

Effectiveness Of Language Games In Assessing And Improving Language Skills In A ESL Classroom

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Abstract

English Language is an integral part of the curriculum in India. Learners learn English language from school to higher branches of learning. Second language students are not familiar with English language or they don't use it regularly in their day to day life except in the classroom. Even in the classroom majority of the students are learning English as only a subject. Learning English as a subject for getting grades or mark is a wrong way. Everyone learns his or her mother tongue through natural ways. Likewise, students have to learn English language by understanding, loving and exploring the beauty of the Language. Many students are afraid to speak in English language. They fear about the mistakes but this should be carefully handled by the teacher. English should not be a nightmare to the learners; they should have Intrinsic motivation for learning English Language. Teaching English through Language games are the finest way to cultivate interest among the students to learn English.

Keywords: Language games, Role Play, Kangaroo Word, Language Skills, Motivation.

The success of language games or activities completely depends on the correct selection and implementation of the activity. In accordance with the class and other environmental factors, a teacher should choose language games or activities that can make positive and desirable impact on the students. When second language is introduced in the form of games, the students will show much enthusiasm to learn the language. A fun-filled atmosphere can surely provide a meaningful and lovely experience to the learners.

Advantages of Language Games

- It motivates the learners
- Learning becomes an experience
- Helps to improve self control
- Promotes retention
- Creates a learner-centred atmosphere
- Promotes co-operative learning
- Increases curiosity
- Arouses creativity.

The above-mentioned are a few of the important advantages of the Languages game activities. The purpose of each language game is different. One may be good for developing vocabulary and another for improving pronunciation. Teaching four skills may therefore, require different games. Which skill is to be taught should be kept in mind before introducing the language games. First of all, the teacher should

emphasize the role of language and the beauty of it; later she should give proper instructions and rules of the games. This is very essential for the successful conduct of Language games and activities in the classroom.

Role-play

Role-play is an interesting game where students can do their best making use of their imagination and creativity. In a role play the students are provided with certain situations, which they have to show, enacted. Here there are two major objectives. One is to make students capable of socializing and the other is to help them improve their language. Communication is the most important aspect in language learning. Through role-play, students understand the role of language in real life context and learn language. There are two types of role-play. In the first one, the teacher gives the topic and the situation. It is more structured in nature. The other one is spontaneous.

In order to implement effectively the role-play activity the teacher should consider the number of students and the time required for the activity. After that, the teacher has to select a team and give a situation, based on which students can enact. Students are absolutely free to choose the presentation style and they can also assign characters based on the theme. Undoubtedly, through role-play teacher can evaluate the problems and improvements of the learners. This is more learner-centred and the classroom becomes more energetic. Pronunciation, stress and intonation can be improved through role-playing. That is the chief objective of this language game

Jumble Words

Jumble words is a language game, which primarily focuses on developing the vocabulary of the students. Vocabulary plays an important role in constructing sentences. In this game, the students are given some letters by the teacher and they should rearrange these letters into meaningful words. Initially students may feel confused with the letters but later they will think and make it correct. This game can be used individually or group wise. Both are good and can be easily done in the classroom. The correct use of spelling and good vocabulary can be achieved through this language game.

Word Search

Word search is another widely used language game that helps one to learn vocabulary and to get familiarised with them. Here the letters of the words are arranged vertically, horizontally and diagonally in a grid. So divergent thinking is also very much needed for this game. If the students are familiar with vocabulary then they will arrange them or find the words without much effort. If they find difficulty to arrange it then the teacher can help them to find those words. Even if the students forget the words, once they see the letters they think in many ways and finally find out the proper word. This game does not require many teaching aids. A chart can be effectively used for this game.

Story Making

Story making is considered as an interesting game for developing communication skills. Both listening and speaking skills can be improved through this game. Construction of a meaningful story is the task assigned to the students. Before starting the game, the teacher makes the students sit in circles and gives them the rules and guidelines of the game. In this game, one student starts a story by telling one

sentence and then the rest of the students add to it according to their imagination and gradually complete the story. Coherence and structure are important for this game. Students can use their creativity as much as possible to fill this story. The only condition is that it should be connected to the sentence made by the preceding student. Once all students share their sentences, a beautiful story is created. Here the teachers can assess students' listening skills as well as their speaking skills. Later the teachers can express their observations to the students. This will make the students more attentive, or else they may be careless during the game. So importance of listening can be easily taught through this story making game.

Mini-Debate

Language activities can also be incorporated in the ESL classrooms. Mini debate is an example of language activity. In larger classrooms if the teacher conducts a debate then it will be difficult for the teacher to handle and assess the students properly. In such situations, a mini debate can do wonders. Mini debates are conducted in small groups and the ideal number of participants is 8 -10. In small groups, all participants will get chance to bring their ideas for discussion. This will help them explore themselves and achieve a flow of language. It also provides time for teachers to do individual assessment.

Whether it is language games or activities, the outcome should be the meaningful understanding of the language. A language teacher should always keep this in mind. Students may show some hesitations to do certain activities but the teacher should then encourage and support the students and give them confidence. Through these activities, definitely, there will be a good progress in the language learning. Also the teachers can assess the students' language and can take appropriate measures to improve it.

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