



UTMACH

UNIDAD ACADÉMICA DE CIENCIAS SOCIALES

CARRERA DE CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN MENCIÓN INGLÉS

TEMA:

ACTION GAMES USED BY TEACHERS TO ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO IMPROVE
THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION IN THE TEACHING LEARNING
PROCESS.

TRABAJO PRÁCTICO DEL EXAMEN COMPLEXIVO PREVIO A LA OBTENCIÓN DEL
TÍTULO DE LICENCIADO EN CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN ESPECIALIZACIÓN
INGLÉS

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DOCUMENTO DE ENTREGA-RECEPCIÓN DE LA PARTE PRÁCTICA DEL EXAMEN COMPLEXIVO PROCESO: PT-030615

Comité evaluador designado mediante Resolución N° Reso N°948/2015-CD-
UACS de fecha 15/10/2015

| |
|---|
| Apellidos y nombres del estudiante: VALVERDE ESCOBAR LEONARDO JAVIER |
| Título del reactivo práctico: ACTION GAMES USED BY TEACHERS TO ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO IMPROVE THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION IN THE TEACHING LEARNING PROCESS. |
| Carrera de: CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN MENCIÓN INGLÉS |
| Fecha y hora de sustentación: 30 DE OCTUBRE DE 2015 13:00 |

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DEDICATORY

The conception of this project is dedicated to my mother and sister, pillars in my life, who throughout my life have ensured my welfare and education being my support at all times. Put their entire trust in every challenge that was presented to me without doubt a single moment in my intelligence and capacity. It is for them that I am what I am now. I love them with my life.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The results of this project are dedicated to all those people who, somehow, are part of its completion.

My Mother Mariana Escobar Espinoza, and my grandmother Rosa Espinoza Medina, being the best, having been with me to support me in difficult times, to dedicate time and effort to be a good man, and give me excellent advice along my way, my sister Genesis Redrovan Escobar who always with her love and support to move forward in my life, and most especially to my best friend Luciana Tinoco Cruz way for giving their honest and valuable friendship.

And finally, I also thank all those who were my classmates at all levels of university and thanks to fellowship, friendship and moral support have contributed a high percentage to my desire to move forward in my career.

ABSTRACT

The present investigation work focuses in clarify the main aspects that entails the use of action games into the foreign language classes especially in English, whereas using games become a useful methodology in educational field; games perform an important role and relevant aspects as motivational way to learn and students feel more comfortable at the moment to participate in classes. Even though, the experience, articles and information founded shown beneficial aspects to incorporate games in classes, it is noticeable that at Mario Minuche high school where the observation was carried out, teachers apply games as methodologies in the teaching learning process, but the games used are not flashy enough, thus students are not motivating through them. Consequently, educators are not using games according the necessities of the students, and they are not learning as well as they need to learn. So, the methodology used allowed to observe, analyze, interpreting and form a judgment of the object studied. On the other hand, researching the principal features of the use of action games, I consider to highlight the opinion of Haldfield "A game is an activity with rules, a goal and an element of fun...", because a game not only have to be used to get fun and take a breath of the class topic, a game need to be helpful to contains parts of the class to strengthen and improve an English skill in the teaching learning process. Through games teachers need to focus on a goal to achieve and work in it using motivating methodologies to catch the attention of the class. The type of game used need to satisfy the teacher requirements; is expected that students who learn through games enjoy more the English classes than students who learn in traditional ways and different methodologies. Finally I want emphasize that the results obtained in class are responsibility of the curricula used by the teacher and the predisposition that students put in their learning.

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INTRODUCTION

The techniques and methodologies used in English classes constitute the main part of the results obtained at the end of the classes. Moreover, the problem found at Mario Minuche high school shows that teachers use action games, but not according to the age of the students and they do not encourage students to participate in class, this problem raise because of different aspects to considerate: lack of teaching methodologies, teacher's criteria about games, predisposition of students or lack of materials to develop different kind of activities in the teaching learning process.

The main objective of this report is to recollect relevant data about the use of games in the classroom, make an argument about the kind of games to motivate students and develop a guide which contains a bunch of games according the necessities of the students. Besides, it is important to develop conclusions and results about this investigation that contains different authors' criteria about the mentioned topic.

Nowadays, teaching and learning are getting new tools as technology to innovate and improve students' learning, traditional ways to teacher are getting over, to take advantage of these tools is responsibility of the educational actors, teachers and students correspondingly, but the games are activities that are and will be really important during the teaching learning process, because games are into the principal ways to motivate students and learning will be funny but significantly.

The games are important resources to make the teaching learning process in a more pleasant and participatory time, but they must be in accordance with the teachers' professional practice and included in the lesson plan so as to provide greater interaction between the content and learning. It should be noted that the random or overuse can render them unproductive. That means that the teacher is not enough access to many different learning materials available if their use is not based on a planning that considers the various aspects of the educational process.

In addition to the last points of view, there are different kind of games to incorporate at the classrooms, the best way to choose the adequate game resides in the needs of students, the capacities, the age, level of knowledge, and identify what ability we want to improve with the game. Even so, teachers need to consider another factors at the moment they going to apply a game into the classes.

