

Use of Puzzle Solving Games to Teach English

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Abstract

Technology plays a dominant role in Teaching. Language games are unique tools for language acquisition. The objective of this paper is to train the trainers of English on the Language games that could be implemented in a flipped classroom, unmanned classroom. The method of study includes Students as samples and grammatical items as contents. A survey through a questionnaire has been employed and its results have been carefully executed. Language Games proved to be a successful tool in Language acquisition. Tenses and other grammatical items can be taught more effectively. Students actively take part when Language is taught through such innovative tools. After implementation, it is proved that the gen z are no longer passive and are involved in language learning through games. This paper acts as a guide to modern techno savvy English teachers and paves a way for implementing innovative techniques in their classrooms and make the class room more effective.

Keywords: Acquisition, Flipped, Gen z, Innovative

1. Introduction

The use of games to learn has been applied universally through the ages. Whether it is to learn language skills or technical skills, games can help them learn effectively. In today's corporate world, English is considered to be the official corporate language. To gain command in English, people with different native language face lot of difficulties in learning English. These games aid in teaching English language in unison to its rules to the students of any age group. They act as instruments in bridging the gap between the complexities in learning English language. Games have proved effective tool for teaching English in both primary and the middle school.

For the successful implementation of Language games and to avail the maximum benefits of it the educators need to be oriented and made aware of the effectiveness of the language games first. Rixon states that the responsibility of choosing the activities and organizing them rests on the teachers so that they may not only cater to the expectations and needs of the students but also be influential in leading them into "more adventurous and linguistics

fields¹" of instruction in these games but also games are devised to help students acquire linguistic abilities) outside the classroom complex.

2. Review of Literature

Language games are seen to be very effective in teaching and learning of English and the various reviews of literature function as evidence to this fact. Nguyen in "Teaching and learning Grammar through games in the tenth grade at Hung Vuong high school" indicates that games reduce the difficulties and exhilarate the ambiance of teaching and learning Grammar. The findings show that the teachers who follow the conventional methods of teaching English through tasks given in textbooks and do not devise creative games and activities shape a grammar lesson into a dreary and uninteresting experience for the students and do not fulfill the demand of an effective and pleasing grammar class². The reception of language games both by the teachers and students in teaching English is important. Research on "the usefulness of games in teaching grammar in Turkey" establishes that

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Turkish EFL teachers acknowledge games to be effective in improving the English learning of the learners³. Author in⁴ their study through the calculation of the percentages for each item state that both teachers and learners are encouraged in using language games and activities that help in learning English in the classroom and they believe these to be valuable tools in learning a new language. They consider that these activities make the class more energetic and vigorous and help them to engage in newer learning tasks⁴. The rise of gaming culture in today's setting cannot be overlooked. Students attain most of their linguistic abilities by using technology and having direct experiences with them. Sylen mentions that playing digital games like Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games (MMORPGs) which are conducive to second Language learning, improves the linguistic and cognitive knowledge of the learners to a great extent⁵. Moreover, Godwin and Jones argue that the development of vocabulary learning through gaming may be enhanced by adding options to both sections of game and learning by means of merging game with electronic and computing tools⁶. This would indeed open newer avenues of English Language learning to the students outside the classroom as e-learning has not yet been introduced in all the Indian schools.

3. List of Games

These are a puzzle solving games effectively used to teach English. Though these games are classified as games for teaching language, they may also be used for teaching specifics of English language grammar, tense, verbs, nouns, vocabulary, sentence structures, speaking, reading and writing skills in English⁹.

3.1 Crossword

A crossword is a word puzzle that normally takes the form of a square or a rectangular grid of white and black shaded squares. The goal is to fill the white squares with letters, forming words or phrases, by solving clues which lead to the answers. The shaded squares are used to separate the words or phrases.

A puzzle is a game, problem that tests a person's ingenuity. In a puzzle, one is required to put pieces together, in a logical way, in order to arrive at the correct solution of the puzzle.

