

MOTIVATING PUPILS WITH GAMES

Niyazmetova Shakhsanam Kutlimuratovna

*Khorezm Regional national centre of teaching new methodology
Urgench, Uzbekistan*

Abstract : *This article deals with peculiarities of using games in teaching foreign languages. Games enable learners to acquire new experiences within a foreign language which are not always possible during a typical lesson. Games also lend themselves well to revision exercises helping learners recall material in a pleasant, entertaining way.*

Key words : *games, experienced, role-play, to practice, advantages, communicative competence.*

Annotatsiya: *Ushbu maqolada chet tillarini o'qitishda o'yinlardan foydalanishning o'ziga xos xususiyatlari ko'rib chiqiladi. O'yinlar o'quvchilarga chet tilida yangi tajribalarni o'zlashtirish imkonini beradi, bu odatiy dars davomida har doim ham mumkin emas. O'yinlar, shuningdek, o'quvchilarga materialni yoqimli va qiziqarli tarzda eslab qolishlariga yordam beradigan takrorlash mashqlari uchun yaxshi yordam beradi.*

Kalit so'zlar: *o'yinlar, tajribali, rolli o'yin, amaliyot, afzalliklar, kommunikativ kompetentsiya.*

There are many advantages of using games. "Games can lower anxiety, thus making the acquisition of input more likely" (Richard-Amato). They are highly motivating and entertaining, and they can give shy students more opportunity to express their opinions and feelings (Hansen). They also enable learners to acquire new experiences within a foreign language which are not always possible during a typical lesson. Furthermore, to quote Richard-Amato, they, "add diversion to the regular classroom activities," break the ice, " [but also] they are used to introduce new ideas". In the easy, relaxed atmosphere which is created by using games, students remember things faster and better (Wierus and Wierus). Further support comes from Zdybiewska, who believes games to be a good way of practicing language, for they provide a model of what learners will use the language for in real life in the future.

Games encourage, entertain, teach, and promote fluency. If not for any of these reasons, they should be used just because they help students see beauty in a foreign language and not just problems.

Choosing appropriate games.

There are many factors to consider while discussing games, one of which is appropriacy. Teachers should be very careful about choosing games if they want to make them profitable for the learning process. If games are to bring desired results, they must correspond to either the student's level, or age, or to the material that is to be introduced or practiced. Not all games are appropriate for all students irrespective of their age. Different age groups require various topics, materials, and modes of

games. For example, children benefit most from games which require moving around, imitating a model, competing between groups and the like. Furthermore, structural games that practice or reinforce a certain grammatical aspect of language have to relate to students' abilities and prior knowledge. Games become difficult when the task or the topic is unsuitable or outside the student's experience.

Another factor influencing the choice of a game is its length and the time necessary for its completion. Many games have a time limit, but according to Siek-Piskozub, the teacher can either allocate more or less time depending on the students' level, the number of people in a group, or the knowledge of the rules of a game etc.

When to use games.

Games are often used as short warm-up activities or when there is some time left at the end of a lesson. Yet, as Lee observes, a game "should not be regarded as a marginal activity filling in odd moments when the teacher and class have nothing better to do". Games ought to be at the heart of teaching foreign languages. Rixon suggests that games be used at all stages of the lesson, provided that they are suitable and carefully chosen. At different stages of the lesson, the teacher's aims connected with a game may vary:

1. *Presentation*. Provide a good model making its meaning clear;
2. *Controlled practice*. Elicit good imitation of new language and appropriate responses;
3. *communicative practice*. Give students a chance to use the language.

Games also lend themselves well to revision exercises helping learners recall material in a pleasant, entertaining way. All authors referred to in this article agree that even if games resulted only in noise and entertained students, they are still worth paying attention to and implementing in the classroom since they motivate learners, promote communicative competence, and generate fluency.

Role play as a method of teaching

Scholars suggest different steps and various successions in applying role play in teaching. Based on the empirical evidence, we suggest our step-by-step guide to making a successful role play.

Step 1 - A Situation for a Role Play

To begin with, choose a situation for a role play, keeping in mind students' needs and interests (Livingstone, 1983). Teachers should select role plays that will give the students an opportunity to practice what they have learned. At the same time, we need a role play that interests the students. One way to make sure your role play is interesting is to let the students choose the situation themselves. They might either suggest themes that intrigue them or select a topic from a list of given situations. To find a situation for a role play, write down situations you encounter in your own life, or read a book or watch a movie, because their scenes can provide many different role play situations. You might make up an effective role play based on cultural differences.

