



Some Features of Language Games in the Way they are used

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Abstract: *Language games are part of CLT approach for its characteristics that include learner-centeredness, meaningful collaborative and interactive activities, the use of relevant and authentic materials, the focus of meaning and linguistic forms in context and also the roles of teachers as facilitators.*

Keywords: *language games, communicate effectively, traditional teaching.*

The term of “language games” refers to the models of primitive language that Invent to clarify the working of language in general. It refers to games those children which enable them to learn the language (Wittgenstein as cited in Shawver). So it can be said that language games not only function as time filling activities but also they can bring some educational values that enable the children to learn the language. While Mc Cabe (1992) defines a language games as a spoken routine for two or more players, meant to be repeated many times. This implies that such repetition will enable the children to communicate effectively since playing language games will help the children to develop language and thought. In the activities of language games, the children will develop their ability to say what they mean to say and to express them clearly

Traditional teaching and learning process referring to chalk-and-talk has become outdated in lessons. Teachers and learners are exposed to various task-based processes to encourage a better participation among learners throughout the lesson. One of the most common and preferred teaching strategies is the use of language games to aid the teaching of various skills.

The growth of digital learning tools and web applications being used in lessons taking the use of language games to a modern and advanced platform for learners to engage in lessons. The use of interesting and suitable materials along with the various approaches when conducting language games during lessons helps to cater to learners' needs and interests on the subject-matter especially in learning grammar in context. Many researches have used various language games to show its effects on learners ' knowledge, competency and motivation in learning a language, focusing on different targeted language areas and skills such as grammar. Therefore, this paper, based on reviews of past literature, will explore the use of language games in teaching and learning grammar, with reference to second language (ESL) learners. The findings indicate the beneficial usage of language games to teaching and learning of grammar in for ESL learners. This study is useful to prove the importance of language games as a teaching strategy to help enhance learners ' English grammar acquisition.

A language game (also called secret language, ludling, or argot) is a system of manipulating spoken words to render them incomprehensible to the untrained ear. Language games are used primarily by groups attempting to conceal their conversations from others. Some common examples are Pig Latin; the Gibberish family, prevalent in the United States and Sweden; and Verlan, spoken in France. A common difficulty with language games is that they are usually



passed down orally; while written translations can be made, they are often imperfect, and thus spelling can vary widely. Some factions argue that words in these spoken tongues should simply be written the way they are pronounced, while others insist that the purity of language demands that the transformation remain visible when the words are imparted to paper.

Wittgenstein develops this discussion of games into the key notion of a language-game. Wittgenstein introduces the term using simple examples, but intends it to be used for the many ways in which we use language. The central component of language games is that they are uses of language, and language is used in multifarious ways. For example, in one language-game, a word might be used to stand for (or refer to) an object, but in another the same word might be used for giving orders, or for asking questions, and so on. The famous example is the meaning of the word "game". We speak of various kinds of games: board games, betting games, sports, "war games". These are all different uses of the word "games". Wittgenstein also gives the example of "Water!", which can be used as an exclamation, an order, a request, or an answer to a question. The meaning of the word depends on the language-game within which it is being used. Another way Wittgenstein puts the point is that the word "water" has no meaning apart from its use within a language-game. One might use the word as an order to have someone else bring you a glass of water. But it can also be used to warn someone that the water has been poisoned. One might even use the word as code by members of a secret society.

Pre-reading tasks.

Pre-reading tasks often aim to raise the readers' knowledge of what they are about to read (their schematic knowledge) as this knowledge will help them to understand the text. In our L1 we use this knowledge subconsciously and as a result need to raise it consciously in an L2. This raising of awareness is most effectively done collaboratively. Approaches I use include:

- tell your partner what you know about the topic
- do a quiz in pairs to find out what you know about the topic
- look at some pictures related to the topic
- Skimming the first paragraph for gist and then predicting.

While-reading tasks

Although reading is often a solitary activity and the idea of 'reading in pairs' seems odd, reading can be collaborative. Approaches I use include:

Running and reading: this approach especially lends itself to scanning as the idea is to encourage the students to read as quickly as possible in a race.

1. Divide the class into student a and student b pairs. Student a sits at one end of the classroom.
2. Stick the text to be read on the wall at the other end of the room.
3. Give student a a list of questions.
4. student a reads the first question to student b who has to run down the classroom to find the answer in the text, and then run back to dictate the answer to student a, who then tells b question 2 and so on.
5. The first pair to answer all the questions wins. (i ask the students to swap roles halfway through so everyone gets a chance to scan).

Slashed / Cut up texts: This is a genuinely collaborative reading approach.



1. Photocopy a suitable text and cut it diagonally into four.
2. Seat students in fours. Give a piece of the text to each student. They mustn't show their piece to the others.
3. Give each group a set of questions.
4. The group has to work collaboratively to answer the questions since no one has the whole of the text.
5. Groups can compare answers when they have finished.

Using websites: if you have a computer room available this is a very effective way of promoting communication as students can work on a reading task in pairs reading from the same screen.

While-reading tasks leading into post-reading tasks Jigsaw reading is an old favorite but perennially effective.

1. Divide a text into two parts or find two (or three) separate texts on the same topic.
2. Students a get one text and a related task, students b get the other text and task.
3. Students a complete their tasks in a group. Students b likewise. Compare answers in a & b groups.
4. Students get into a & b pairs and tell each other about their tasks.

Creating a class text bank: I encourage students to bring in interesting texts that they have found (perhaps as a homework task using the Internet) which can be submitted to the class text bank. For weekend homework each student selects a text to take away which they then discuss with the student who originally submitted it. This is, of course, what readers do in real life.

Exploiting graded readers: this is a good way to help with detailed reading since this implies reading for pleasure. I have used two approaches:

1. Using a class set of the same reader so that everyone reads the same book. This leads into class discussions of what everyone has read.
2. Students read different books and then recommend their book (e.g. by writing reviews) to their colleagues.

Exploiting students' written work: I often put students written work up on the walls for the others to read. Tasks can include guessing who the author is, voting on which is the most interesting, selecting some for a class magazine.

Post-reading tasks As mentioned above, telling someone about what we have read is a very natural reaction to a text. I have already mentioned a few in connections to 'while-reading' (e.g. recommending readers to the class) but other ideas I have used include:

- discussions about the text
- summarising texts
- reviewing texts
- using a 'follow-up' speaking task related to the topic
- Looking at the language of the text (e.g. collocations).



Conclusion

I would not be exaggerating to say that one of the things that all the most successful language learners I have met have in common is that they are dedicated readers in English. They all recognised the value of reading as a way to develop their language independently of the classroom but equally saw the value of investing class time in becoming more effective readers in English. They were willing to make this investment because they realised that reading could be fully integrated into other skills work and thereby be just as communicative as any other classroom practice.

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