The Role of Games and Advantages of Using Games in Learning English

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Abstract

This article is devoted to the role of games and advantages of using games in learning English.

Keywords: *Games, Marginal Activity, Engage, Knowledge, Incorporate, Skills, Confidence, Immerse, Motivate, Imitating, Plug Holes, Implementing, Promote Communicative Competence, Generate Fluency.*

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays to learn English is the main aim of Uzbeks' life in Uzbekistan. This purpose cowered all over our republic too. There are many ways to teach ESL/TEFL to children but one of the most exciting and rewarding ways to do it is by using English games.

English Games not only engage the children, but also teach through play – and most of the time the children don't even know they are learning until the time comes to show their knowledge! It truly is possible (and almost necessary) to create a classroom where the students not only learn but also truly enjoy their time there.[1] Incorporating English games into the classroom can build interest in the class, put language in an interesting and meaningful context, give students a break from the pressures of learning a new language while giving the break a purpose, teach real world skills and, most importantly, build the student/teacher bond.

But we shouldn`t forget about the level of our pupils. Every level has its own methods of learning by grammar or lexicology, and playing games too. Incorporating English games is a great way to get out of the rut of language drills, worksheets, boring repetition and individual study. If you can find ways to keep the children interested in class (i.e. through fun English games), they will also find that they are interested in the topic – and will often absorb and retain more knowledge than if they are simply studying to pass a test or complete an assignment. Friendly competition is also great to keep children interested –it often is the one encourager that they need to actively participate in any classroom activity. The outcome of the game (even if it is simply knowing the score at the end of the game) gives them a concrete and immediate incentive to use the language as dictated by the game.

MAIN PART

English Games solve this because they allow you to engage the entire class in activities that require practical use. When children learning ESL get this meaningful and contextual practice, the language becomes more vivid in their mind sand they are better able to remember what they've learned and used.

Furthermore, English games often encourage pupils to use language spontaneously and to think for themselves and they give children the confidence they need to go out and use the language in real-world settings.

Giving students a break learning a new language is intense and even sometimes stressful. English games allow ESL pupils to have a break from the rigor of learning a new language. If you find the

right kinds of games this break can have purpose and make useful the time spent on the break because they are still practicing their skills.

In addition, the students will be totally immersed in the focus of the game and they'll be learning before they even realize what's happening.

These methods of learning has helped 1000s of teachers be an inspiration to their pupils and achieve results twice faster.

Improve the effectiveness of our lessons by up to 80%. Receive free English language games now on our every lesson at that time we can see the opportunity of games to our pupils or children.

Keep Yourself Motivated. Think back to when we were a child. If our teacher was not enthusiastic about what he or she had scheduled for class that day, how did we feel about it? It's the same with young children today. If we, the teacher and often a role model for younger children, think this is a neat activity, then they will too!

Encourage. Young kids thrive on praise and positive attention from the adults in their lives. If we want them to like us and be motivated in our class, we often just need to give them a lot of positive attention.

Play Games. Children learn English through playing. Often times they don't even realize they are learning if they are enjoying the game. Just think children could sit there and fill out worksheet after worksheet or they could play an English game and learn the same concepts. Which would we rather do?

When we say English games we are talking about games that are specifically designed to teach language and vocabulary.

For example, we could turn using vehicle vocabulary into a relay game where children need to pick a card with a word and then run to a box of vehicles (or a stack of pictures of vehicles) and bring the correct one his or her classmates.

When we play games, we can use points and competition as a motivator, but not for kids under six who may find the competition too stressful. For them, just playing the game is motivating enough. We can also sometimes award extra credit, but use it sparingly so that it remains "extra" and a special reward. Also if we use it too much, children can have so much extra credit that its ways the actual grades too much.

Get Them Moving. Movement is a vital component to motivating children. The best way to prevent children from zoning out is to get them up out of their seats at least once each class period.

Even if we just require them to come up to us instead of we going to them for help, the movement can help get them out of the trance that they sometimes get from sitting in one spot too long. Grouping the children for study projects and activities helps as well. If we can, let them move the desks around or sit on the floor to change things up as well. Many games involve movement without the children needing to leave their seats, such as miming, moving game or race. Therefore even teachers with large classes and no space to move can use this technique, albeit to a more limited degree.

Many experienced textbook and methodology manuals writers have argued that games are not just time-filling activities but have a great educational value. W. R. Lee holds that most language games make learners use the language instead of thinking about learning the correct forms. He also says that games should be treated as central not peripheral to the foreign language teaching programmer.

A similar opinion is expressed by Richard-Amato, who believes games to be fun but warns against overlooking their pedagogical value, particularly in foreign language teaching.

There are many advantages of using games. "Games can lower anxiety, thus making the acquisition of input more likely" (Richard-Amato). They are highly motivating and entertaining, and they can give shy students more opportunity to express their opinions and feelings. They also enable learners to acquire new experiences within a foreign language which are not always possible during a typical lesson. Furthermore, to quote Richard-Amato, they, "add diversion to the regular classroom

activities," break the ice, "[but also] they are used to introduce new ideas". In the easy, relaxed atmosphere which is created by using games, students remember things faster and better.

Further support comes from who believes games to be a good way of practicing language, for they provide a model of what learners will use the language for in real life in the future.

Games encourage, entertain, teach, and promote fluency. If not for any of these reasons, they should be used just because they help students see beauty in a foreign language and not just problems.

There are many factors to consider while discussing games, one of which is appropriate.

Trainers should be very careful about choosing games if they want to make them profitable for the learning process. If games are to bring desired results, they must correspond to either the student's level, or age, or to the material that is to be introduced or practiced. Not all games are appropriate for all students irrespective of their age. Different age groups require various topics, materials, and modes of games.

