DOI

Isakulova B.K.
teacher, English Department
Tashkent Institute of Irrigation
and Agricultural Mechanization Engineers
National Research University, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN'S SKILLS THROUGH THE USE OF GAMES IN LANGUAGE TEACHING

Annotation
Games should be seen as an integral part of the language curriculum, not as a fun activity for a Holiday afternoon or at the end of term. They can be used at all stages of the transition from guided practice to free practice, serving at one end of the spectrum as a memory aid and repetition exercise, and at the other as an opportunity to freely use the language and a means to an end rather than an end in itself.
Key words *methodology, using games, teaching a foreign language, teaching children, development of skills, activities, rules for classroom.*

It is known that games remain the most common activities in students' lives, regardless of grade level. Students are exposed to games throughout the day at home, on their computers, on the Internet, and even on their cell phones. However, one area where they are not regularly given the chance to play games is in their classroom. Although some teachers decide to use games as a teaching approach or demonstration, many of them do not have the same idea about games.

In particular, teachers who introduce games as a teaching technique may not use them to their full potential (Marzano, 2010). To find out whether games are related to language learning, it is best to first spend a lot of time looking at the different definitions of a game and its characteristics. According to Harfield (1999), play is an activity that has rules, a purpose, and an element of fun. He confidently said:

They can also serve as a diagnostic tool for the teacher, who can note difficult areas and take appropriate corrective action. (1999, p.7) In addition, the support of the authors of many experienced books and methodical manuals has shown that games are not just time fillers or warm-up activities. Instead, games have extreme educational value. Lee (1979), a leading author of language teaching games and contests, believes that most language games in language learning allow young learners to use the language immediately rather than having to think about learning the correct form. To make his point more convincing, he emphasized that games should be considered as central rather than peripheral games in the foreign language teaching program. Interestingly, Lee's idea was also supported by

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Richard-Amato (1988), who believed that games can reduce anxiety and increase the likelihood of information acquisition.

Based on the above definitions and opinions about games by various researchers, the importance of games in education has been highly appreciated. This further emphasizes that when games are used in the classroom, they not only help students learn more effectively, but are also fun at the same time. Consequently, language teachers, in particular, teachers, from the point of view of teaching techniques, began to recognize that games are not only "fun activities", but also serve as a technique for students to complete tasks in an interesting way. However, even though many language teachers seem very enthusiastic about using games as a teaching tool, they usually see games as mere time fillers - a break from the same drill or a frivolous activity. (in S.M. Silvers Uberman, 1998). According to Silvers, this must be due to the perception of teachers that real learning happens in quiet environments; Thus, students tend to use the language they have been instructed to use and have previously practiced. Despite all the facts, to reveal the advantages of using games for language learning, Chen (cited in Petrovic, 2014) mentioned nine main benefits, including:

1. Games are focused on the student (the student is always in the center of attention).
2. Games develop communicative competence.
3. Games create a meaningful context for language use.
4. Games increase learning motivation.
5. Games reduce learning anxiety.
6. Games consolidate linguistic skills.
7. Games encourage creativity and spontaneous use of language.
8. Games create cooperative use of language.
9. Games develop participation in students. (2014, pp. 8-9)

Games can be argued to act as a medium of sorts to encourage, entertain, teach and promote fluency at the same time. However, teachers should remember that games are a tool that should never be misused. Games don't always have to be done on the same day or at the same time; therefore, teachers must take responsibility for how to extend the selected games and the learning associated with these games. Games must be adapted and used to the learning situations and indeed the learners to be suitable to be effective teaching tools (Petrovic, 2014). Although there are traditional teachers who strongly object to the aforementioned functions, because games allow students to see the beauty in learning a foreign language, sometimes they should be used rather than dull and boring.

The four main skills that language learners must learn and practice and encounter throughout their lives are: listening, speaking, writing, and reading. Among them, writing skills are considered as learned and unlearned skills. It can be considered the most difficult and heavy in the language. One of the reasons for this may be that it is usually assigned as homework or as an unreasonable punishment by teachers. For this main reason, it may not be a good writing

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experience for children learning a language, and in a worst-case scenario, it may even lead to children hating writing. Fortunately, according to Sigurðardóttir (2010), when games are used, they are able to prevent the aforementioned disaster. This is because games are not only fun, but they can also motivate students to write. In this case, despite obeying the teacher's orders, it is clear that the students will find it easier to complete the written tasks after being given interesting and reasons.

For listening skills, frequent practice listening activities are strongly advocated an effective way to teach this skill. As a language teacher, he needs to be reminded to make the activities versatile, otherwise their students will get bored easily. Sigurdardottir (2010) stated that by combining listening and games, teachers can prevent students (children) from becoming bored. By engaging students, teachers are more successful in increasing students' chances of achieving their goals. One example of a good listening game he provides is a popular game called Simon Says, in which one student takes on the role of Simon and gives instructions or commands to other students.

Since communicative competence is now considered the main focus of language learning, it is emphasized that the teaching of communication is very important. However, when it comes to teaching students to communicate, language teachers are reported to have a very difficult time making their lessons effective. This finding indicated that when teachers do not use the target language in class, students do not use it either. To solve this problem, games are a very useful way to teach speaking skills because they naturally encourage communication and emphasize fluency rather than accuracy. This emphasis encouraged students to communicate more without anxiety about accepting criticism when they make any mistakes. Fluency is indeed an important skill needed in the real world, and in this context, games can be seen as a necessary link between the classroom and the real world (Harfield, Intermediate Communication Games, 1990).

On the other hand, reading has been proven to be an important skill in learning a foreign language, especially English. This is because in order to create any writing, people must first know how to read (Sigurðardóttir, 2010). Another important aspect of reading skills is that this skill is useful for people who are planning to go abroad, especially where a foreign language is used and spoken. For example, they need this reading skill to understand directions, directions, tourist information, menus, etc. Given the importance of reading skills, it is inevitable that foreign language teachers will put a lot of effort into engaging students in their lessons. Similar to the other three skills mentioned above, Sigurðardóttir (2010) further suggested that language learning games not only provide variety but also make the subjects interesting and engaging.

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