Puzzles are often devised as a form of entertainment but they can also arise from serious mathematical or logistical problems.

A quiz is a form of game or sport of the mind in which the players (as individuals or in teams) attempt to answer questions correctly.

Teachers of English should have sufficient confidence in using technology for the enhancement of teaching and leaving skills. We have to prepare ourselves to face this challenge, which is not impossible to achieve.

Today student live in a dynamic "e-age". They receive information with the click of a mouse in a fraction of a second. They are looked to the Net as never before. In such a situation, reading books is least preferred by most students. Teachers have to tune themselves to the changing mindset of the student community.

Today we have amazing web tools to enhance the vocabulary of the students. Vocabulary is crucial not only during the learning process but also during recruitment. **Quiz let** is a flashcard creator with aids to memorize chosen words. It has games like scatter and space Race. The test mode has a variety of multiple choice and true or false questions. '**Quiz let**' is certainly an astonishing web-tool to enhance students vocabulary.

Lexipedia is an on-line dictionary which is widely used today in ELT. It creates a web of related words. Most of the words are recorded. Hence, pronunciation can also be mastered by the learners⁸. Parts of speech have been color ended. Synonyms and Antonyms also appear side by side with the parts of speech.

NINJA words is a superfast dictionary which gives definitions quickly. It is also an **iphone app**. **Word bucket** is used by teachers and learners to download difficult words and practice.

Snappy words is an online visual dictionary and thesaurus. Students can attain mastery over words without paper and pencil when they use their user-friendly web-tools.

PODCASTS is a series of video or audio files which can be played on a number of devices such as desktops and Mp3 players. They are short, portable and easy to use. It provides the teacher the real setting of language. These are of enormous use to English language teachers.

Digital story-telling is another technological device used in ELT. Stories are told electronically by combining text, audio, video, photos etc; It is used to teach writing and speaking skills. Many tools are available for creating digital stories. Digital story telling helps improvement of oral skills such as intonation, rhythm and stress.

Word-clouds is another tool in ELT. Here, the more frequently used words appear in a larger font. It is used

even to put research interviews in nutshell. Word-clouds is helpful in teaching reading and writing skills.

Blogs are used as a personal journal for an individual. It is a web-page used to generate motivation and interest for writing in English.

Video-Conferencing is useful for a language teacher. It is undeniably a great boon to ELT by technology. Teachers of the English language should get awareness about such latest technologies available. Adequate training can help them assist and enhance language teaching.

SMS and **E-mail** are also widely used methods of teaching and learning. The cost is negligible. They are effective teaching and learning aids; rural students prefer SMS and E-mail for learning activities. They are indeed, widely used tools. They consume less time and are useful for fast communication. Effective use of technology in enhancing English learning is unavoidable since we metaphorically swim today in the sea of technology. Hence, computer is the basic requirement in an ELT classroom. Microsoft word, power-point, net surfing, and video-downloading play a vital role in enhancing language learning.

You-tube is also widely used by teachers of the English language. You-tube videos can be used in ELT classrooms to teach vocabulary, accent, pronunciation and also voice-modulation.

Teacher and learners use **E-forms** to communicate at different times and form different places. Teachers can also create their own E-forums. Social-media applications such as **FACEBOOK** are also used for online group discussions.

Language laboratories and **LCD projectors** also play a major role in ELT. Interactive- whiteboards are used like a large computer screen. The pen is used like a large computer screen. The pen is used like the mouse. This innovative device is also an excellent technological tool. To add more information on the board, the already existing notes need not be erased.

To enhance the English Language empowerment, the impact of social networks is indispensable. To imply this concept is the objective of the chapters which this introductory chapter. Innovative methods in ELT and multimedia resources for ELT are to be clearly understood to highlight the role of technology in enhancing/strengthening the mettle of ELT.

Today mobile learning has become a classroom without walls. It has become a learning-revolution. Mobile phones should be used for learning English too. The western nations have already progressed in this. Free mobile applications are available for learning English. It is enough

to do google search for “**mobile phone apps** for learning English” and we can get a lot of mobile applications.

