



EFFECTIVE METHODS FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

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ABSTRACT

This article is considered the problem of teaching foreign language through games and the impact of games on the effectiveness of language learning. Games are very effective in the process of learning a language for both small and adult, as during the games the participants well remember and practice this or that material and communicate more freely with each other. The games are intended to provide both teachers and learners with alternative ways of revising and recycling language, so the aim of game is to help the learners learn specific language in an enjoyable way.

Remembering new words is hard. Words are very slippery things. Before you know it, they've wriggled away and are gone. It takes a lot of effort to keep them where you want them. According to Jill Hadfield, in order to retain the word students have to go through three distinct processes. They have to fix the meaning of the word in their minds. They have to somehow make the word their own - to personalise it so that it takes on a colour and a character for them and becomes part of their individual word store - and they have to use the word creatively in context for themselves.

How could teacher devise activities that would help the learner through these three processes?

- Fix the meaning of the word in their mind.
- Make the word their own.
- Use the word to communication with others.
- How make it fun?

One of the most effective classroom tools are games. As Shaheen Ara mentioned, 'repetition is the mother of skill' becomes very meaningful during the games in language class as students get to use the language all time with a lot of repetition. Although repetition is boring in some cases, during games it is fun for children. Also because of fun involved in the game a massive amount of vocabulary and grammar can be revised in a short time.

The games based on fluency practice aim to set up context within the classroom that encourage the learners to use foreign language for communication and create a need for language exchange in order to complete the activity. The learners are therefore concentrating



on completing the task rather than on the language itself. The language expected of the learners is however, limited and is always clearly defined by the context of the game.

And some words about games. A game is an activity with rules, a goal and fun. There are two types of games: competitive and cooperative games. In competitive games players or teams race to be the first to reach the goal. In cooperative games players or teams work together towards a common goal.

There are also two categories of games: linguistic and communicative. In linguistic games the goal of the game is linguistic accuracy: in the case of these vocabulary games, remembering the correct word.

Communicative games have a goal that is not linguistic: successful completion of the games involves carrying out a task such as exchanging information, filling in a picture or chart, or finding two matching cards rather than the correct production of language.

Types of game: the games make use of a variety of techniques, variety being important in language teaching. The simplest games are sorting, ordering or arranging games. These are usually played in pairs, where students sort cards into different groups of vocabulary.

In **information gap** games, player 1 has access to some information not held by player 2. player 2 must acquire this information to complete a task successfully. This type of game may be one-side or reciprocal, where both players have information which they must pool to solve a common problem. The games may be played in pairs or small groups, where all members of the group have some information.

Guessing games are a familiar variant on this principle. The player with the information deliberately withholds it while others guess what it might be.

Search games are another variant involving the whole class. In these games everyone in the class has one piece of information. Players must obtain all or a large amount of the information available to fill in a chart or picture or to solve the problem. Each student is thus simultaneously a giver and a collector of information.

Matching games are based on a different principle but also involve a transfer of information. These involve matching corresponding pairs of cards or pictures and may be played as a whole class activity where everyone must circulate until they find a partner with a corresponding card or picture or a pairwork or small group activity, played as a card game on either the "snap" or the "pelmanism" principle.

Labelling games involve matching labels to items in a picture.

Exchanging games are based on the "barter" principle. Players have certain articles, cards or ideas which they wish to exchange for others. The aim of the game is to make an exchange which is satisfactory to both sides.

Exchanging and collecting games are an extension of this. Players have certain articles or cards which they are willing to exchange for others in order to complete a set. This may be played as a whole class activity where players circulate freely exchanging articles or cards at a random.

Classroom management: there are three main types of activities: pairwork (involving two partners), small group work (involving groups of three or four) and whole class activity (involving all students). All these activities require some flexibility in the constitution of groups and organisation of the classroom. It is best to have the desks or tables in a "U" shape if



possible. Students can then work with the person sitting next to them for pairwork, and groups of three or fours can easily be constituted by alternate pairs moving their chair to the inner side of the “U”, opposite another pair.

Whole class activity which involve all the students circulate freely, can take place in the empty area in the centre of the “U”. If it is not possible to arrange desks in this way, the traditional arrangement of front-facing desks can be easily adapted to pairwork with people at adjoining desks working together. While small groups can be by two people turning their chair round to face the people behind them. Whole class activities present a little more of a problem but often there is a space big enough for the students to move around in at the front the class, or desks can be pushed back to clear a space in the centre.

So, games are best set up by demonstration rather than by lengthy explanation. The teacher should explain briefly what the game involves, hand out the photocopied cards make sure students have pen and paper if needed, give them a little time to study the cards and then demonstrate the game with one of the students in front of the class.

We know that teaching foreign languages is a creative process. Teachers are constantly tapping into new ideas. Here some activities for teachers which can be used in foreign language lessons and we hope that they’ll help you during your teaching process.

№1. Draw three big circles on the floor with chalk. Label one circle “noun”, another one “verb”, and the third “adjective”. Tell the children that you are going to say a word and they must decide if it is a noun, verb or adjective. As soon as they have decided, they should run and stand inside the correct circle. Those who go to the correct circle, and can fit inside it, are safe. Those who go to the wrong circle, or who are too late to fit into the right one are “dead”. “Dead” players should stand next to the teacher and can help by taking turns to call out words from the list. Keep playing until the circle can hold all the remaining players. These are the winners. Words for the list could include:

Noun	Verb	Adjective
Dog	Read	Big
Boy	Speak	Slow
Flower	Go	Hot
School	Have	Beautiful
House	Are	Fast
Tree	Play	Small
Pencil	Cook	Long
Table	Run	Cold
Teacher	Sit	Short
Book	Draw	Little

№2. Give each child two signs, one saying “right” and the other saying “wrong”. Sit the players on the floor in front of you and tell them that you are going to say some sentences containing acts of animals. Sometimes the sentences will be right, and sometimes one of them will be in the wrong case. The children must listen, and then hold up one of their sign to show the



teacher if the sentence was right or wrong. Correct answer score a point and each child can keep his own score to find a winner. Examples of sentences could be:

1. Dogs can fly (wrong).
2. Bears can swim (right).
3. Cats can climb (right).
4. Cats can draw (wrong).
5. Dogs can dance (right).
6. Horses can jump (right).
7. Foxes can sing (wrong).
8. Ducks can fly (right).

№3. Draw three lines across the floor with chalk, so that the room is divided into thirds. Name each third either “preposition”, “verb”, “pronoun”. Tell the children that you are going to call out a word that will be either a preposition, a verb, or a pronoun, and that they must decide which one it is. As soon as they know, they should run and stand in the correct third of the room. The first child to reach the correct place scores a point. Children can keep their own scores so that a winner can be found at the end of the game. Examples of the selected parts of speech could include:

Preposition	Verb	Pronoun
In	Run	You
On	Play	We
Under	Speak	He
Between	Write	They
Above	Read	She

№4. Label the four walls of the room with a different category of vocabulary to be tested. For example: family, animals, parts of body, colours. Tell the children that you are going to say a word and that they must run to the correct wall to show which category the word belongs to. The first child to reach the correct wall wins a point. Keep score to find a winner. Words to include in the above categories could include:

Family	Animals	Parts of body	Colour
Brother	Dog	Head	Red
Mother	Cow	Hand	Black
Father	Cat	Leg	Green
Sister	Bear	Nose	Blue
Granny	Horse	Eye	White

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