Step 2 - Role Play Design

After choosing a context for a role play, the next step is to come up with ideas on how this situation may develop. Students' level of language proficiency should be taken into consideration (Livingstone, 1983). If you feel that your role play requires more profound linguistic competence than the students possess, it would probably be better to simplify it or to leave it until appropriate. On low intermediate and more advanced levels, role plays with problems or conflicts in them work very well because they motivate the characters to talk. To build in these problems let the standard script go wrong. This will generate tension and make the role play more interesting. For example, in a role play situation at the market the participants have conflicting role information. One or two students have their lists of things to buy while another two or three students are salespeople who don't have anything the first group needs, but can offer slightly or absolutely different things.

Step 3 - Linguistic Preparation

Once you have selected a suitable role play, predict the language needed for it. At the beginning level, the language needed is almost completely predictable. The higher the level of students the more difficult it is to prefigure accurately what language students will need, but some prediction is possible anyway. It is recommended to introduce any new vocabulary before the role play.

At the beginning level, you might want to elicit the development of the role play scenario from your students and then enrich it. For example, the situation of the role play is returning an item of clothing back to the store. The teacher asks questions, such as, 'In this situation what will you say to the salesperson?', 'What will the salesperson say?' and writes what the students dictate on the right side of the board. When this is done, on the left side of the board the instructor writes down useful expressions, asking the students, 'Can the customer say it in another way?', 'What else can the salesperson say?' This way of introducing new vocabulary makes the students more confident acting out a role play.

Step 4 - Factual Preparation

This step implies providing the students with concrete information and clear role descriptions so that they could play their roles with confidence. For example, in the situation at a railway station, the person giving the information should have relevant information: the times and destination of the trains, prices of tickets, etc. In a more advanced class and in a more elaborate situation include on a cue card a fictitious name, status, age, personality, and fictitious interests and desires.

Describe each role in a manner that will let the students identify with the characters. Use the second person 'you' rather than the third person 'he' or 'she.' If your role presents a problem, just state the problem without giving any solutions.

At the beginning level cue cards might contain detailed instructions (Byrne, 1983). For example,

Step 5 - Assigning the Roles

Some instructors ask for volunteers to act out a role play in front of the class (Matwiejczuk, 1997), though it might be a good idea to plan in advance what roles to assign to which students. At the beginning level the teacher can take one of the roles and act it out as a model. Sometimes, the students have role play exercises for the home task. They learn useful words and expressions think about what they can say and then act out the role play in the next class.

There can be one or several role play groups. If the whole class represents one role play group, it is necessary to keep some minor roles which can be taken away if there are less people in class than expected. If the teacher runs out of roles, he/she can assign one role to two students, in which one speaks secret thoughts of the other (Shaw, Corsini, Blake & Mouton, 1980). With several roles play groups, when deciding on their composition, both the abilities and the personalities of the students should be taken into consideration. For example, a group consisting only of the shyest students will not be a success. Very often, optimum interaction can be reached by letting the students work in one group with their friends (Horner & McGinley, 1990).

Whether taking any part in the role play or not, the role of the teacher is to be as unobtrusive as possible (Livingstone, 1983). He or she is listening for students' errors making notes. Mistakes noted during the role play will provide the teacher with feedback for further practice and revision. It is recommended that the instructor avoids intervening in a role play with error corrections not to discourage the students.

Step 6 - Follow-up

Once the role play is finished, spend some time on debriefing. This does not mean pointing out and correcting mistakes. After the role play, the students are satisfied with themselves; they feel that they have used their knowledge of the language for something concrete and useful. This feeling of satisfaction will disappear if every mistake is analyzed. It might also make the students less confident and less willing to do the other role plays (Livingstone, 1983).

Follow-up means asking every student's opinion about the role play and welcoming their comments (Milroy, 1982; Horner & McGinley, 1990). The aim is to discuss what has happened in the role play and what they have learned. In addition to group discussion, an evaluation questionnaire can be used.

The methods submitted above are only less part of the whole list of various effective methods of teaching a foreign language. The teacher should remember that each of the submitted methods works more effectively if they are combined and applied together at every lesson. It is impossible to allocate the best and most effective of them, every teacher himself chooses for himself what method approaches for each concrete case better.

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