

THE WAYS OF USING GRAMMAR GAMES IN TEACHING PRIMARY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

In this article, the ways of using grammar games in teaching primary schools are investigated for Uzbek EFL teachers that are working in primary schools. The most effective methods and common teaching strategies are used to make teachers' jobs easy in teaching grammar. Additionally, this research is advantageous for young learners who want to improve their grammar acquisition via the consequence of the strategy of teaching language games. Moreover, in this study I have investigated the use of grammar games to improve English grammar achievement among students at primary school in one of the villages of Uzbekistan. It was held during the first term of the 2023-2024 school years. I applied experimental approach with 30 students who completed test of grammar games.

Keywords: grammar games, teaching, learning, methods, primary school

INTRODUCTION

Grammar is not only an area that deals with the set of language, but it is also a major part of language. That's why both teachers and language learners should take into consideration how to successfully teach and learn grammar. However, most teachers are unable to teach grammar in their classroom even though they have extensive knowledge of grammar. In addition, grammar is described as boring, difficult and uninteresting thing to learn because of involving memorization and working on written exercises. According to Joseph Webbe, 'No man can run speedily to the mark of language that is shackled...with grammar precepts' [S.Thornbury, 1999]. He explained that those who want to learn grammar can easily acquire it by practicing other skills of language.

For teaching the learners in primary schools, games play a vital role because they simplify learning process for young learners. Games also provide enjoyment and relaxation, so that they are crucially important for the learners of English language.

The importance of games in teaching and learning grammar

Using games in classroom can help young learners to practice easily grammatical structures and concepts which are boring, repetitive and difficult. Games also make lower pupils' negative emotional and motivational factors and enhance their motivation. As Deesri said, 'When teachers want to choose certain games to be played in the class, they should first consider the games' purpose, students' characteristics,

whether they are old or young, and the suitable time of playing the game. Some games should be used in the morning, others in the afternoon and others on Friday.' [Deesri A. 2002].

Games are a great way of engaging students, increasing their motivation and interest in study material while allowing the teacher to be innovative and original as he presents topics. In games, students are also challenged to make use of information which will allow them to evaluate their critical thinking skills. They foster a challenging, constructive competition environment that facilitates the interaction of students in an amicable and entertaining atmosphere.

'Popular games are classified into specific categories as follows:

1. Matching: Matching synonyms / antonyms, matching two sentences together, matching pictures with words etc.
2. Ordering: Arrange words to form sentences, arrange pictures in the order of the story, and arrange suitable words to form the longest meaningful sentence possible, etc.
3. Completing: Add words to the blanks to complete the sentences.
4. Competitions: Compete to see how many sentences each team / player can complete in a certain amount of time, compete to see which team / who can put words into sentences the fastest, etc.
5. Card games: Games like bingo, dominoes etc.
6. Memory games: Contest to see how many sentences the player can remember the most in a given period of time.' [Tomlinson, Brian, and H. Masuhara, 2009].

Useful methods to teach grammar by using games

1. Play the *Simon Says* of grammar

This game helps children to learn any structures of grammar in a productive and uncomplicated way. It is especially suitable for elementary and primary school students. Teachers can adopt this game to teach parts of speech. For instance, pupils can stand up for a noun (e.g. desk, blackboard, chair, etc.), sit down for a verb (e.g. walk, run, stop, etc.) and place their hand on their head for an adjective (e.g. beautiful, strong, cold, etc.).

Teachers call out a word and ask them to do the right thing as soon as their child has rehearsed each action several times. Siblings, groups of friends or entire family can have a great time playing this game. If it is played in a group, teachers should encourage each player to act as quickly as possible, with the fastest one winning the game, a similar concept *Simon Says*.

2. Grammar Bingo games

One of the fun games that can be played in the classroom is bingo. In this game, teachers can prepare bingo cards which some words are called out randomly for each learner. Teachers should hand out these cards to their pupils and they should state the

correct parts of speech. Those who get it wrong must remove the marker. It should be continued playing until someone has a BINGO

It is also able to improve students' language understanding, spelling skills, listening abilities and teamwork not only through the Bingo game, but by making them better at word recognition.

3. Icebreaking game

This entertaining icebreaking game gets the students and helps them to get to know one another better. In order to enhance the language skills of students, it may also be used as a rhetorical game. To do it, teachers should give every student a piece of paper and ask them three kinds of sentences: what they like, what they have and what they can (e.g. I have a book, I like reading, I can swim). After that, the first piece of paper should be crumpled into a small ball. After reading their sentences, students should crumple their piece of paper around this ball to make it bigger and bigger. After making a large ball, which is called a snowball of friendship, the students should stand up by making a circle and pass the ball while playing music. When the music stops, the student who is holding this snowball in hands, should take one piece of paper out of it, read the sentences and try to find who they are about. This icebreaking game is played until the last piece of paper and at the end, students remember a lot of facts about one another. And the teacher can also enjoy every moment of the lesson.

Results

I have conducted grammar games among fourth grade students at primary school in one of villages of Uzbekistan during the first term of 2023-2024 school year, from September 4, 2023 to November 3, 2023. The experimental method was used to identify whether there was any improvement in grammar consequences after using games. I used pre-test and post-test to highlight any differences between students before and after using games and I assessed them as followed:

Pre-test results

| <i>Percentage of students</i> | <i>mark</i> |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| 10% | <i>excellent</i> |
| 40% | <i>good</i> |
| 50% | <i>satisfactory</i> |

Post-test results

| <i>Percentage of students</i> | <i>mark</i> |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| 40% | <i>excellent</i> |
| 40% | <i>good</i> |
| 20% | <i>satisfactory</i> |

The result showed significant differences among students before and after using games to improve their grammar.

Discussion and conclusion

The result of the study showed that grammar games can aid the student's English language learning with efficiency. Furthermore, Luu and Nguyen [2012] point out that educational games were also instrumental in setting up a more engaging and supportive teaching environment as well as reducing the difficulties of understanding grammar that make it simpler for pupils to learn from their classroom experience. According to Zdybiewska, 'Games help the teacher to create contexts in which language is useful and meaningful' [Zdybiewska, 1994].

Lastly, these games also contributed to an increased interaction between classes and the promotion of enthusiasm amongst students. Unlike traditional activities, games provide an opportunity for students to interact with each other and facilitate active participation in the learning process.

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