers

A deck of playing picture cards with relevant irregular verbs

*Procedure:* Students take turns placing a marker on the starting place and tossing the dice.







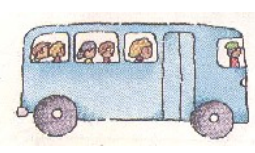




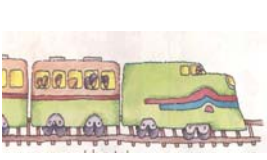
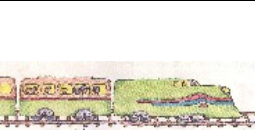

They then move their marker the appropriate number of spaces. The pronoun on the spaces decides which pronoun students use for the question, i.e. 'Was macht Gabi?' (*What are you doing?*)

Then, students choose a picture card to answer the question.

Students are permitted to move by giving a correct answer to the question and the picture. If the answer is incorrect, the player moves three spaces back. The first person to reach the endpoint wins.

*Source:* This game is a variation of a game in the German course book 'Pinpong I' (Kopp & Fröhlich, 1997, p. 28).



 <p>nehmen</p>	<p>Er nimmt eine Suppe. Du nimmst eine Suppe. Ihr nehmt eine Suppe</p>	 <p>laufen</p>	<p>Der Film läuft jetzt.</p>
 <p>schlafen</p>	<p>Er schläft. Du schläfst. Ihr schlaft.</p>	 <p>laufen</p>	<p>Er läuft schnell. Du läufst schnell. Ihr lauft schnell.</p>
 <p>mit dem Taxi fahren</p>	<p>Er fährt mit dem Taxi. Du fährst mit dem Taxi. Ihr fahrt mit dem Taxi.</p>	 <p>zu Mittag essen</p>	<p>Er isst zu Mittag. Du isst zu Mittag. Ihr esst zu Mittag.</p>
 <p>den Bus nehmen</p>	<p>Er nimmt den Bus zur Schule. Du nimmst den Bus zur Schule.</p>	 <p>Pommes frites essen</p>	<p>Er isst Pommes frites gern. Du isst Pommes frites gern. Ihr esst Pommes frites gern.</p>
 <p>mit dem Auto fahren</p>	<p>Er fährt mit dem Auto. Du fährst mit dem Auto. Ihr fahrt mit dem Auto zur Schule.</p>	 <p>das Taxi nehmen</p>	<p>Er nimmt das Taxi. Du nimmst das Taxi. Ihr nehmt das Taxi.</p>
 <p>Englisch sprechen</p>	<p>Er spricht Englisch. Du sprichst gern Englisch. Ihr sprecht wenig Englisch.</p>	 <p>mit dem Zug fahren</p>	<p>Er fährt mit dem Zug zur Schule. Du fährst mit dem Zug zur Schule.</p>
 <p>den Zug nehmen</p>	<p>Er nimmt den Zug zur Schule. Du nimmst den Zug zur Schule.</p>	 <p>Eis essen</p>	<p>Sie isst Eis gern. Du isst Eis gern. Ihr esst Eis gern</p>

## Game 4                      Who wrote what about me?

**Grammar:** Irregular verbs and verb forms: sein (to be), fahren (to go), schlafen (to sleep), sprechen (to speak), lesen (to read), sehen (to see), Essen (to eat), nehmen (to take), laufen (to run)

Sentence structure: questions and answers

Examples: A Sprichst du Deutsch? (*Do you speak German?*)

B Ja, ich spreche Deutsch. (*Yes, I do.*)

A Liest du gern Bücher? (*Do you like reading?*)

B Ja, ich lese gern Bücher. (*Yes, I do.*)

**Function:** To check statements

**Skills:** Writing, speaking, listening, reading

**Class Organisation:** Groups

**Time:** 30 minutes

**Preparation:** One irregular verb sheet per student

**Procedure:** Give out an irregular verb sheet to each person in the class. Ask each student to complete the sentences thinking about different classmates and complete a full sentence structure by using the irregular verbs they have learned, e.g. Maria schläft oft (*Maria sleeps very often*) or Alex fährt heute nach Taipei (*Alex is going to Taipei today*). Each sentence should mention a different classmate.

Collect all the completed sheets and then hand them out again, making sure nobody gets his own.

The students walk around the room and try to find the person described on the sheet. The students have to check with the people whether the statements about them are true or not by asking the question, e.g. 'Isst du gern Fisch, Alex?' (*Alex, do you like to eat fish?*) Each student has an opportunity to correct the previous statements that have been written about them, e.g. 'Ja, ich esse gern Fisch.' (*Yes, I like to eat fish.*) or 'Nein, ich esse gern Fleisch.' (*No, I like to eat meat.*)

The winner is the first student to find the person described in his/her sheet.

**Source:** This game is a variation of the game 'Who wrote what about me?' found in the book 'More grammar games: Cognitive, affective and movement activities for EFL students' (Rinvolverci & Davis, 1995, pp. 62- 63).

Sheet

**IRREGULAR VERB SHEET**

Write about your classmates using the verbs below – they are given in the infinitive form – you have to use the correct form of the verb for the person you use. You may decide to write more than one sentence about a particular classmate.

- Mein Name .....
- (sein ) .....
- (schlafen) .....
- (fahren) .....
- (sprechen) .....
- (lesen) .....
- (essen) .....
- (laufen) .....
- (haben) .....



## Game 5                      Matching game

*Grammar:*                      Insertion of the definite article *der* (masculine) /*die* (feminine)/*das* (neuter)/*die* (pl.), use of singular/plural forms; short oral responses to picture cues.