For example, children benefit most from games which require moving around, imitating a model, competing between groups and the like. Furthermore, structural games that practice or reinforce a certain grammatical aspect of language have to relate to students' abilities and prior knowledge. Games become difficult when the task or the topic is unsuitable or outside the student's experience.

Another factor influencing the choice of a game is its length and the time necessary for its completion. Many games have a time limit, but the teacher can either allocate more or less time depending on the students' level, the number of people in a group, or the knowledge of the rules of a game etc.

Games are often used as short warm-up activities or when there is some time left at the end of a lesson. Yet, as Lee observes, a game "should not be regarded as a marginal activity filling in odd moments when the teacher and class have nothing better to do". Games ought to be at the heart of teaching foreign languages. Roxon suggests that games be used at all stages of the lesson, provided that they are suitable and carefully chosen. At different stages of the lesson, the teacher's aims connected with a game may differ:

It would be wrong to suggest that vocabulary learning has to be all work and no play. Language play, including word games, has a long history. Children of all cultures seem to enjoy games of the 'I spy ...'or 'Hangman' type, and there is a long tradition of adult word games, a number of which have been adapted for television.

Most first-language word games transfer comfortably to the second-language classroom. The most useful will be those that are consistent with the principles of learning outlined. For example, the more often a word is successfully retrieved from memory, the easier it becomes to recall it. Therefore, useful games are those that encourage learners to recall words and, preferably, at speed. Or, consistent with the principle that learners need to make multiple decisions about words, a useful game would be one like a 'dictionary race', where students first sort words into alphabetical order, then into parts of speech, and then into lexical sets - the first group to complete all three tasks correctly being the winner.

However, since many word games deal solely with isolated - rather than contextualized - words, and often require only shallow processing on the part of the learner, they should be used judiciously. The time spent on a single de-contextualized word in a game of 'Hangman', for example, has to be weighed up against the more productive, contextualized and cognitively deep activities outlined earlier in this chapter. Too often games are used to plug holes in lessons which could more usefully be filled with language-rich talk.

Nevertheless, the fun factor may help make words more memorable, and, like it or not, a competitive element often serves to animate even the most lethargic students.

Games are often used as short warm-up activities or when there is some time left at the end of a lesson. Games encourage, entertain, teach, and promote fluency. If not for any of these reasons, they should be used just because they help students see beauty in a foreign language and not just problems.

Yet, a game "should not be regarded as a marginal activity filling in odd moments when the teacher and class have nothing better to do".

Games ought to be at the heart of teaching foreign languages. Roxon suggests that games should be used at all stages of the lesson, provided that they are suitable and carefully chosen. Games also lend themselves well to revision exercises helping learners recall material in a pleasant, entertaining way. Many teachers agree that even if games resulted only in noise and entertained students, they are still worth paying attention to and implementing in the classroom since they motivate learners, promote communicative competence, and generate fluency.

There are many advantages of using games in the classroom:[1] Games are a welcome break from the usual routine of the language class. They are motivating and challenging. Learning a language requires a great deal of effort. Games help students to make and sustain the effort of learning. Games provide language practice in the various skills- speaking, writing, listening and reading. They encourage students to interact and communicate. In the easy, relaxed atmosphere which is created by using games, students remember things faster and better. The most instructive language learning games are those that emphasize specific structures. They do not only practice the basic pattern but also do so in a pleasant, easy way that allows the students to forget they are drilling grammar and concentrate on having fun. Take a small object, such as a pen, and do something with it, then describe your action. That student repeats what the teacher did and what the first student did with the object. The second student then does something different with the object before passing it to the third student. Songs also give new insights into the target culture. They are the means through which cultural themes are presented effectively. Since they provide authentic texts, they are motivating. There are various ways of using songs in the classroom. The level of the students, the interests and the age of the learners, the grammar point to be studied, and the song itself have determinant roles on the procedure. Apart from them, it mainly depends on the creativity of the teacher. For primary students, the best songs would be those that are either familiar to the children or those, though maybe not familiar, which have an international nature, such as Old Mac Donald. Since there is not a strict teaching procedure, the teacher can mainly concentrate on what to teach rather than on how to teach. For instance, while teaching them individual letter sounds or spelling the words, the traditional camp song Bingo, or while teaching them counting Johnny Works with One Hammer will be useful. In order to make the songs more meaningful and more enjoyable, motions can be added to the song which parallel the words of the song. Since most children enjoy singing fun and nonsensical lyrics, using easy children songs will be useful. Furthermore, choosing lively action songs through which they can dance or act while singing will ensure a lively atmosphere.

For teenagers or adults in the intermediate or advanced level, it is better to use more meaningful or popular songs, which not only review or introduce grammar points but also reflect cultural aspects.

At the primary level of singing the song, the prosodic features of the language is emphasized.

At the higher levels, where the practice of grammar points is at the foreground, songs can be used with several techniques. Some examples of these techniques are: gap fills or close texts, focus questions, true-false statements, put these lines into the correct sequence, dictation, add a final verse, circle the antonyms/synonyms of the given words and discuss. A teacher's selection of a technique or a set of techniques should be based on his or her objectives for the classroom. After deciding the grammar point to be studied, and the song and the techniques to be used, the teacher should prepare an effective lesson plan.

CONCLUSION

Games also lend themselves well to revision exercises helping learners recall material in a pleasant, entertaining way. All authors referred to in this article agree that even if games resulted only in noise and entertained students, they are still worth paying attention to and implementing in the classroom

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[1] Rinvolucri Mario. Grammar Games. Cognitive, affective and drama activities for EFL students Cambridge, 1989

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