



THE USE OF GAMES TO TEACH FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

This paper covers the ways of enhancing language proficiency of students through interactive games, challenges in using game process and ways of solving problems that language learners face in developing their language skills.

Consequently, this research paper will analyze the effectiveness of interactive games and activities that help students to acquire and improve their all skills.

Games are enjoyable activities that encourage communication, critical thinking, learning, and problem-solving techniques. Games frequently offer a feature that enables players to produce information quickly. In some games, the players must either perform a physical task or succeed in a mental challenge.

"Games are good teaching tools because they give pupils a fictitious setting where they can experiment with different course of action without the fear of failing. In order to achieve a goal, thought and action are blended into deliberate behavior. As stated in [1;478], "playing games teaches us how to strategize, analyze options, and think flexibly. My views on the use of games to teach, practice, and reinforce a foreign language are encapsulated in that quotation.

In a constructivist classroom setting, games put the focus on the students' learning. Active investigation, analysis, interpretation, problem-solving, memory, and physical activity are necessary for learning through performance substantial cognitive processing, and activity" [2;16]. While learning from their mistakes and from one another, students infer their own meaning from these encounters. Additionally, the students build on their prior learning and apply their new information outside of the context of the activity in which it was learned. The teacher can now observe each student individually to determine what subjects the class as a whole or particular students are struggling with or excelling in, as well as the social dynamics of the group. Constructivism is widely recognized as having been successfully implemented in Montessori classrooms. Their instructors have received training in ideas that



support experiential learning. They serve as a reminder that trial and error are crucial parts of learning for young children. The learning experience need to be engaging, simple, and enjoyable. For best outcomes, it should also work with routine tasks and the workplace environment. [3;1].Playing games promotes independence, creativity, and higher level thinking.

The majority of the time, the classroom teacher's questions are fact-based and have just one possible response, which prevents students from expressing their own opinions or testing hypotheses. Games may allow for more than one solution, but the answer can only be right or wrong.

They help students become more involved, feel better about themselves, use more vocabulary, and realize there are various approaches to resolving a given issue. It also resembles real life more. For example, the majority of conversations open-ended inquiries like, "How are you?" "What did you do yesterday?" "How can I help you?" and "What would you like for dinner?" are good places to start. It is crucial that students are given settings that are as realistic as possible because they are learning a foreign language. The same can be achieved through well-made video games. Simple exercises for children to complete include naming words that start with a particular letter, responding to open-ended questions on a board game, or recounting a tale.

Playing video games helps students learn across many of Gardner's multiple intelligences. Since people acquire and process information in such a wide variety of ways, it is crucial that educators employ a variety of tactics and pedagogical approaches. Games frequently involve spatial relationships, tactile, visual, and verbal stimulation. Playing games helps learners learn by analyzing and interpreting both new and old material. The practical experiences are also essential for critical learning, memory retention, and recall.

Play encourages interaction. In addition to interacting with their other classmates and the information, the students are actively absorbing it. Few voices are heard during class while students are working only with the text in a grammar translation lesson. It is essential that students practice conversing with each other in a foreign language lesson. The aim of a language learner is to talk competently and on their own in a variety of circumstances.

The pupils' interaction with one another fosters a sense of community among the students. Instead of focusing only on their outward appearances, the kids will start to get to know one another better and start to view one other as unique individuals. Students can cooperate and work as a team during games to achieve a common objective. More than just teamwork skills are being learned in this collaborative project. It encourages a mutually beneficial relationship where they can benefit from one another. Students are required to explain why their response is the best. After hearing their teammates' arguments, decide which response is the greatest and why. As a result, the kids are now thinking rapidly on their feet and the collaborative effort is encouraging a natural dialogue about the subject, improving pronunciation, raising involvement, and assisting with comprehension. In the process, the students are also growing in confidence and self-worth. Between and among the participants, trust grows. The ability to create the answer as well as their own intuitions and others' justifications must be trusted by the students. As their responses are accepted and



teammates count on them to be one of the game's key participants, their self-confidence increases.