*Function:*                      Naming objects and people in German

*Skills:*                              Speaking, listening, reading, writing

*Class Organisation:*        Groups

*Time:*                              30 minutes

*Preparation:*                      Sets of small cards made up of matched pairs whose link is immediately and easily grasped. Sets of small pictures cards of objects in singular and plural and sets of word cards of corresponding words.









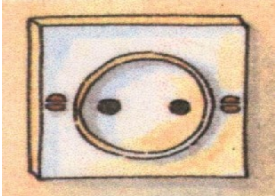



*Procedure:*                      Students work in groups of four, with the word and picture cards randomly spread out before them. The first student picks up a picture card by asking a question, for example:

*Was heisst das auf Deutsch? (What is it in German?) or  
Wer ist das? (Who is it?),  
Was ist er/sie von Beruf? (What is your job?)*

Then he has to find the word card that matches the picture. If a student picks up a word card first, he has to ask 'Wo ist das Bild 'die Lampe'?' (*Where is the picture card of 'the light'?*)

The cards become the property of the student who matched the word with the picture. The winner is the one who has the most cards at the end.

*Variation:*                      To reinforce the three kinds of definite articles and forms of singular and plural of nouns, each student will be asked by the other of the group what is on the card. (*Wie heisst das?/ wie heissen sie auf Deutsch?*). The student has to say the noun with its singular form as well as plural form, e.g. *das Buch, die Bücher (a book, books)*. If he gives the correct answer, he may keep the card. The winner is the one who has the most cards at the end.

	der Journalist die Journalisten		die Kirche die Kirchen
	die Straße die Straße		der Touist die Touristen
	die Frau die Frauen		die Lampe die Lampen
	das Mädchen die Mädchen		der Großvater die Großväter
	die Steckdose die Steckdosen		das Buch die Bücher
	die Sonne die Sonnen		die Mine die Minen

	der Mond die Monde		das Telefon die Telefone
	das Foto die Fotos		der Kugelschreiber die Kugelschreiber
	die Patientin die Patientinnen		der Stecker die Stecker
	der Taschenrechner die Taschenrechner		der Mann die Männer
	das Kind die Kinder		der Schüler die Schüler
	die Lehrerin die Lehrerinnen		

## Game 6 **Quartet (Happy Families)**

*Grammar:* Insertion of the definite article: der (masculine) /die (feminine) /das (neuter)/die (pl.), use of singular/plural forms; short oral responses to picture cues.

*Function:* Making requests and naming objects and people.

*Skills:* Listening and speaking

*Class Organisation:* Groups

*Time:* 30 minutes

*Preparation:* Pictures and pieces of card (see Appendix)  
For each group of players, a set of 36 small picture cards is distributed. The pictures fall into nine 'families', four pictures constitute a family. This game has families of food items. Each card has only one picture of a food with a word in the centre of the card.

*Procedure:* This is a game for four players. One player shares out the picture cards, shuffling the set first, and dealing them out face down so that no one sees the others' cards. Each player looks at his own cards and sorts them out into as many complete families as possible. There may be none. All complete families are placed face down in front of each player.

The players take turns to ask another player for any card that is needed to make up a complete family. If the player who is asked has the card in question, he must hand it over. As before, when a family is completed, the cards are placed face down in front of the player to whom they belong. The first player to complete all his families is the winner.

Direct the learners to use an appropriate form of words when asking for cards, e.g.




S1.: Wo ist die Schokolade? (*Where is the chocolate?*)

Ist die Schokolade hier? (*Is the chocolate here?*)

S2 : Ja, sie ist hier. (*Yes, here it is.*)

Nein, sie ist leider nicht hier. (*Sorry, it is not here.*)

*Source:* This game was adapted from the book 'Games for Language Learning' (Wright, Betteridge & Buckby, 1986, p. 85). These cards were designed and made by my colleague, Mrs. Chu, chen-pin.

 <p><b>DIE LEHRERIN</b> die Schülerin der Schüler der Lehrer</p>	 <p><b>DIE TÜTE</b> der Riegel der Stück die Flasche</p>	 <p><b>DIE DOSE</b> der Becher das Glas die Packung</p>	 <p><b>DER SCHÜLER</b> die Schülerin die Lehrerin der Lehrer</p>
 <p><b>DER KREIDE</b> die Tafel der Schwamm die Tür</p>	 <p><b>DER LEHRER</b> die Schülerin der Schüler die Lehrerin</p>	 <p><b>DIE SCHOKOLADE</b> die Gummibärchen der Kuchen der Saft</p>	 <p><b>DIE JACKE</b> der Mantel der Rock der Pullover</p>
 <p><b>DER SCHWAMM</b> die Kreide die Tafel die Tür</p>	 <p><b>DER PULLOVER</b> der Rock der Mantel die Jacke</p>	 <p><b>DIE PACKUNG</b> der Becher das Glas die Dose</p>	 <p><b>DIE FLASCHE</b> der Riegel die Tüte das Stück</p>
 <p><b>DIE GUMMIBÄRCHEN</b> die Schokolade der Kuchen der Saft</p>	 <p><b>DIE SCHÜLERIN</b> der Schüler die Lehrerin der Lehrer</p>	 <p><b>DER ROCK</b> der Pullover der Mantel die Jacke</p>	 <p><b>DIE TÜR</b> die Kreide der Schwamm die Tafel</p>
 <p><b>DER MANTEL</b> der Rock der Pullover die Jacke</p>	 <p><b>DER BECHER</b> das Glas die Dose die Packung</p>	 <p><b>DER KUCHEN</b> die Gummibärchen der Saft die Schokolade</p>	 <p><b>DER RIEGEL</b> die Flasche die Tüte das Stück</p>
 <p><b>DER SAFT</b> die Gummibärchen der Kuchen die Schokolade</p>	 <p><b>DAS STÜCK</b> der Riegel die Tüte die Flasche</p>	 <p><b>DAS T-SHIRT</b> die Hose die Schuhe der Gürtel</p>	 <p><b>DIE TAFEL</b> die Kreide der Schwamm die Tür</p>
 <p><b>DER KEKS</b> die Limonade der Joghurt die Milch</p>	 <p><b>DIE LIMONADE</b> der Keks der Joghurt die Milch</p>	 <p><b>DAS GLAS</b> der Becher die Dose die Packung</p>	 <p><b>DER JOGHURT</b> der Keks die Limonade die Milch</p>
 <p><b>DIE MILCH</b> die Limonade der Joghurt die Keks</p>	 <p><b>DER GÜRTEL</b> das T-Shirt die Hose die Schuhe</p>	 <p><b>DIE HOSE</b> die Schuhe der Grtel das T-Shirt</p>	 <p><b>DIE SCHUHE</b> das T-Shirt die Hose die Gürtel</p>

