

# LANGUAGE LEARNING THROUGH INTERACTIVE GAMES

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**Abstract:** *this article is devoted to the investigation of language learning through interactive games in EFL classes. The article also focuses on the educational benefits as well as on recommendations how to incorporate games into a learning environment. It is considered that using game activities in the lessons not only aid to improve the students' vocabulary and knowledge of English, but also it makes lessons much more effective, entertaining and enjoyable. Learning vocabulary is a complicated task for all learners, so games can encourage them to acquire the target language much more easily.*

**Keywords:** *game activities, interactive activities, learning vocabulary, positive attitude, target language, communicative skill.*

Games are fun activities that promote interaction, thinking, learning, and problem solving strategies. Often, games have an aspect that permits the players to produce information in a short time period. Some games require the players to engage in a physical activity and/or complete a mental challenge. "Games are effective tools for learning because they offer students a hypothetical environment in which they can explore alternative decisions without the risk of failure. Thought and action are combined into purposeful behavior to accomplish a goal. Playing games teaches us how to strategize, to consider alternatives, and to think flexibly" [3, 478]. That quote summarizes my beliefs about using games to teach, practice and reinforce a foreign language. Games provide a constructivist classroom environment where students and their learning are central. "Learning through performance requires active discovery, analysis, interpretation, problem-solving, memory, and physical activity and extensive cognitive processing" [2, 16]. Students draw their own meaning from these experiences while learning from their mistakes and also from each other. The students also build upon their previous knowledge and use their new knowledge in a situation five separate from the activity in which they learned it. Furthermore, the teacher is now able to make observations on each student and see what areas the class or individuals are struggling with or excelling at as well as the social dynamics of the group.

Learning vocabulary is a hard work, so attempt is required to understand, produce and manipulate the target words. Games help and encourage many learners to learn target language more easily. They also help teachers to create contexts in which the target words are useful and meaningful; they also bring fun for students, thus help them learn and retain new words more quickly. In other words, game-based learning can create a meaningful context for language learning process. After learning and practicing new vocabulary through games, students have the opportunity to use language in stressful way. Games are advantageous and effective in learning vocabulary. They are motivating because they usually involve friendly competition and create cooperative learning environment, so students have an opportunity to work together. They improve students' communicative skills and they have a chance to use the target language. Therefore, vocabulary games bring real world context into the classroom, and enhance students' use of English in a flexible, communicative way. The role of games in teaching and learning vocabulary cannot be denied.

Games allow for creativity, independence and higher order thinking. Usually, questions posed by the classroom teacher are fact based and have only one answer, not allowing for creativity, personal expression, or testing hypotheses. Games often incorporate logical reasoning, communication, kinesthetic, visual stimulation and spatial relations. Games include analysis and interpretation of new and old material which makes learning concrete. Furthermore, the hands-on experiences are integral to critical learning, retention and recall. Games stimulate interactivity. The students are actively processing and working with the material as well as with classmates. In a grammar translation classroom, the students are working solely with the text and few voices are heard throughout the class session. In a foreign language classroom, it is imperative that the students practice speaking with each other. The goal of the foreign language learner is to speak proficiently and independently in various situations. Teachers should encourage students to take advantage of games in their learning process. They also need to monitor their students' use of these vocabulary games to make sure that the structure and rules of the game do not take higher rank over learning. Learning vocabulary through games is one of the effective and interesting ways that can be applied in classrooms.

Games provide students, especially teenagers, a situation to learn without barriers created by social norms, and mundane routines or performances. Games encourage language production and social interaction in a playful, nonthreatening way. Learning vocabulary through games is one of the effective and interesting ways that can be applied in classrooms. This paper is in line with the following quotation from Gillespie Educational games are used frequently due to their benefits. They give students responsibility and the opportunity of being active physically and mentally, they are student-centered rather than teacher-centered, they easily grab children's attention, increase their interaction and are fun to play in the formal academic process, and socialize students. In addition, students gain or develop many skills such as taking turns, working individually and working with others as a team toward a common

goal. Taking all into account, it is considered that learning a language through interactive games and activities gives students responsibility and the opportunity of being active physically and mentally.

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