



## **The Purpose of Games in the Learning Process**

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**Annotation:** *At present, the study of foreign languages, especially English, is becoming an essential component of the intellectual and practical activities of the majority of people, as well as the professional training of specialists of a very diverse profile. Success in mastering the English language largely depends on the methodology of the teacher’s work, his ability to use various modern technologies in the context of solving educational problems. The most favorable conditions for the realization of all the goals of education are provided when organizing classes in the language environment. Partial solution of this task is fascinated by the use games in the learning process.*

**Keywords:** *new experience, foreign language teaching, speaking opportunities, definition of game, the most effective way, making the acquisition, an activity, and vocabulary skills.*

The definition of game is an activity that you do to have some fun. Games can make the students more focus in learning, because they do not feel that they are forced to learn. Games can lower anxiety, thus making the acquisition of input more likely. They are highly motivating and entertaining, and they can give shy students more opportunity to express their opinion and feelings.

Thus, using games in foreign language teaching is one of the most effective ways that provide students with speaking opportunities and at the same time motivate them. The purpose of games in the learning process is to reinforce what has already been taught. During the game, learners are engaged in an enjoyable and challenging activity with a clear goal. Often, students are so involved in playing the games that they do not realize they are practicing language. So games can provide vocabulary practice. Vocabulary games facilitate initial practice and periodic revision of vocabulary in an enjoyable context, thus making classroom vocabulary study an amusing and satisfying experience for teacher and student at the same time. Some games are played with the whole class, often with the students divided into two teams, while others can be played in pairs or small groups. Many experienced textbook and methodology writers have argued that games are not just time-filling activities but have a great educational value.

Using games in teaching vocabulary skills develops habits and skills of dialogue speech, promotes students’ speaking initiatives and enhances the natural communicative orientation of the lesson. The authors suppose that while playing games students involuntary memorize new lexical and grammar material. Thus, using games in foreign language teaching is one of the most effective ways that provide students with speaking opportunities and at the same time motivate them. The definition of game is an activity that you do to have some fun. Games can make the students more focus in learning, because they do not feel that they are forced to learn. Games can lower anxiety, thus making the acquisition of input more likely. They are highly motivating and entertaining, and they can give shy students more opportunity to express their opinion and feelings. They also enable learners to acquire new experiences within a foreign language which are not always possible during a typical lesson. Games can be media that will give many advantages for teacher and the students as

well. The use of games attract the student to learn English because it is fun and make them want to have experiment, discover and interact with their environment. Some experts have also figured out characteristics of games that make vocabulary learning more effectively.

Lee (1996) lists several main advantages when games are used in the classroom, including “a welcome break from the usual routine of the language class”, “motivating and challenging”, “effort of learning”, and “language practice in the various skills”. Ersoz holds that games are highly appreciated due to their amusement and interest. Teachers can use games to help their students practice more their skills of communication. Besides, Uberman also states the helpful role of games in vocabulary teaching after quoting and analyzing different opinions of experts. And also, Uberman observed the interest of her students in learning through games. She believes that games are a way to help students not only enjoy and amuse with the language they learn, but also practice it incidentally. To be short, games can be considered useful and effective tools that may be applied in vocabulary classes. The use of games in teaching vocabulary is a way to make the lessons more interesting, enjoyable and effective.

There are numerous techniques concerned with vocabulary presentation. However, there are a few things that have to be remembered irrespective of the way new lexical items are presented. If teachers want students to remember new vocabulary better, it needs to be learnt in context, practiced, and then revised to prevent students from forgetting. Teachers must make sure students have understood the new words, which will be remembered better if introduced in a “memorable way”. Bearing all this in mind, teachers have to remember to employ a variety of techniques for new vocabulary presentation and revision. We believe that one of the effective ways of vocabulary presentation is using games. Games are an important part of a teacher’s repertoire.