## Game 7                      Memory game

*Grammar:*                      Insertion of the indefinite article ein/eine/x (a/an) before appropriate nouns; use of singular/plural forms;

*Function:*                      Asking and describing.

*Skills:*                              Speaking, listening, reading, writing

*Class Organisation:*        Groups

*Time:*                              30 minutes

*Preparation:*                      Sets of small cards made up of matched pairs whose link is immediately and easily grasped, are presented. Sets of small picture cards of objects (in singular and plural) and sets of word cards of corresponding words.

*Procedure:*                      Students work in groups of four, with the cards randomly distributed before them, face down. The first student turns over any two cards and reads the written words or describes the picture(s):

Das ist ein Buch. (*This is a book.*)

Das ist eine Strasse. (*This is a road.*)

Das ist ein Kugelschreiber. (*This is a pen.*)

Das sind Lampen. (*They are lights.*)

Then students replace the cards face down. This process is repeated, in turn, by the participants, the aim being to remember where the different cards were located and to turn up a matching pair – which then becomes the property of the one who found them. The winner is the one who has the most pairs at the end.

*Source:*                              This game was adapted from the book ‘Grammar practice activities: A practical guide for teachers’ (Ur, 1988, p. 86).

## Game 8 Picture game

*Grammar :* Negative words: nicht (*not*), kein/keine/kein (*no, not a, not any*)

Negative sentences:

Nicht (*not*) goes directly after the verb or in front of the adjective.

- Examples :
- A Ich komme nicht aus Taiwan.  
(*I do not come from Taiwan.*)
  - B Dino kommt heute nicht.  
(*Dino won't come today.*)
  - C Ich bin nicht gross.  
(*I am not tall.*)

Kein/keine/kein (*no, not a, not any*) are followed by a noun and follows the pattern of ein/eine/ein (*a/an*).

- Examples :
- A Das ist keine Lampe, sondern ein Telefon.  
(*This is not a light, but a telephone.*)
  - B Das sind keine Bleistifte, sondern Kugelschreiber.  
(*They are not pencils, but pens.*)

*Function:* Asking and answering.

*Skills:* Writing, reading, speaking, listening

*Class Organisation:* Groups

*Time:* 30 minutes

*Preparation:* A dice, four markers and a board card (Snakes and Ladders)

Sets of picture cards with adjectives, nouns or phrase

*Procedure:* Students take turns placing a marker on the starting place and tossing the dice.

The students move their marker the appropriate number of spaces. Then they choose a picture card. With the words, (an adjective or prepositional phrase), they have to build up a question from the picture.

- Examples :
- A Ist der Kaffee kalt? (*Is the coffee cold?*)
  - B Kommt der Mann aus Deutschland?  
(*Does the man come from Germany?*)
  - C Spielt er? (*Does he play?*)
  - D Sind das Kugelschreiber? (*Are they pens?*)

E Ist er Lehrer von Beruf? (*Is he a teacher?*)

Students are permitted to move by giving a correct answer to the question.

- Examples :
- A1 Nein, er ist nicht kalt, sondern heiss.  
(*No, it is not cold, but hot.*)
  - B1 Nein, er kommt nicht aus Deutschland, sondern aus England. (*No, he doesn't come from Germany, but from England.*)
  - C1 Nein, er spielt nicht, sondern macht Musik.  
(*No, he doesn't play, but listen to music.*)
  - D1 Nein, das sind keine Kugelschreiber, sondern Bleistifte. (*No, they are not pens, but pencils.*)
  - E1 Nein, er ist kein Lehrer, sondern Student.  
(*No, he is not a teacher, but a student.*)

If a student lands at the base of the ladder and gives the right answer, he may climb up to the top of the ladder and continue from there on the next turn; if the answer is not correct, he just stays on the same spot.





If a student lands on the tail of a snake and gives the right answer, he is permitted to move forwards. If the answer is incorrect, he should move three spaces back. If he lands on the head of the snake and gives the right answer, he may stay on the same spot; otherwise, he has to slide down to the tail of the snake and continues from there on the next turn.

The first person who reaches the endpoint, wins.

