

# Language Games in Developing Speaking Skills

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## *Abstract*

*Learning language is bored when learners do not change their learning habits, such as writing words on paper, repeating the same thing in a bored manner, trying to learn by heart or learning passively through the teacher's explanations. The article tries to show that the students are very attentive and keen to learn if they are presented subject matters with games and interactive way. To help students find language classes, all the aspects and skills and vocabulary in particular more interesting, and to achieve more from games, this article is very beneficial. This article also tries to focus on the effectiveness of using games in the classroom. It also indicates the advantages of language games in teaching all the aspects of language. At last it points out the effective language games that are beneficial in language classroom.*

## **Introduction**

Activities in the classrooms engage children more than teaching English through lecture. Indeed a bored class will take in less than half of what a teacher says and retain none profit. Whereas an attentive, interested and involved class, learning through fun English Language Games, will take in 100% of the lesson and retain up to 80% of it. Using English Language Games in class has got to be one of the most exciting ways to teach children English.

The need for meaning fulness in language learning has been accepted for some years. A useful interpretation of 'meaningfulness' is that the learners respond to the content in a definite way. If they are amused, angered, intrigued or surprised, the content is clearly meaningful to them. Thus, the meaning of the language they listen to, read, speak and write will be more vividly experienced and, therefore, better remembered. Andrew Wright, David Betteridge and Michael Buckby (from their introduction, p. 1, 1984) point out that If it is accepted that games can provide intense and meaningful practice of language, then they must be regarded as central to a teacher's repertoire. They are thus, not for use solely on wet days and at the end of term!

Aydan Ersöz(2000) writing in the Internet TESL Journal points out that language learning is a hard task which can sometimes be frustrating. Constant effort is required to understand, produce and manipulate the target language. Well-chosen games are invaluable as they give students a break and at the same time allow students to practice language skills. Games are highly motivating since they are amusing and at the same time challenging. Furthermore, they employ meaningful and useful language in real contexts. They also encourage and increase cooperation. Games are highly motivating because they are amusing and interesting. They can be used to give practice in all language skills and be used to practice many types of communication.

It is well documented that English Language Games enhance learning and the children are one of the most effective classroom tools. Nguyen Thi Thanh Huyen and Khuat Thi Thu Nga, authors of *Learning Vocabulary Through Games: The Effectiveness of Learning Through Games*, report that the students seemed to learn new vocabulary more quickly and retain it better when it was applied in a relaxed and comfortable environment such as while playing games.

Andrew Wright, David Betteridge and Michael Buckby (1984) point out that English Language Games also help the teacher to create contexts in which the language is useful and meaningful. The learners want to take part and in order to do so must understand what others are saying or have written, and they must speak or write in order to express their own point of view or give information.

Importantly English Language Games give students a reason to communicate and a context for speaking practice. Repetition is the mother of skill but constant, meaning less parrot-fashion repetition is not going to go down well with your pupils. Therefore, the repetition needed for language to stick can be attractively packaged in a game and pass unnoticed as students focus on the process of the game itself, all the while using the language in a relaxed and above all fun environment. Yin Yong Mei and Jang Yu-jing (2000) put forth that through playing games, students can learn English the way children learn their mother tongue without being aware they are studying; thus without stress, they can learn a lot. Even shy students can participate positively.

### **Research Objectives and Research Questions**

The main objective of this article is:

To present evidence in related studies on language games helps and improve ESL learners' oral skills.

This study conducted to answer two research questions:

- (a) How effective is language games in improving learners' speaking skills?
- (b) What are the learners' experience when playing the game?

### **Literature Review**

Speaking is an action that involves words to utter, those words or sentences are person's thoughts that's been said loudly. Speaking is a skill that is very essential in a language which can be first or second language. Through speaking, we can measure the success of a language proficiency (Thornbury, 2005; Nunan, 1995). Thus, speaking really emphasizes when learning a foreign language. Speaking is more used and learned compare to other language skills as writing, listening and reading in learning second or foreign language (Thornbury, 2005, Nunan, 1995) "Speaking is a skill that is noticeable compared to other skills, people would notice the way speakers speak before they notice reading, writing or listening skills". Therefore, learners of second language must master the vocabulary and syntax of sentence structure because speaking is all about using the accurate words to express thoughts.

Speaking is a norm for humans as they use it so much in their daily life. It is stated that, an average person produces tens of thousands words a day (Thornbury, 2005, Nunan, 1995), However, people in different professional which involves speaking produces more amount of words than a way such as people who work as salesmen, educators ,promoters etc.

The objective of speech depends on the speakers' personal goal. There are few components of speaking that learners of second language have to pay attention. Phonology is one of the component that can be taught to be master for speakers that are learning second language ,as they have to be aware of all the pronunciation of words,(Thornbury, 2005, Nunan, 1995). There are words in English which is not pronounce the way it is spelt thus, it confuse the learners. The speed of speech is one of the important components in speaking because speaker must know what rate of speed they need to be in, to ensure there is sufficient time of processing or outgoing speech. New speakers need to monitor their output, they must always gain their feedback from interlocutors on their speech to observe their progress (Thornbury, 2005; Nunan, 1995).

All these factors make speaking a challenging skill to be learn however many people view speaking as central skill. The desire to communicate with others in real time and to stay connected face to face motivates people to master English fluency and accurately (Thornbury, 2005; Nunan, 1995).

## **Discussion**

Through discussion used here related to the studies on the use of language games, the following discussion has been summarized.

