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РОЛЬ ИГР В ИЗУЧЕНИИ ЯЗЫКА

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THE ROLE OF GAMES IN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

A trainer should use different games to enliven his lessons. The trainer attracts interest of trainees and students involving them into training by the use of games.

Для оживления уроков английского языка преподаватель должен применять разнообразные игры на своих уроках. Вовлекая студентов посредством игр, преподаватель вызывает интерес учащихся, студентов к своему предмету.

Students usually start learning English as a Second Language (ESL) as early as kindergarten. By the time they enter college, they have wide exposure to traditional grammar-based approaches to language instruction. Classes of 25-40 students meet to 2-3 hours per week to study, among other things, sentence structure and sentence transformations, paraphrasing and summarizing, and composition writing; grammar and vocabulary enrichment are integrated in the course.

In general, the students find the lessons boring, perhaps because they have been studying the same material for so many years. The lessons are mechanical and quite predictable – the teacher presents rules, gives exercises for students to work on, and administers tests to assess learning.

As a result, the English teachers do most of the talking while the students listen, take notes, or give one-word or one-sentence responses. This should not be the case. English-language instructors should be careful about monopolizing a class with too much teacher-talk – for speaking and writing activities more than 15 percent of the time is probably excessive. Teacher-centered lessons featuring lectures on sentence structure and how to write effective paragraphs are bound to create passive students who do not take an active role in class.

Clearly, English classes need to be more interactive to keep students interested in the lessons. English need not be a boring subject; on the contrary, it can be fun if teachers supplement the formal lessons with alternative methods and techniques. For example, if teachers regularly use games to review and practice the language skills that the class is currently studying, teachers can easily adapt available games and develop new ones to add some fun and excitement to the learning process.

The Usefulness of Games

Games are effective teaching tools and have many positive aspects, including the creation of opportunities for students to communicate in a relaxed, friendly, and cooperative environment. Games reduce tension by adding fun and humor to lessons, and they add an element of competitiveness that motivates students to participate. When students are absorbed by games, they internalize and acquire the essential

vocabulary, grammar, and other aspects of English in an unconscious manner because they are focused on the message and not the language itself.

Play, play, for your locks will grow grey...

According to the dictionary, a game is a form of play or sport. But a game can be much more than that.

A game can:

1. Help those who play develop their inner self.
2. Help them relate to others more effectively and cooperatively.
3. Train them in creative freedom as they feel less embarrassed or afraid and become more self-confident.
4. Bring them and the facilitators closer, which will evidently help to lower the tension and anxiety that prevents students from acquiring the language.

Although games can be used to practise certain language items at certain stages in the acquisition process, the main aim of games should be to develop communication skills.

Teachers at colleges and universities know that there are many games, such as specific classroom techniques, even children's games, which adults like playing, particularly if they see the language-learning point.

There are various games as means of foreign language teaching, from very elementary to quite advanced, for large and small classes, for cooperative group- and team- work games, as well as games for individuals.

For example, team-work games are very good for problem-solving and decision making classroom activities, where there is a leader responsible for the presentation of solution.

In my view, it is possible to divide all language games into various categories:

Grammar games, pronunciation and spelling games (word games included), problem-solving games, role-playing and simulations which we believe are real-life situations with role-playing.

Speaking about grammar games proper, one can use the different exercises; grammar songs on varied structures and regular and irregular verbs; type of grammar games on linking words and different crosswords like "X-mas Quiz" crossword or "British National Holidays" crosswords which every teacher can prepare himself, comics and so on.

As to pronunciation games, we recommend tongue-twisters and limericks, which can also be used both as warmers and grammar games. It is mostly traditional word games, though some of them are difficult to understand.

Among numerous problem-solving activities there are a variety of exercises in listening and reading. Game-like activities with proverbs and sayings, priority games are also very good here.

Effort is required at every step and must be maintained over a long period of time. Games help and encourage many learners to sustain their interest and motivation.

Games also help the teachers to create contexts in which language is useful and meaningful. The learners want to take part and in order to do so they must understand what others are saying or have written, and they must speak or write in order to express their own points of view or give information.

The spirit of real games

The aim is to find games which the learners would enjoy playing in their out of classroom lives. Of course, the experience of teaching foreign languages shows that many learners are prepared to take part in games and activities which they would consider a little juvenile or rather boring in the mother tongue. However, there is a limit to learners' goodwill and we should not stray far from the aim of introducing games worth playing in their own right. It is often the activity expected of a learner which makes it into an acceptable game, or, on the other hand, into a mechanical exercise. One example of this should be sufficient.

The teacher places a number of pens, pencils, etc. in various places on the desk and asks a learner,

For example: "Where is the red pen?" As the red pen is obviously in the book, the learner understands the questions as, "What sentence in English describes the position of the pen"

Game: Adverb charade

Aims: Skills-speaking

Language-asking yes/no questions, adverbs.

Level: The 3rd_4th forms

Organization: Pairs, class.

Preparation: About 50 small pieces of paper.

Time: 10-15 min.

Procedure:

Step 1: The pieces of paper are distributed, so that each student receives two. On one piece of paper he writes a simple action, e.g. eating a banana, knitting, reading a paper, on the other an adverb, e.g. angrily, badly, terribly etc. All the pieces of paper are put in two files face down.

Step 2: Each student teams up with a partner. The first pair of students come to the front of the class. One draws a piece of paper from the action, the other from the adverb. Both imply their action in the manner described by the adverb. The rest of the class guess.

Guessing games

Everybody knows guessing games. It is not only children that like guessing; adults like guessing too, as shown by many popular TV programmes. The basic rule of guessing games is very simple:

One person knows something that another one wants to find out. As the person guessing has a real urge to find out something, guessing games are true communicative situations and as such are very important for foreign language learning. They are generally liked by students of all ages because they combine language practice with fun and excitement.

Before you try out a new guessing game with your class, make sure that the players know all the words and structures necessary for the game. Games may refresh your students' memories and show whether any revision is needed before you start playing. Another element to be considered before playing is the organisation of the game, in order to guarantee that as many students as possible are actively participating most of the time. Games give a lot of fun even if they are not played in order to score points.

Literature

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