## Picture cards



 <p>Das Lineal kurz?</p>	<p>Nein, es ist <b>nicht kurz</b>, sondern lang.</p>	 <p>neu?</p>	<p>Nein, es ist <b>nicht neu</b>, sondern alt.</p>
 <p>schön?</p>	<p>Nein, es ist <b>nicht schön</b>, sondern schlecht.</p>	 <p>heiß?</p>	<p>Nein, es ist <b>nicht heiß</b>, sondern kalt.</p>
 <p>jung?</p>	<p>Nein, sie ist nicht jung, sondern alt.</p>	 <p>kalt?</p>	<p>Nein, er ist <b>nicht kalt</b>, sondern heiß.</p>
 <p>groß?</p>	<p>Nein, die ist <b>nicht groß</b>, sondern klein.</p>	 <p>leer?</p>	<p>Nein, es ist <b>nicht leer</b>, sondern voll.</p>
 <p>langsam?</p>	<p>Nein, sie laufen <b>nicht langsam</b>, sondern schnell.</p>	 <p>Ted Max?</p>	<p>Nein, er ist <b>nicht Max</b>, sondern Ted.</p>

 <p>Karten spielen?</p>	<p>Nein, sie spielen <b>nicht</b> Karten sondern studieren.</p>	 <p>Studieren?</p>	<p>Nein, sie studieren <b>nicht</b>, sondern spielen Fußball.</p>
 <p>lesen?</p>	<p>Nein, er liest <b>nicht</b>, sondern schreibt.</p>	 <p>arbeiten?</p>	<p>Nein, sie arbeiten <b>nicht</b>, sondern spielen.</p>
 <p>schlafen?</p>	<p>Nein, sie schläft <b>nicht</b>, sondern liest.</p>	 <p>arbeiten?</p>	<p>Nein, er arbeitet <b>nicht</b>, sondern isst.</p>
 <p>fahren?</p>	<p>Nein, sie fährt <b>nicht</b>, sondern schläft.</p>	 <p>singen?</p>	<p>Nein, sie singt <b>nicht</b>, sondern spricht.</p>
 <p>fahren?</p>	<p>Nein, sie fahren <b>nicht</b>, sondern warten.</p>	 <p>aus Tainwan?</p>	<p>Nein, es kommt <b>nicht</b> aus Taiwan, sondern aus Afrika.</p>

## Game 9 Describing Pictures

**Grammar:** Negative words: nicht (*not*), kein/keine/kein (*no, not a, not any*)

Negative sentences:

Nicht (*not*) goes directly after the verb or in front of the adjective.

- Examples :
- A Ich komme nicht aus Taiwan.  
(*I do not come from Taiwan.*)
  - B Dino kommt heute nicht.  
(*Dino won't come today.*)
  - C Ich bin nicht gross.  
(*I am not tall.*)

Kein/keine/kein (*no, not a, not any*) are followed by a noun and follows the pattern of ein/eine/ein (*a/an*).

- Examples :
- A Das ist keine Lampe, sondern ein Telefon.  
(*This is not a light, but a telephone.*)
  - B Das sind keine Bleistifte, sondern Kugelschreiber.  
(*They are not pencils, but pens.*)

Pronouns for the different gender of the nouns:

- Examples :
- A der Mann – er (*the man – he*)
  - B das Auto– es (*the car – it*)
  - C die Kirche – sie (*the church – it*)
  - D die Bücher – sie (*the books – they*)

Indefinite articles: ein/eine/ein (*a/an*)

**Function:** Describing a picture

**Skills:** Writing, reading, speaking, listening

**Class Organisation:** Groups

**Time:** 50 minutes

**Preparation :** Three large pictures of the College 'Wenzao Ursuline College of Languages', a church 'der Kölner Dom' and a truck made by Mercedes Benz. Basic key words are supplied either by the teacher or within the coursebook so that most of the items depicted are within the vocabulary range of the class.

**Procedure:** Students work first as a whole class to brainstorm and jot down some ideas. The teacher invites the students to say as much as they can about the picture, using the grammatical features listed above.

Students then work in groups of four and repeat step 1. They are then required to write as much as they can about the picture into a short paragraph in ten minutes.

Each group has to send one of its groups to read out his writing in front of the class.

The group work will be assessed by other groups and by the teacher by adding points on a set scale. The winning group is the one who has the most points at the end.

- Grammar:* Separable verbs: ankommen (*to arrive*), abfahren (*to start*), umsteigen (*to transfer*), anfangen (*to begin*), ausfüllen (*to fill in*), mitsingen (*to sing together*), mitkommen (*to come with*), mitspielen (*to play with*), vorlesen (*to read loud*), nachsprechen (*to speak after*)
- Function:* Putting the words in the correct order
- Skills:* Writing, reading, speaking, listening
- Class Organisation:* Groups
- Time:* 50 minutes
- Preparation:* Select five sentences built up with the separable verbs from the textbook and teaching handouts for each group of students.
- Procedure:* Ask the students in the group to choose their five favourite sentences from those provided by the teacher. They then write each word on a separate piece of card. The students may design their own cards.
- The students mix up the word cards and place them on their chairs. Students then reconstruct the same sentences.
- The winner will be the one who first finishes the reconstruction of the sentences.
- Variation 1:* Ask the students of the group to remix the pieces and to place them on their chairs. Students of the other group then mill around and reconstruct the sentences.
- Stop them when they have done half a dozen sentence reconstructions.
- The group who can reconstruct the most sentences will be the winner.
- Source:* This game was adapted from the book ‘More grammar games: Cognitive, affective and movement activities for EFL students’ (Rinvolutri & Davis, 1995, pp. 44 - 45).

*Grammar :* Present progressive of verbs, irregular and separable verbs

Sentence structure:

- Examples :
- A Ich höre Musik um 19:00 Uhr.  
(*I listen to music at 19:00 o'clock.*)
  - B Ich mache Musik am Freitag.  
(*I play music on Friday.*)
  - C Ich spiele Fußball am Freitag um 15:00 Uhr.  
(*I play football at 15:00 o'clock on Friday.*)
  - D Am Freitag um 15:00 Uhr spiele ich Fussball.  
(*On Friday, at 15:00 o'clock I play football.*)

*Function :* Gathering information; making appointments

*Skills :* Writing, reading, speaking, listening

*Class Organisation :* Pairs

*Time :* 40 minutes

*Preparation :* Blank diary for each student

*Procedure :* Group are placed in pairs.