"Games improve repetition, reinforcement, transference, and retention" [4;10]. The same subject or skill is dealt with in a different method throughout each player's turn since each game has a distinct learning purpose in mind. Students may therefore discover what they missed during their turn from someone else's turn. Additionally, the learner accepts responsibility for studying and practicing on their own accord.

What justifies against using games in the classroom?

There are many who are against the use of games in the classroom. They believe that games' intense competition fosters a hostile learning environment.

However, competition is a natural element of our world: job applicants compete for positions during the interview process; sports teams battle for victories; and businesses compete to maintain or attract customers. Our schools already have competition due to test results and class standings. In reality, some children take on the challenge because they enjoy competing even if they don't enjoy doing their homework, studying, or participating in class. It is possible to have competition in the classroom without it negatively affecting learning or the intended enjoyment.

Depending on the students' ages, the competition may be for bragging rights, the front of the lunch line, or the first to choose a lollipop.

My pupils inquire about their concrete prize, "What did we win?" Then I add something that would unavoidably occur: hamburger for lunch, leaving when class is done, and me becoming their instructor for the remainder of the school year after I say, "The best prize of all." It teaches children about real life, but sometimes they grumble or become irritated because they don't comprehend my attempt at humor. Not every achievement in life results in an instant, obvious reward. For instance, people occasionally change careers not because it will make them richer but because it will make them happier.

Associated with gambling, don't provide a fantastic prize. Gamers keep coming back for more thanks to the entertainment, competition, and teamwork. Additionally, playing games in a classroom fills the space with "good noise." The pupils are involved and maybe a little too enthusiastic. It may imply that twenty students are speaking simultaneously in large class settings. It might be a little disturbing to other surrounding classrooms in schools with thin walls, especially if the other students are taking tests or doing other quiet activities.

What rules should teachers follow when employing games in the classroom?

1. The game needs to have a distinct learning goal and purpose. What the students are learning and practicing throughout the activities should be obvious. There are only one game rule. For vocabulary identification, for instance, pupils can act out or draw the word. These games have a distinct purpose, and their structure can be used repeatedly in other chapters or units.

2. The instructor should divide the class into teams. However, the work the students will be undertaking should ultimately determine how the kids are grouped. Knowing the students' strengths and personalities to some extent is necessary for creating fair teams. To ensure that each squad has an equal opportunity, try to divide the smartest or best players from those that struggle the most. Additionally, this will enable individuals who are suffering to gain



knowledge from those who are more confident and confident in their newfound knowledge. Random grouping is not advised because students frequently prefer to work with their friends or because one group may have an unfair academic edge. The latter approach, obviously, rarely encourages conversation about the language or learning in general. Other students will attempt to team up with the group in an effort to win the game.

3. Ensure that you thoroughly and slowly explain all applicable procedures and rules. Ensure that everyone is paying attention and comprehending. Ask the pupils to repeat them if required. Ask the children to state the rules and procedures for previously played games before starting the game.

4. Be dependable. If need, set a timer to ensure that each person has an equal amount of time to respond. If all of the teams won't have a chance to participate before the class concludes, do not begin another round. Determine whether you will accept only the first response because sometimes kids will say something erroneously, realize it after they say it, and then correct it.

5. Be organized. Ensure that there are sufficient resources, questions, and time available. As a teacher, you may always expect the unexpected: an assembly, absent kids, additional time, etc. It is the facilitator's responsibility to make prompt, informed judgments.

6. Keep the atmosphere non-threatening. When playing games, all customary classroom norms and protocols should be followed. For instance, insulting someone and calling them names are undesirable behaviors. However, some kids feel emotionally charged while participating in a game and may respond badly, particularly if the outcome is not what they had anticipated. They occasionally might be smaller people, like their teammates. Before starting our first game, we talk about how to interact with others.

However, if in the heat of the moment a critical remark emerges, I tell the students that games are meant to be enjoyed, and by saying those things, the enjoyment is being undermined. Additionally, by expressing those things, some students may be less inclined to participate, which would limit their learning and violate their right to more. Additionally, it is hurtful and rude in general.

