

# Games in the Teaching of Foreign Languages

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**Abstract:** The use of games in teaching of foreign languages is that students learn the foreign languages easier, the students enjoy this method, they participate classes with love and willingly and the stuff that they learn seems to be much more permanent. Games in the process of teaching foreign languages seem to be a forward key for the teachers. Moreover, the teaching of the languages through the games, will learn the students to share, to have a friendship, to socialize and to communicate among others. The most important thing for the teacher is to know which games is proper for the basic language skills, to choose the game for the purpose and to apply it correctly. One of the principles of foreign language teaching is to develop the four basic language skills. These skills are listening, speaking, reading and writing which consists of the functional integrity. Teaching of foreign languages includes a lot of games and a lot of researches have done about these issue. Since I have personally applied these games in TÖMER Gazi University (Gazi University the Turkish Language Teaching Center) I can tell that I was getting excellent results. Most important thing is to be able to apply it and at the end to have positive results.

**Key Words:** Games, Teaching of the language with games, Foreign language teaching, The techniques of teaching the language, Language teaching

## Introduction

"Children should grow with the game." Plato

One of the most important functions in training is that the students uncover the existing capabilities and develop. The traditional way of education system is teaching the students not to be that active, teachers are using the teacher-centered methods and techniques. Now, training and education in our age is that the students are the center as assets that adds many new class of methods and techniques which are beginning to be used.

Foreign language teaching can only be taught by the student-centered methods and techniques used with the appropriate technologies which have to be effectively performed.

Not to explain and not to be able to express the true feelings and thoughts, is the same as not to be able to understand and effectively explain without thinking, as a result of the effectiveness of the class, summarize. (Kavcar et al., 2004:59).

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 (Demirel, 1990: 23).

Developments of the four basic skills are many events. In foreign language teaching; specified goals of the activities within the classroom, the plan can be applied. To teach certain subjects in order to put these issues, starting from simple to complex, concrete and abstract concepts should be taught correctly, and thus issues a call to find language teaching program that forms the basis of the other is a policy (1990:24 Demirel; 1997: 123).

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.

I briefly would like to talk about the benefits of the games.

## **The Benefits of the Games**

1. The game allows children the freedom of movement.
2. The game teaches children to respect social rules.
3. An interesting game should increase interaction between people, it consists specific and constructive power. Games are providing the children's mental and psycho-social developments.
4. Games are providing children's self-managed and controlled creating a fantasy world.
5. The game is challenging research, curiosity and adventure.
6. The basis of language developments process occurs during the game.
7. Care collection, developed with the game.
8. Games for children, to recognize aspects of the real nature, the research allows.
9. To learn the game and method provides the most dynamic live environment.
10. Children's making of decisions and execution logics are developing through the games
11. The program can be educational teachings through the game.

Shortly, games are helping in children's character development, earning trust, to ensure compliance, to develop observation skills, enhance the activity of body and brain. This event also are related to education of individuals' social. Their sensitivity to environmental development, learning to listen, sense and feel when using their own internal sense of direction as well as sound thinking to develop.

So far we have stand on the different topics about how games are effecting the children. I wonder what are their contributions to influence on language skills?

Beyond the listening, speaking, reading and writing skills games are improving the supporting skills as well such as basic skills of words and grammar. Language means interaction. All of this can be only functional if the language spoken between individuals is at the understandable level. Specially if during the interaction between individuals in the game, encourage the individual to full fill interaction with fun and educational activities. In particular, teaching the students with the game as soon as possible most effective and most meaningful in a way words can be provided with. Foreign language teaching each skill (listening, speaking, reading and writing) can be applied to game events. But here in the class not only the implementation of the games are important but also reaching good results with it, which is on the other hand the aim of the teaching. Otherwise, hundreds of games can be produced on paper, but only few of them will have the results. As a result of our experience the games should have these features: 1. The game should be fun and instructive, 2. The game should be loved by students, 3. The game should be easy to understand and to perform should not be messed up, 4. Since the students don't prefer the games with much material, the games should not include much material. 5. The goal of the game should be appropriate 6. The game should not be to long or to short 7. The games should be appropriate to students' level 8. Games should be competitive. 9. The game should be suitable for individual or group work.