Give students blank grids (as in Table 3.7). Students are told to fill about two thirds or three quarters it with their own imaginary program of activities for the coming week. They then talk to partners and try to find times they are both free to meet (or preferably two or three possible times, out of which they choose the most convenient). As an optional continuation, they may go on to try to fix a further appointment with someone else- and so on, until the diary is full, or until they are unable to find anyone to meet in the little spare time remaining. They do this by asking each other questions:

Was machst du am Freitagnachmittag?  
(*What are you going to do on Friday afternoon?*)

Hast du Zeit am Samstag? (*Do you have time on Saturday?*)

Um wieviel Uhr spielst du Fußball?  
(*When do you play football?*)

If they cannot meet their partner at the time proposed, they must say why, i.e. describe what they are going to do then. They do this by answering each other's questions:

Nein, am Samstag um 10:00 Uhr spiele ich Fußball.

*(No, I am going to play football on Saturday.)*

Nein, der Deutschkurs fängt um 9:00 Uhr an.  
*(No, the German course begins at 9:00 o'clock.)*

The winner is the first student in a group to finish the task.

*Source:*

This game is adapted from the book 'Grammar practice activities: a practical guide for teachers' (Ur, 1988, pp. 96-105)

## Blank Dairy

<b>11</b> <b>Montag</b>	<b>12</b> <b>Dienstag</b>	<b>13</b> <b>Mittwoch</b>	<b>14</b> <b>Donnerstag</b>	<b>15</b> <b>Freitag</b>	<b>16</b> <b>Samstag</b>	<b>17</b> <b>Sonntag</b>
7:00 _____	7:00 _____	7 _____	7 _____	7 _____	7 _____	7 _____
8 <i>Deutschkurs</i> <i>anfangen</i>	8 _____	8 _____	8 _____	8 _____	8 _____	8 _____
9 _____	9 _____	9 _____	9 _____	9 _____	9 _____	9 _____
10 _____	10 _____	10 _____	10 _____	10 _____	10 _____	10 _____
11 _____	11 _____	11 _____	11 _____	11 _____	11 _____	11 _____
12 _____	12 _____	12 _____	12 _____	12 _____	12 _____	12 _____
13 _____	13 _____	13 _____	13 _____	13 _____	13 _____	13 _____
14 _____	14 _____	14 _____	14 _____	14 _____	14 _____	14 _____
15 _____	15 _____	15 _____	15 _____	15 _____	15 _____	15 _____
16 _____	16 _____	16 _____	16 _____	16 _____	16 _____	16 _____
17 _____	17 _____	17 _____	17 _____	17 _____	17 _____	17 _____
18 _____	18 _____	18 _____	18 _____	18 _____	18 _____	18 _____
19 _____	19 _____	19 _____	19 _____	19 _____	19 _____	19 _____
20 _____	20 _____	20 _____	20 _____	20 _____	20 _____	20 _____
21 _____	21 _____	21 _____	21 _____	21 _____	21 _____	21 _____
22 _____	22 _____	22 _____	22 _____	22 _____	22 _____	22 _____



**Game 12****Detectives**

- Grammar :* The use of the possessive adjectives to indicate possession; simple oral utterances based on object cues.
- Function :* Stating possession of objects.
- Skills :* Writing, reading, speaking, listening
- Class Organisation :* Groups
- Time :* 40 minutes
- Preparation :* Collect easily identifiable objects from the students, e.g. a pencil, a standard textbook
- Procedure :* Send one student in the group (the detective) outside, and ask other students in the group for something that belongs to him or her, but is not easily identifiable – a pencil, a standard textbook, etc. The detective comes back, is given one of the collected objects, and is asked by one student:

Ist das dein Buch? (*Is it your book?*)

The student – whether it is in fact his or not – denies it by indicating another female student out of the group:

Buch. Nein, das ist nicht mein Buch, vielleicht ihr

(*No, it is not my book, it is her book.*)

The detective then asks the student indicated, and so on round the group; at the end, he or she has to try to identify who in fact was lying and who the owner of the object is.

Each member of the group has to take a turn to play the 'detective' and repeat step one.

The winner will be the person who found the owner of the object within five minutes.

- Source:* This game was adapted from the book 'Grammar practice activities: A practical guide for teachers' (Ur, 1988, p. 226).

### Game 13                      Grammar letters

*Grammar :*                      To use of the possessive adjectives to indicate possession

*Function :*                      Asking and answering.

*Skills :*                          Listening, speaking, reading and writing

*Class Organisation :*      Groups

*Time :*                          50 minutes

*Preparation :*                A letter to the students, taken directly from the textbook  
‘Passwort Deutsch, Stufe I ‘(p. 40)

Family photo of students will be collected.

*Procedure :*                    Ask students to open page 40 of their textbook ‘Passwort  
Deutsch, Stufe I’ and allow time for them to read the letter.

The teacher helps with vocabulary or grammar problems including reinforcing the written grammar presentation in the letter. Tell the students that the sample letter gives them all the grammar they need in order to reply.

Four group members choose one of their family photos and try to find out the relationship between people in the photo with the owner of the family photo. They should ask by using the question ‘Wer ist das?’ (*Who is it?*) The owner has to give an answer by saying ‘Das ist meine Onkel.’ (*This is my uncle.*) Other members of group may ask more questions of the person they are interested in, e.g.