- The teacher reads out a story to the students slowly. The teacher marks all the nouns used in the story prior to her reading and if the story contains adjectives used before the nouns the teacher underlines and avoids them while reading out the story to the students.
- The teacher gives instruction to the students that they have to insert an adjective wherever possible after the noun.
- The teacher at the end of her reading asks the students to read out the adjectives they have used to describe the various nouns. The student who has recognized all the nouns and written adjectives for those wins in the game.

Variation: The teacher may even use an audio-visual aid, a newspaper or journal article for the game.

This game is adapted from the Cambridge Handbook for Language Teachers: Grammar Practice activities by Penny Ur.

Material: A list of various prepositions.

Object: To help students understand the use of various kinds of prepositions and prepositional phrases and develop in them an appreciation for poetry.

- The teacher draws three columns for Preposition of Place (static and movement), Preposition of Time and Prepositions showing other relationships, on the board and asks the students to pool in as many prepositions as they can to the three columns.
- The teacher then challenges the students to write a poem using as many prepositions as they can. The teacher instructs them to start by composing some dramatic event such as “He fell into a well” or “It moved to and fro”. Then the students think of all the circumstances and add prepositional phrases to precede the event further.
- Once the poems are constructed the students read out the poem and also appreciate the poems written by others. The names of the ones who wrote the best poems are decided through votes.

Variation: The teacher may make the students hear an audio of a sample poem composed using prepositions.

3.2 Find a One-Word Verb

This game is adapted from the Cambridge Handbook for Language Teachers: Vocabulary activities by Penny Ur.¹⁴

Material: An English Dictionary, List of two-word verbs that have one word equivalents

Object: To enable students to recognize equivalents for prepositional or phrasal verbs.

- The teacher writes on the board a list of phrasal or prepositional verbs or gives the students a handout containing sentences having prepositional verbs in them.
- The teacher asks the students to find out a single word verb for each phrasal verb given, individually or in groups. The students are allowed to refer to their dictionary. The teacher then sets a time limit of 10 minutes.
- Once the time gets over the teacher reads out the answers for the students and the one who gets the maximum answers correct is the winner. For e.g., 'give back' = 'return'.

Variation: The teacher may ask the students to recall two-word verbs that they may have heard being used in the cricket commentaries. She may even ask the students to construct sentences using the prepositional or phrasal verbs after giving them a list of verbs that may have two-word verb equivalents.

- Used in each and to solve the problem.
- The students work on the problem. They underline the verb forms and then solve the problem. The student who gets all the tense forms correct and gets the answer '8' to the problem wins $[(2 \times 3 + 3) - 2 + 1 = 8]$ ¹⁰.

Variation: The teacher may ask the students to solve the problems even in groups. The teacher may also challenge the students to construct word problems using various verb forms and then pass those in the class for the students to solve.

4. Conclusion

The paper highlights the uses and effectiveness of Language games in teaching grammar. The reviews of literature highlights that games can be proficiently used even outside the classroom situation to learn English with the help of technology and through gaming. Language games enliven not only the teaching-learning of English in the classroom but also stimulate the interest of the students to do more of self learning¹¹. The activities demand them to work and employ their linguistics and grammatical skills in constructing sentences accurately. More importantly Language games help the students to gain knowledge of a

Foreign Language (English) in a relaxed, tension free and fun filled atmosphere. The various games discussed here are tailored and tested in the classroom situation and have proved indeed effective in assisting students to acquire command in English Grammar and its usage in both written and oral construction of sentences¹². The teachers may face many impediments while executing these language games in the classroom but in due course of time with regular use of games in the classroom the teachers will find themselves overcoming many problems they may face initially. Language games indeed have numerous benefits in helping students obtain mastery over English Language¹³. Though the games mentioned here are mostly grammar activities there are many other language games available for improving the vocabulary, pronunciation, communication skills, etc, of the students which may also be by far used in the classrooms.

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