W.R.Lee holds that most language games make learners use the language instead of thinking about learning the correct forms. He also says that games should be treated as central not peripheral to the foreign language teaching program. There are many advantages of using games. “Games can lower anxiety, thus making the acquisition of input more likely”. They are highly motivating and entertaining, and they can give shy students more opportunity to express their opinions and feelings. Games also enable learners to acquire new experiences within a foreign language which are not always possible during a typical lesson. Games encourage, entertain, teach, and promote fluency. If not for any of these reasons, they should be used just because they help students see beauty in a foreign language and not just problems that at times seem overwhelming.

Teachers should be very careful about choosing games if they want to make them profitable for the learning process. If you want the games to bring desired results you must be sure that they correspond to the student’s level, or age, or to the material that is to be introduced or practiced. Games become difficult when the task or the topic is unsuitable or outside the student’s experience. One of the factors influencing the choice of a game is its length and the time, necessary for its completion. Many games have a time limit, but according to Siek-Piskożub, the teacher can either allocate more or less time depending on the students’ level, the number of people in a group, or the knowledge of the rules of a game and etc. Some teachers suggest that games be used at all stages of the lesson, provided that they are suitable and carefully chosen.

At different stages of the lesson, the teacher’s aims connected with a game may vary: a) provide a good model making its meaning clear; b) controlled practice. Elicit good imitation of new language and appropriate responses; c) communicative practice. Give students a chance to use the language.

After the teacher chooses what items to teach, Haycraft suggests following certain guidelines. These include teaching the vocabulary “in spoken form first” to prevent students from pronouncing the words in the form they are written, placing the new items in context, and revising them. A number of techniques can be adapted to present new vocabulary items. The presentation of new vocabulary is classified according to verbal and visual techniques according to Gairn’s and Redman’s classification.

Among visual techniques are flashcards, photographs and pictures, wall charts, blackboard drawings, word pictures, mime, and gesture. Students can label pictures or objects or perform an action. Verbal techniques consist of using illustrative situations, descriptions, synonyms and antonyms, scales, and using various forms of definition: definition by demonstration (visual definition), definition by abstraction, contextual definitions, and definition by translation. Now let us look at what games the teacher may exploit while working with words: Word association requires students to name all the words they know associated with any lexical category. One student says a word from the category, and then the next student must immediately say another word from the category. The next student continues with another word and so on around the class.

For the category health, for example, the game might begin this way: student 1-illness, student 2-catch a cold, student 3-sneeze, student 4-cough, and student: remedy and so on. Anyone who can't think of a word immediately has to drop out of the game. In EFL contexts, learning vocabulary has been considered a boring subject for a long time and the traditional way of learning vocabulary by mere copying and remembering has shown to be less than effective. Meanwhile, games are also seen as a time-filling activity in most English classrooms. It is believed that games are just for fun and they have very little effect in teaching and learning. However, our research reveals that games contribute to vocabulary learning if they give students a chance to learn, practice and to review the English language in a pleasant atmosphere. From the research, we found that students are demanding a new way of teaching vocabulary, and they themselves are in search of a new way of learning this subject as well. Under such circumstances, games have been shown to have advantages and effectiveness in learning vocabulary in various ways. Students also prefer games and puzzles to other activities.

Most students agreed that their use of vocabulary was becoming better since they actively joined games and involved in cooperative learning. Although Games are effective in cooperative learning new words, they cannot be successful if the teacher does not explain the tasks and roles of students clearly in playing games. Games should be an integral part of a lesson, providing the possibility of intensive practice while at the same time immensely enjoyable for both students and teachers. And we would like to recommend the wide use of games for enhancing students' vocabulary knowledge and skills as a successful way of language competence formation. Games motivate and entertain students but also help them learn in a way which aids the retention and retrieval of the material. Recently, using games has become a popular technique exercised by many educators in the classrooms and recommended by methodologists. Many sources, including the ones quoted in this article, list the advantages of the use of games in foreign language classrooms. Though the main objectives of the games are to acquaint students with new words or phrases and help them consolidate lexical items, they also help develop the students' communicative competence. Regarding the effectiveness of games, we can say that our 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.

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