Wie alt ist er? (*How old is he?*)

Wie groß ist er? (*How tall is he?*)

Ask each student to write a letter to a German penfriend about himself and his family.

Collect the letters in the next class. Pick out a few of the most interesting ones in terms of human content and grammar errors. Photocopy these for the whole group.

Give the class copies of the letters you have chosen to highlight. Let them read them, enjoying them for content. Then go through the main grammar difficulties.

This game was adapted from the game ‘Grammar letter’ collected in book ‘More Grammar Games: Cognitive, affective and movement activities for EFL students’ (Rinvoluceri & Davis, 1995, p. 92).

**APPENDIX I**  
**Extra Students' Comments**  
**from Focus Group Interviews**

## 5.1 The Experimental Group's Positive Responses to Grammar Classes Where Games were Used

### a) Students' level of satisfaction with their teacher:

Although her teaching approach was much the same as my English teachers' approaches in the junior high school, she tried to explain the rules as clearly as possible. I like the way she explains the grammatical rules ... step by step ... from simple units to the completed sentence structure. This really helped me understand German grammar better. (S9)

I benefited a lot in this way. The teacher stated the grammatical rules at the beginning of the lessons; we are supposed to have an overview of the explicit information about the rules. Then, we might be able to work on a series of exercises [games], which improved my understanding of the taught grammar. I think it's a good way to learn German grammar. (S5)

### b) Students' level of satisfaction with the type of grammar practice through

#### communicative, interactive games

I thought the hands-on approach to the lecture was wonderful. I will keep what I have learned with your interactive learning approach. I can retain more information with hands-on vs. formal lecture. (S1)

I have learned to speak German more freely, and my expression or communicative ability has also been enhanced. I thought that I applied what I have newly learned to real life communication with each other and elicited information that I needed. Practising my grammar contributed to my success in the learning of German and also strengthened my interest. (S7)

### c) Students' level of satisfaction with the teaching approach through

#### increased student-student interaction, peer support and encouragement in games:

##### Supportive classroom atmosphere

In that way, I mean, we could check the answers by ourselves or you could also get the support from your group members or the teacher. I felt more confident to apply the grammar and use German. That encouraged me to study harder. And my German ability is improving, I thought. (S11)

I am very shy because my German is not good. However, I have to work with my classmates in groups. In small-group interaction time, I become more cooperative with my classmates because they would

encourage me to study. I can still remember that time; they ‘encouraged’ (in forced tone) me to raise my hand to answer a teacher’s question in order to earn points for my group. And this is the first time I speak German in front of the whole class. I am happy to get one point for my group. I finally realised I can also succeed if I study hard. I feel I am motivated to study German. Although I am still passive, I won’t be so scared to work with my classmates as before. I appreciated my group members very much. (S8)

At first, I hated to attend German grammar class because my German is so poor.... But now I like German better because German classes are fun and I have several nice, helpful group members who are really concerned about me. It’s good to have learning partners. (S2)

I felt more encouraged to speak in class. I think I have become more fluent and more competent at expressing myself. I felt less nervous because I knew I was not alone in the class. I felt more encouraged to talk, to explore and even to make mistakes. (S6)

I usually ask my classmates instead of the teacher. Sometimes, I could understand their answers or explanations better”. (S4)

### **Classroom cohesion**

By playing games, I got to know students in class, who I did not know before. Group members share happiness and sorrow together, and I like this sense of belonging. (S7)

If I have any problems, my group members would teach me or they would correct my mistakes immediately. Besides, through games, we have more chances to get to know each other, to learn together, and share learning experiences...e.g. Stefan taught and told me how to learn definite articles. (S7)

### **d) Increased students’ motivation as a result of the use of games:**

I like to learn German through games. Sometimes, I am looking forward to playing games. While playing games, our responses and actions are forced to become faster than usual. If you want to win, you have to concentrate in class. So ...I can concentrate harder in class and it’s impossible for me to doze off during the games. (S12)

I enjoyed the games. It was such an exciting alternative to the lecture. Not that lecture is all bad, but the games break the simple monotony of it. (S2)

I thought the games were interesting. I found that I absorbed information more when I enjoy learning it, and the games were a big help. To learn grammar through games was easier and more fun to learn. It made the class go by quicker. (S8)

For me, it is more interesting to play games than sitting at the desk and listening to the teacher alone. I wish that the teacher would include more games in the grammar class. (S5)

## **5.2 Unfavourable Responses of the Experimental Group to the Grammar Classes**

### where Games were Used.

#### a) Students' problems regarding the organization of games:

Playing games did not make all students look forward to every class time. We are accustomed to teacher-fronted lessons. This time we have the chance to sit in a group. Some students just use the opportunity to talk. They did not really become involved in the games. (S9)

It is true. I got wonderful experiences at that game 'Match game'. I was in the group with Stefan, Verona, and Manfred. All of us participated actively in the game. We trained each other to pronounce the new words... We created our rules to play games. It was a lot of fun and learned the words better. But you are not lucky every time to have such wonderful partners to work with. So, it might be a good idea to choose our partners by ourselves. (S7)

#### b) Request for more games:

I am often able to finish the games rapidly. Sometimes, I have a greater opportunity to move off-task. Therefore, the grammar classes would work better if the teacher prepared more games for the same context. Then, we would be able to practise more and get more familiar with the newly learned grammar. That may make the learning of grammar more effective. (S9)

#### c) Usefulness of group work:

I recognized that sometimes it is better to play with different people. You have more opportunity to work with different people. It's also a challenge... more fun. It was not an issue any more as it was at the beginning of the semester. (S7)

## 5.3 Experimental Students' Attitude Towards the Role of Grammar

### in a Second Language.

#### a) Students' perceptions of the role of grammar in their learning of a Second

##### Language:

Learning a foreign language is different from learning a native language; it is just necessary and natural to learn grammar. (S7)

We are not German and we are not learning German in Germany. We are learning German here in Taiwan. We are unable to have exposure to it and are therefore not used to it. In Germany, they don't need to learn the grammar of their native language. Similarly, we don't learn grammar of Chinese, but we still can use Chinese naturally and fluently...because we are exposed to it and are used to it.