Of the 50 students of grade 10 students, different language games enhanced speaking skill in different perspectives.

- Games are useful tools to make students involve.
- Games help to enhance the speaking ability of low proficiency students.
- Games reduce the anxiety of students.
- Games promote motivation and enjoyment.
- Games are effective tools to enhance language skills.
- Games involve students' participation.
- Positive impact is shown by students through games.
- Games help not only in speaking skills but also increase students' logic power.
- Games enhance students' speaking skills.
- Students feel more motivated to speak through games.
- Develop positive attitude towards speaking in English is enhanced by games.

- Games are useful tool for teachers to achieve learning objectives.
- Students enjoy the lesson through games.
- Students gain more motivation and confidence to speak English through games.
- Students feel less pressure in speaking English through games.
- Emotion of students is expressed, through games.
- Students experience meaningful conversation through communicative language games.
- Communicative languages games develop speaking abilities among students.
- When students interact with each other through games, their anxiety levels decrease.
- Games boost motivation among students.
- Games help to improve speaking and other learning skills.
- Games create an enjoyable environment. Games provide authentic learning.

### **The Effectiveness of Language Games among ESL Students**

Through the discussion, the studies show a positive effect of learning language using games not only on students but also on teachers. Based on the outcome of analysis of all these research, effectiveness of games varies from each. Students gave a positive response after playing the game. Students show preference towards language games. Online learning games, most of the students enjoyed playing games and they developed positive feelings towards games. Language games helped reduce the issues of anxiety among students. Games involve communicating with peers thus it helped the anxiety to ablate however the students still experience anxiety in test setting.

There is a common perception that all learning should be serious and solemn in nature, and that if one is having fun and there is hilarity and laughter, then it is not really learning. This is a misconception. It is possible to learn a language as well as enjoy oneself at the same time. One of the best ways of doing this is through games.

English Language Games can be used to learn a foreign language communicatively. Learners practice and internalize vocabulary, grammar and structure through language games. Motivation gets enhanced by the games and competition is involved in them. Paul Rooyackers (1994) also points out that language games increase vocabulary, develop fluency, improve public speaking, develop social skill etc.

Hiralal Subedi (2010) points out that English Language Games generate fun and excitement for children. They experiment, discover and interact with their environment through games. English Language Games create a meaningful context to use the target language. They encourage creative and spontaneous use of language.

Lee Su Kim (1995, Page 35) points out the following effectiveness of using games in the

classroom:

- 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.

English Language 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. The effectiveness of English Language Games can be summarized as:

### **Giving Students a Break**

Learning a new language is intense and even sometimes stressful. English Language Games allow ESL pupils to have a break from the rigor of learning a new language. If you find the right kind 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.

### **Teaching Real World Skills**

Teachers who successfully use English games in their classrooms will tell you there are more benefits than those just related to learning the language. English Language Games give opportunities for shy students to express themselves in a non-threatening environment. The class will learn to work together as a whole or as small groups. English Games can also promote competition in a healthy, fair manner, if you chose to use them that way.

### **Creating a Student/Teacher Bond**

Finally, as a teacher I'm sure you want to build a bond with your pupils. Playing English Language Games does this in so many ways. You'll be able to show yourself as a person, not just a teacher, as you encourage your students to do well in the game, or join in with them. Playing these games also creates a positive learning environment that allows children to relax and enjoy themselves and those around them. While some people still look at games as "time fillers" in a classroom, when used correctly they can actually replace "traditional" teaching time with activities that give the students (and teachers) so many more benefits than lectures, worksheets and boring repetition.

## ***Different Games***

### ***Add a letter***

From each word below, make two new words by adding a letter at the end or at the beginning.

- Go..... oil.....

### ***Hidden Colours***

Find the name of a colour hidden in each sentence.

- Some part of the face are the eye, eyebrow, nose and mouth.

### ***Work Building***

Find out the 'Ant' family.

- Lives in the jungle? ( Ant )
- Is far away? (Distant)

### ***Board Game***

Board game is made of card-board paper presenting different boxes in which different language activities to be done are arranged. Dice is used to play board game. The number that is presented after throwing the dice suggest what the player has to do. The board has the starting and the finishing line. The player, who crosses the finishing line fast, is declared the winner. It can be used to develop all the aspects and the skills of language.

### ***Steal, Swap, Bust & Number Game***

Cut out the words and numbers on the grids below to make cards. Put the cards in a box or bag and shake the box so that the cards are shuffled. Start the game by splitting the class into 2 teams (depends on class size- teams could be increased to 4 or more). Award every team 100 points to start the game. A team captain meets the other team captain and do STONE, PAPER, SCISSORS. The winner starts the game. The teacher asks the student a question (questions could come from the topic of the lesson or it could just be general review). If the students answer the teacher's question, that student then draws a card from the box for his/her team. If a student cannot answer a question, s/he can get help from team members. Students cannot look into the box when drawing a card.

## ***Trace Video Game***

The game is prepared to develop language fluency as well as language accuracy. The game is useful for the learners to learn language through game. Learners really like the game. The games can be downloaded from <http://americanenglish.state.gov//>.

## **Conclusion**

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.

Friendly competition is also great to keep children interested – it often is the one encourages that they need to actively participate in any classroom activity. English Games solve this because they allow you to engage the entire class in activities that require practical use. Language games helps children get meaningful and contextual practice, give a break from the pressures of learning, and build the student/teacher bond. The language becomes more vivid in their minds and they are better able to remember what they've learned and used.

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