Now I would like to inform you about the games which we, my colleges<sup>1</sup> and myself, apply in TÖMER Gazi University (Turkish Education Application and Research Center) which are very enjoyable and made more efficient course.

1. Saying new words according to the last letter of word. A student is telling a word, after which a next student has to say according to the last letter of the previous word a new word which begins with that letter. The game is going on that way until all the students have said the words. For example: the first word is "play", next student is saying "young", since the last letter of the word play is "y". If the student doesn't remember any word with the particular letter or if the student is saying the same word which was already used he has to leave the game. These easy game is very loved by students. The purpose of this game is to check out if the students are spelling and pronouncing the words correctly. During this game students have the capability to learn new words and to remember the forgotten ones. The most useful time to play this game are the last 15 minutes of the class, because it will help

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<sup>1</sup> Expert Hatice Parlak, Gazi University, TÖMER, Instructor of Turkish Language; Expert Neslihan Delice, Gazi University, TÖMER, Turkish Language Instructor, Ankara.

out the students to repeat the words that they have learned that day or before and it will bring joy to the last part of the class. This game can be performed to the middle – level students, but not to the higher level students (advanced) because it might be boring and too easy for them.

2. The teacher should read a comprehension from the unit that they have worked out before. A class should be divided into two groups. Teacher before reading the comprehension should write some words from the text on the board. From each group one student is coming in front of the board, every group has a different colour to mark the words which they hear while the teacher is reading. Teacher has to read the text loud and slowly, and the students listen good and when they recognize a word which is on the board they have to mark it and next student from that group has to continue. The students who marked more has won the game. This game is a good practice for listening, and to repeat a unit at the end of the class. Students will have fun as well as new information and possibility to repeat the unit. This game can be applied to middle-level students. For advanced students is simple and boring.

3. This is the different version of the previous game. The teacher should read a comprehension from the unit that they have worked out before. A class should be divided into two groups. Teacher before reading the comprehension should write some words about the text on the board. From each group one student is coming in front of the board, every group has a different color to mark the opposite words which they hear while the teacher is reading. Teacher has to read the text loud and slowly, and the students listen good and when they recognize a word which is on the opposite of the word on the board they have to mark it and next student from that group has to continue. The students who marked more has won the game. This game is a good practice for listening, recognizing and to repeat a unit at the end of the class. Students will have fun as well as new information and possibility to repeat the unit. This game can be applied to middle-level and a little bit advanced students. For advanced students and those who are really good this game can be simple and boring. This game can be performed also with the similar words or something that might be the grammar topic of that unit such as adjectives, adverbs, pronouns...

4. The teacher has to write into the board some synonym words from the unit that they have done same day. Students should look to the board 5 minutes and try to remember the words which are written on it. Then from each group at the same time a student comes to the board. Students are given different colored pencils. When the teacher is reading students should try to find the synonyms on the board. For example, the teacher is reading "pc" and the student has to recognize the word "computer" on the board, mark it with the color of his group. The students who marked more has won the game. This game is a good practice for listening, recognizing and to repeat a unit at the end of the class. Students will have fun as well as new information and possibility to repeat the unit. This game can be applied to middle-level and a little bit advanced students. For advanced students and those who are really good this game can be simple and boring. This game can be performed also with the similar words or something that might be the grammar topic of that unit such as adjectives, adverbs, pronouns...

5. Teachers can perform the same game as number four but only with the opposite words.

6. The teacher is writing the words one by one on the small papers from the unit they have had before and putting them into a bag. Teacher is dividing the class into two groups. A student takes a paper from the bag and trying to explain it in Turkish using similar words, opposite words and so on. The student is trying to describe it to the both groups. The group that the first knows gets a point. This game is helping the teacher to understand the students skills for explanation, how the student is using his knowledge in practice, how good are his sentences, his knowledge about synonyms and opposite words. This game can also be performed to the individuals without dividing the class into two parts.

This game can also be performed to the advanced level students using "expressions" instead of "words".