So, if we want to master a foreign language, it is important to learn grammar. (S1)

I am aware that German is very different from Chinese. It is an alphabetic language, like English... They belong to the same language family. And Chinese is a character-based language. If we didn't study the grammar, how would I know how to make a meaningful sentence? We would encounter similar problems when we started to learn English. That is why it is necessary to study grammar. Then, with knowledge of grammar, I can understand what I read. I can build up correct sentences and write. (S5)

**b) Students' perceptions of the purposes of grammar instruction:**

The primary purpose of learning German grammar is for good conversational skills. Grammar should be used to gain a better command of speaking and writing skills. I would be unable to read German texts or understand dialogues in German, if I did not study German grammar. (S1)

I don't think it is a good idea that the teachers spend most of time talking about grammar or leading students to do a lot of form-based, fill-in-the blank exercises. They might select relevant reading texts or dialogues. So we have ideas about how to apply or practise the grammatical rules and improve our reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. (S12)

**c) Students' preference for the current grammar instruction**

**approach:**

It was impressive that ...the teacher taught the definite articles and pronouns. Then we read the text about the German cities. Through reading, I understood the rules better and also got to learn about some German cities. I saw that German could be useful. I know I will be able to read German if I study it. (S6)

I like the grammar instruction provided in my grammar class a lot because I basically think that students in any grammar class should practise grammar both through grammar exercises and through applied communicative activities, like language games in class after getting instruction on any specific grammar point. The grammar practice activities, I mean, both the exercises in the handouts and communicative grammar practice activities, were helpful for my acquisition of grammar. (S10)

**d) Students' preference for communicative grammar teaching**

**approach/activities:**

The grammatical knowledge has to be practised and used. Perhaps at first students only have the knowledge and cannot use it, but after receiving guidance and instruction from the teacher, they start using it and expressing themselves better. So, more interactive or communicative activities should be integrated into grammar teaching. Language games can be one of the most interesting communicative activities for practising the learned grammar. (S3)

Grammar should be used in real life situations either through speaking or through writing after being taught the rules. Thus, the way, I think, the teacher taught for the last semester is not bad for the learning of German grammar. The teacher explained grammar points in focus by giving many meaningful example sentences, and by referring many times to the handout charts where the grammar points in focus were explained and how the grammar points can be used. The teacher, then, prepared useful communicative speaking activities or writing activities, I mean, language for us to practice already learned grammar. I think, this grammar instruction is helpful for the learning of the grammar. (S9)

#### **5.4 The Control Group's Positive Responses to the Grammar Classes.**

##### **a) Students' level of satisfaction with the grammar teacher:**

[The teacher] was really keen on teaching us. [She was] very positive and encouraging. She was definitely charismatic ... the teacher worked hard and was very supportive. She always explained or answered ... every very basic, easy, and trivial question from her students, and helped the students to do their job better in class by acting as a helper or facilitator instead of a controller. (S1)

I liked the grammar class a lot because I was able to ask the teacher about any grammatical points that she had taught in class, and the teacher herself assumed those learning processes to be natural and responded to my questions in a very welcoming manner. (S6)

##### **b) Students' level of satisfaction with the grammar teaching approach:**

I liked the approach that the teacher used to teach grammar. She explained the rules by demonstrating the structure on the blackboard and giving examples. (S2)

The deductive grammar presentation method from my teacher's part was not bad. She did a good job – the way she introduced the grammar enhanced my understanding of German language. She explained in detail the forms and the ways these grammar items are used. During these grammar explanations, the teacher enriched her explanations with lots of model sentences showing how those grammatical items work in a sentence. This process was quite helpful when it came to improving my grammar. (S11)

Which textbook is used in any grammar class is very important. I was unable to study German grammar with the textbook alone. It



was not easy for a beginning learner to find grammar points by him/herself. To this point, [the teacher's] systematic organization and presentation of any grammar point and intensive exercises on that grammar in the chosen textbook really helped us to understand German grammar. I was satisfied with my teacher because she did her job well. (S8)

**The benefits of handouts:**

I appreciated the teacher very much. She planned all the grammatical features and organized them systematically in the handouts. The handouts helped me a lot in the understanding German grammatical rules. (S13)

Finally, I could understand why the teacher was proud of her handouts. With her handouts, she explained each grammar point very clearly by using simple language, step by step. In this way, I was able to get an overview of the explicit information about the rules. It was not as difficult to understand German grammar as I had thought at the beginning of the semester. I could get good grades if I concentrated on the lessons and reviewed the handouts and text exercises. (S5)

**5.5 Unfavourable Responses of the Control Group to the Grammar Classes**

**a) Students' comments on the type of grammar practice:**

I think that a grammar instruction where a teacher teaches first the grammar rules and then students do exercises in a textbook is not adequate for improving the students' grammar. Instead, I really love grammar instruction where the teacher gives lots of example sentences about grammar while teaching the rules and after that, lots of communicative grammar practice activities. (S1)

In addition to the exercises prepared by the teacher in the handouts, the main focus practice activities were doing textbook exercises in class or as homework. In these parts of the lessons, I did not have any interest at all. Of course, I hardly benefited from the classes. First of all, the textbook exercises were all grammar-based, they were fill-in-the blanks, multiple choices, circle the correct answer. You can do it by yourself since you can find the answers at the end of the course book. Why should we sit in class and read the answers together? (S4)

