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## GAMES IN TEACHING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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**Annotation:** : This article explains games as a teaching method and its reasons for classroom use as well as some measures that must be considered by teachers. Games in teaching a foreign language can be used as a support tool to complement traditional teaching methods to improve the learning experience of the learners while also teaching other skills such as following rules, adaptation, problem solving, interaction, critical thinking skills, creativity, teamwork, and good sportsmanship.

**Key words:** games, fun activity, encourage learners, foreign language, language skills, real-life activities.

### Introduction

Success of foreign language teaching practices, based on the principles and methods in the classroom depends on the operating conditions. Basic principles, language and education of scientists of various research is created by the results reached by the findings suggest. These are recommended basic principles of proper planning and implementation in the classroom interaction that may be about the effectiveness of foreign language teaching. One of the principles of foreign language teaching is to develop the four basic language skills. These skills are listening, speaking, reading and writing consists of the functional integrity. Language as a communication tool to use these four basic skills of teaching should be carried out.

A good foreign language teacher is the one who develops the skills towards the work in the classroom. The content of foreign language courses should include on one hand, the continuity, availability and other issues provided by teaching again and again. With this aim, for teaching foreign language classes students should use above mentioned four basic language skills to enhance photographs, pictures, poems, stories, tales, drama, film, music and games and getting benefit from the thinking skills in line with the activity which can be done. In recent years, education in mother language is required in the foreign language teaching, being used widely as a student centered and

active teaching methods in language teaching with games. Because the game is fun for students providing rest and joy as a training method.

Games are fun activities that promote interaction, thinking, learning, and problem solving strategies. Often, games have an aspect that permits the players to produce information in a short time period. Some games require the players to engage in a physical activity and/or complete a mental challenge. Learning games and game-like activities have a long history of use in classrooms. Activities structured as games can provide concrete practice for learners, while reducing the tension and anxiety often encountered during the learning process. Games can help with motivation, particularly cooperative games, and are easily adjusted in difficulty to reflect the learning levels of the students. Games are also away to be sure all learners are included in the learning effort, not only a few highly motivated or extroverted students.

Language learning environments, in particular, can benefit from the use of learning games. Because games are often based on real-life activities, they offer an opportunity to practice the realistic use of language to communicate. Use of language serves an immediate functional purpose, and the tasks embedded in the game generate interest by the nature of the game and its goals. Games can be adapted to emphasize fluency, as in timed games and races, and accuracy, as in memory-based competitions and other judgments of skill. Although language used in games may be repetitive in places, there is usually also plenty of opportunity for unrehearsed use of language, as well. Games encourage learners to experiment with and explore the target language.

Because of this, it is argued that although games can be used to review existing language content, they need not be limited to this use. They can also be used to explore and acquire new language content. Certainly, they deserve a primary place in the language classroom lesson plan. As Friederike Klippel notes, "Since communicative aims are central to these activities they should not be used merely as fillers or frills on the odd Friday afternoon, but should have their place in revision or transfer lessons." [1:6] However, not all language learning games are equivalent. Some are helpful in practicing individual vocabulary words, while others involve the students in complex discourse. Still others take advantage of modern computers and their multimedia capabilities to provide rich, authentic linguistic experiences, either in the classrooms or in self-study. Although there are many reference works describing language learning games, few provide specific or helpful guidance regarding appropriate linguistic level. This article attempts to address that area in a preliminary way. It may be useful to make a distinction between games and language activities, in that all language activities involve using language for a specific communication purpose, but a game is a type of language activity involving a competitive element and/or scoring (either of individuals or of teams). Both games and language activities encourage a more relaxed atmosphere and provide contextualization of the language elements being learned, but games add the competitive element, whereas non-game language activities tend to be more cooperative. The author's experience has been that younger learners are happy to play games, but older learners may prefer non-game language activities. This could relate to some findings in the literature that game effectiveness may be inhibited when some students refuse to participate. [2:15]

This difficulty may be in part due to the sometimes negative influence of competition on learner esteem and confidence. While competition can help to spur more effort, it can also lead to extrinsic

motivation and a performance-avoidance achievement goal orientation, rather than intrinsic motivation and a mastery goal orientation, which have been shown to lead to more enduring learner benefits.[3:27]

There are a number of reasons that games deserve a place in the language classroom:

**First** of all, they are fun, which is extremely important, because they can help activate students who may have been inactive before, due to lack of interest. Keeping students active is vital because teachers will never be able to actually teach students anything unless they can get them to participate in their own learning process.

**Second**, games also play a big part in helping participants build relationships, and to feel equal. Playing games in the classroom can also help create a friendly and positive atmosphere where seat arrangement can differ from game to game, and thus cause diversity from the norm which can be extremely helpful in keeping an exciting learning environment.

**Third**, the reason most people want to learn a language is to be able to use it in real situations, for example when travelling. Games can be a very good way to practice this skill because they can easily be used to reenact various situations from real life and provide students with practice in their fluency. Also, by using games in the classroom the teacher is giving his students a bigger role, and he himself is stepping out of the frontline which is a positive thing because it allows students to take on more responsibility. Also that allows students to do more on their own, and that can very well result in an increase in their confidence level. [4:12-14]

**Fourth**, language students need to be exposed to the language in a variety of situations, which is a need games can fulfill. Language students also need to be ready to take on the experience, keeping their minds open and being willing participants. Again, games make this possible.

**Fifth**, language students need to be emotionally involved, meaning they need to feel something while they are exposed to the language. Strong emotions, such as happiness, excitement, amusement and suspense allow students to feel positively about their learning situation and are therefore likely to have a positive effect on language learning.

**Sixth**, games are good for shy students and students with low confidence, and that applies specifically when playing takes place in smaller groups because then they get a chance to speak in front of fewer audience instead of having to express themselves in front of the whole class. Also it is sometimes easier to open up and forget the shyness when playing a game because the atmosphere is not as serious and more emphasis is put on fluency rather than grammatical correctness. [4:12-14]

**Seventh**, games can be a good strategy when teaching various subjects because they are very likely to spark interest amongst students. They can be used with students of all ages, and when they are used with other teaching methods they create diversity which is ideal for school work [6: 80]. A study that was undertaken in Iceland in 2006 shows clearly the need for diversity in schools. Many participants in that study complained about the lack of diversity, and that they wanted more of it in order for their learning to become more fun and progressive in their school. [5:34]

## Conclusion

Finally, using games in the classroom is important because many children do not get enough opportunity to play during their free time, which can be traced to the rapid changes in our society.

Cities are getting bigger and traffic is getting heavier which means that more and more parents are hesitant to let their children play outside. Also passive activities such as watching television, or the computer screen are seen as being more exciting than actually physically playing, so today the sight of children playing various games in groups outside is becoming much more rare than it was 10, 15 or 20 years ago. This is not a good development, and it can have several bad consequences for our society. One possible consequence is that the lack of movement can cause health problems because even though not all games are physical some certainly are. [5:3] Another consequence this change might have is decreased social skills because, according to Piaget, children's games reflect society and that by playing games children learn many of society's rules and regulations. [5:17]

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