7. In this game most important thing is to know how to describe a person with physical and character features. Teacher should divide the class into two. The student in front of the board should without giving a name describe a person in the class only using words. The opponent group should guess the name of the asked person, they have the right to ask questions about the person, but they also have only one chance to guess it right. If they know they get a point, if not than the opposite group gets a point. If there are less students then the person which they have to explain doesn't necessarily has to be from the classmates. It can also be someone from the neighbour class, some stars... The goal of this practice is to check up the students knowledge about the grammar. This game can be applied to students in middle level and a little bit forward ones.

This game can apply in writing courses. This time student has to describe a friend and the character of the physical properties in paper and later on perform it to the classmates which have to guess about who is the topic. The goal of this game is to check up the knowledge of the students in writing accurate, meaningful and writing the sentences and adjectives grammatical proper.

8. The teacher divides into two groups the class. Removes some words from the text and prepares two different texts. The missing words from the group A he writes it to the group B. The missing parts of the group B writes to the group A. after the teacher reads the original text teacher will check up who has the most right words and

his group is going to be a winner. This game can be performed also for the individuals. At the end the student who has the most right words is the winner.

This game is good for teaching of foreign language so that the students will develop listening and writing skills. This game can be adapted to language skills, the teacher can ask only for grammar words like pronouns. This game can be applied to advanced students.

9. This game is very similar to the eighth game. Can be applied to the entire class or groups. Teacher should give a text with some missing words to the students and then while listening to the song the students should fulfill the missing words. This game will improve students' listening skills.

10. While working the dictate teacher has to divide the group into two. Also he has to divide the text into two parts and hang them to the classroom but the students should not see it. From every group a student goes and reads one sentence and tells it to the friends from the group quickly. Each time a different student has to do it. At the end of the game two text parts will be read again. The group who has a less mistakes is a winner. This is a very teaching game who is improving the students to remember the sentences and to write it quickly. This game can be played with the middle level students.

11. This game, and in oral expression and written expression is a game that can be implemented. Teachers bring to class a small ball. Teacher starts a sentence by saying the story and the ball goes into a student. Add a sentence to the story the students at the ball. Then he wants the ball at one and continues until students. Students will have to pay attention to structure and editing. Students can enjoy a game that is played. This game can be applied to advanced students.

12. Teacher country, city, place, environment to promote the unit after telling pictures of famous places is cut and pasted to cardboard. Divides the class into two groups again. Students from each group in turn will show one of these places and students of this place (without saying where it is) to tell you which group knows more and better explain the name if he wins. Students to describe this game (the title) to learn about. Students will increase their vocabulary. This game can be applied to students in the middle a little more advanced.

13. Another game we played very often is the silent cinema. Teacher movie names, book names, words, or a bag put it on paper wise words said. Teacher class divides into two groups again. A student from the group a paper bag and pull without ever talking with Mark, with gestures sometimes classified as an object to show through or on paper by de facto, a friend of movement on the bag by applying the word taken from a group of friends at a certain time to try to explain. The first consists of few words and tell which word with the finger shows. Here you say all the words that evoke the students in the group for them, students will review the vocabulary for. Sometimes students do not know if the words out, then the teacher tells the meaning of those words silently to the narrator or a particular time will allow to select the other words from the bag. Most who know the game will win the group. This game can be applied to advanced students.

14. Classified into two groups of teachers in grammar lessons will take. Written on paper in the hands of each group has a list of verbs. A student against a student group and a verb tells him to this act passivity, or want to bring. (for example: hair cut-factual the other is cut-to-order in) know if students ask questions during and in the same way that the group goes to a question he asks. Group knows the most wins. This game, teachers, students without verbs list of verbs to tell whether the students also can apply by requesting. We can adapt to the many issues grammar this game.

## **Conclusion**

Dear colleagues it has been determined that in the teaching of foreign language threw the use of the games are making the students to learn foreign language more easy, students enjoy this method, they willingly participate and learn more.

Dear colleagues, teaching has only a meaning with the learning. If there is no willing for learning teaching and the education can't only be of use. I can tell you about hundreds of games, but if I tell you about something that I don't know, something that I haven't tried there won't be benefits of it. I have informed you about the games that my colleagues and myself have tried in Gazi University Turkish Language Teaching Center. At the end I would like to respectfully thank you for listening patiently.

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