**b) Students' comments on the paucity of teacher-student and student-student interaction:**

Of course, we could practise our grammar through textbook exercises by filling in the blanks. But it was so boring to fill in the blanks or

to circle the correct answer in class. You just sat there. Nobody, not even the teacher would notice whether or not you read the answers from the exercises. No interaction. It was easy to be absent-minded. And I often told myself, it's OK, I might find the answers by myself after class! (S12)

It was not a problem for me to learn the grammar since the teacher introduced grammar clearly. It wasn't a problem to do textbook exercises or pass the grammar examination. But I am seriously concerned that I am unable to check grammar use myself and understand its use. In her teaching approach, she lacked of grammar practice activities, I mean, communicative grammar practice activities which would enable us to use grammar we had learned in class. (S9)

**c) Classroom boredom:**

I did not like the classroom atmosphere. I could not understand why so many classmates fell asleep in the German grammar course. It's very impolite to the teacher. But some weeks later, I began to understand why it is so. The teacher talks and talks. I quite understand she tries very hard to explain the rules and sentences as clearly as possible. But she talks too much. Many of us used to doze off when the teacher talked for more than twenty minutes. (S8)

I did not like my German class because all the activities given out in the class were the same every time, and I felt that the class was boring. Why couldn't we play language games to learn German grammar like the other class? I hated to hear when the other class played and laughed. Why did the teacher treat us differently from the other class? (S7)

**d) Unsupportive and uncomfortable learning classroom atmosphere:**

Actually, I did not have any difficulties interacting with the teacher or my classmates at the beginning of the semester. I think that it was reasonable for me to ask for clarification or to answer any questions which were posed by the teacher. I needed more opportunity to practise German. However, in such a classroom atmosphere, I dared not ask or answer any questions because my classmates would think that I was trying to show off. I wanted to be a friend of the class. So, I did the same as most students did [sat still and listened]. (S9)

I never asked my teacher any questions, especially in class. I would not ask my classmates next to me, either. I was afraid that the teacher would think that we are chatting. Furthermore, the class was so quiet. So, I could do nothing, but sit still. Once the problem cannot be solved, it will bother me all the time. Then, I could not concentrate. (S10)

I could not get support from my classmates. I asked my classmates questions instead of the teacher, if I had questions. But they implied that we should discuss these later on after classes, not in class. You

have more questions until the class is finished. I was getting frustrated... I feel rejected by my classmates. I felt that it was getting more difficult to ask them after the class. (S4)

She [the teacher] is friendly and nice. She encouraged us very often to participate actively in the learning process. But we did not know how. She asked us if we had any questions or whether we understood what she said. I am too shy or I should say I am afraid to ask my teacher any questions. I used to keep all the questions in my mind until I was overwhelmed. It seemed that all the students, except me, understood everything the teacher said. (S3)

**e) Recommendations offered:**

What would have been more successful is if the teacher had focused on teaching us the basics, as well as creating situations where we would be forced to speak the language to find our way around or to ask for help. (S6)

Of course, we could practise our grammar through textbook exercises by filling in the blanks. But it was so boring to fill in the blanks or to circle the correct answer in class. You just sat there. Nobody, not even the teacher would notice whether or not you read the answers from the exercises. No interaction. It was easy to be absent-minded. And I often told myself, it's OK, I might find the answers by myself after class! (S12)

## **5.6 Control Students' Attitude towards the Role of Grammar in Learning**

### **a Second Language.**

#### **a) Students' perceptions of the role of grammar in their learning of a Second**

##### **Language:**

I may not be able to use German correctly in communication, either orally or in writing, if I am just exposed to German without any grammar instruction. (S1)

I think teachers should teach grammar because it is difficult for us to learn some structures or patterns after reading or hearing them many times. (S3)

Grammatical knowledge enables students to understand more complicated sentences and reading materials, work out comprehensible writing, and express ourselves more clearly. (S8)

#### **b) Students' preference for communicative grammar teaching**

##### **approach/activities:**

Grammar instruction should not occupy most of the class time. The classes will turn out to be very boring. Teachers should plan some

communicative and interactive activities, either in small groups or pairs. (S6)

Teachers should also be concerned about whether students achieve accuracy and fluency in German. Emphasizing the grammatical rules and sentence structures alone often frustrates students in learning. We need fresh air, I mean, a comfortable or happy atmosphere. We need more grammar activities, either in oral or in writing, where we may practise the German grammar taught in the classes. We need practice and practice. (S3)

We are often trained to practise various grammatical drills and to memorize exceptional rules and then to take sample tests. It seems that we can successfully pass the examinations. However, such mechanical exercises often kill our interest and motivation in learning a foreign language. (S9)

I think teachers should plan lots of challenging, interesting and innovative grammar learning activities to sustain the students' motivation to learn grammar. Teachers may use the computer lab more or use lots of educational media like video to teach grammar and to increase students' motivation to learn. (S5)

And fun. Most of grammar classes are very monotonous and boring. Sometimes, you just feel tired. It is easy to lose your interest...and later on you don't have the motivation to study further. Once you lost your interest, you won't study hard, even though you are aware how important the learning of grammar really is. (S7)

I also think that German is learned best in the most interesting and engaging way where students are dedicated to the learning process itself. And so giving students very interesting tasks where the students learn German grammar is a very good way for us to remember the grammar points later on. I like to learn in a small group because I feel freer to interact with my classmates or even with teachers. So, I think that our teacher used language games in the grammar classes. It's not a bad idea. (S8)