7. Getting pupils to design games may be helpful. I only advise against this after the kids have seen educational games in a classroom context so that they are familiar with how the teacher chooses to handle the games and how they function. To help the pupils focus their creativity, it's critical to establish rules or restrictions for the activities. As an illustration, the students must: incorporate fifteen terms from the current past tense, or center on Mexican culture. If the students design games, I usually assign them the role of game group facilitators. They will facilitate the game since they are the "expert" in the group and will lead the discussion. It is intriguing to observe young adults' ongoing learning processes, which are very similar to those of young children. There is a sense of enthusiasm in the room, along with a concentration on and immersion in the subject matter. Because they do not spend a lot of time considering their comments, the pupils are giving imprompt responses and developing confidence arrives at them. Sometimes it's accurate, other times it's not. What I adore about them is that they are trusting their gut instincts, searching through mental file cabinets for the correct response, deciphering the 'clue,' uttering words in Spanish that might be the correct response, and receiving constructive criticism and inspiring words from their teammates in



addition to the teacher. Through play, the first-graders can express some of their genuine selves, form connections with others, and hone a variety of abilities.

Additionally, they enable the facilitator to observe who is knowledgeable and whether or not they are hesitant to offer it. Additionally, it becomes clearer which students require additional teaching or which ideas can possibly be done correctly. The more games you employ, the simpler it is to facilitate. As you advance, it also becomes second nature with rivalry and collaboration, and assess the advantages of educational games. [5; 67]

What traits distinguish the best games?

1. They are founded on a learning purpose, to start. This gives the creator a focal point for the format, required abilities, and subject matter. The players gain new information and develop their talents through play as they apply their prior knowledge and abilities. For instance, games that demand memory when testing memorization techniques, the players' memory. Success reinforces their knowledge, while mistakes are remedied as a result of unfavorable outcomes. They have the capacity to control recall and memorization techniques as well. If the players struggle, maybe they will learn that more study or assistance may be necessary to advance their skills or ace the "test."

2. They grant the player autonomy over his course of action. By demonstrating that decisions have clear consequences, this not only boosts motivation and responsibility but also enhances decision-making abilities. The player is either coping as a result of making poor decisions or he is adapting to the environment in order to succeed.

3. They come with manageable difficulties. Throughout the game, the player should experience both success and failure at various times. This strengthens the player's resolve and motivation to succeed and complete the task at hand. Students should be made to think harder by including fresh material or a situation to which prior knowledge can be applied.

4. They are entertaining and stimulating, which inspires. This encourages the gamer to play the game right away as well as afterwards. The student frequently loses track of what he is learning as a result of the enthusiasm and feelings that are there.

In addition, it's possible that the player will start doing more research, studying more diligently, and practicing so that the following game's outcome conforms to his expectations. The pupils get enthusiastic and have fun without recognizing that they are learning something by labeling class activities games when they aren't. Despite their poor English skills, several of my students still enroll in my class because they enjoy it.

5. They are grounded in reality to provide gamers with an innate incentive to keep playing the game. The player can practice a valuable skill without the pressure of a real-world scenario. There are numerous opportunities for repentance and practice. Peer support is available, and there is time to consider and respond. Situational games enable the players to adopt a new persona in a comfortable virtual environment. For instance, the kids see the games I play as games even though they are not truly games at all because of the setup or buildup I provide. Speaking and listening abilities are required.

6. They demand conversation. The players should engage with the subject at different levels and, naturally, with other players who are both more and less skilled or educated. Once more, this encourages learning from understanding others who have experienced or will experience a comparable circumstance.



7. Everyone must participate in games. In order to properly foster and promote social contact, clear communication, and a feeling of community, each student should be able to take part as a player. Games are designed to level the playing field so that everyone has an equal chance of winning because everyone starts with an equal amount of time and resources and aims to achieve the same objective. The teacher ought to be watching the students as they engage with the game, one another, and the lesson material.

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