DEVELOPMENT

DEFINITIONS OF GAME

Play is important for the growth of body and mind, for the overall development. Playing is imitate, imagine, is entering into a relationship, moving from reality to fantasy and the fantastic to the real, is to fight, to strive, play is fun

According to Haldfield (1999): "A game is an activity with rules, a goal and an element of fun... Games should be regarded as an integral part of the language syllabus, not as an amusing activity for Friday afternoon or for the end of the term." This definition highly evaluates the importance of games in teaching. It adds to teachers' techniques in teaching that games serve not only as an 'amusing activity', but as a technique to carry out tasks to learners amusingly as well.

The game is the foundation on which to perform the tasks of any nature. The various activities, which are based on games, allow address issues that are so important for cognitive development of the student as follows: class participation, creativity and originality, sociability, and the creation of a pattern of behavior in class. But what we must never forget is that behind every game there is a specific learning objective.

When appears 'an element of competition', all above rules are most needed. Besides, games are, in this case, emphasized to encourage students' solidarity in teamwork in which they have to try their best to do the tasks or maybe to code any requirements given in the games for their team spirit. Therefore, games comprise many factors such as rules, competition, relaxation, and learning. The main focus of using game in class is not only to help students to learn more effectively but also to have fun.

Through this short analysis of the concept of game we can conclude that this is as important as serious business. When students play set in motion all their learning abilities: create, innovate, explore.

All this allows us admit that the game play is an integral part of life, a phenomenon of all human existence, an activity that forms the basis for human relations, creativity and development of our imagination, a socially relevant fact about particularly in the teaching learning process.

WHY SHOULD WE USE GAMES

Language learning itself is complex and many sided, which need not discourage us when we must learn a foreign language from the four communicative skills: listening, reading, speaking and writing. But there are games to develop all these skills.

Games can be very help-full when we want teach a foreign language to our learners, but we should know use it correctly.

The most important is children's needs, age and motivations. We adapt games to their needs, age and motivations. If we keep in mind it, learners will learn and they will want to learn more.

With games we will provide them an opportunity for the real using and processing of language while the mind is focused the task of playing the game.

Next, I'm going to explain some reason that why should we use games in our lessons:

1-Games are enjoyable and these offer to children to learn a foreign language as something enjoyable and rewarding, as a pursuit.

2-If we play, in a lot of games, the children will play in pairs, groups, teams, the..., they will develop the ability to cooperate. There are situations, what children can not answer to some questions, then, his companion will help them for win the game. So, the knowledge is shared.

3-In the classroom, games get a pleasant, informal, and often relaxed atmosphere, favorable to language learning.

4-Games offers experience of communication and these help to learn a foreign language.

5-Unconsciously, most language games distract the learner attention from the study of linguistic forms without need of to be something bored.

6-Games get a good predisposition to the learning.

7-There are a lot of games what can be different modes of communication. So, it helps us to adapt them in children's age and motivations. It is varied.

8-Repetition is basic to language learning, but not the repetition of mechanical drills. In games offers repetition with a language advance and motivating effect.

GAMES IN CLASSROOM

The use of games in classrooms, it is equally important that before playing, the rules of the games are clearly explained and well understood by the students. There should be only a few, well-explained rules. Demonstrations also can be very helpful because it can help students understand the game and help them follow the rules.

A successful game must:

- Be funny.

- Involve friendly competition.
- Keep all students involved and interested.
- Require students to use language that is challenging but not too difficult.
- Give students the opportunity to learn, practice or review the specific language material.
- Allow only a few students involved for a long time.
- Continue for long: end the game while still fun.

CLASSIFICATION OF GAMES

According to Lee (2000) (cited in Pham, 2007), games have been classified into ten kinds:

- Structure games which provide experience of the use of particular patterns of syntax in communication
- Vocabulary games in which the learners' attention is focused mainly on words
- Spelling games
- Pronunciation games
- Number games
- Listen-and-do games
- Games and writing
- Miming and role-play
- Discussion games

Another classification of games by McCallum (1980) consists of seven kinds:

- Structure games
- Vocabulary games
- Number games
- Spelling games
- Conversation games
- Writing games
- Role-play and dramatics

It is shown that the classifications of games from the above linguists are common in a way that each kind of games focuses on a language item or a skill for the purpose and the content of the lesson. Therefore, teachers should be careful of choosing the most suitable game for each lesson so that learners and teachers can benefit the most from these games.

WHEN TO USE GAMES

The selection and application of games in the school context implies, by the teacher, in a work of reflection and analysis, which must be planned and consistent, and not simply as a

way to occupy the time or improvisation when the class has changed course and no one knows what to do. The games offer countless options for use and can be used at different points of the class: to enter a subject, to establish and practice the contents after an explanation or to make a review. In truth, the game does not have to be something to take advantage of last-minute classroom and may even be the focal point of the class.

'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.

HOW CAN WE SELECTING GAMES

We choose games depending of these factors: number of children, skill be worked, age and level of the children, places you can use, etc.

You should choose games that practice certain word families, specific language patterns, or skills. You will therefore have to decide whether the children need to practice this language using a code-control game, or whether they are ready to use a communication game.

Bear in mind that it may be wise to vary choice of games so that there is not always a competitive element; communication games focus on cooperation and are more likely to give every child a chance to have a turn to speak in an unthreatening atmosphere.

THE ADVANTAGES OF USING GAMES IN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING

The educational games are excellent alternatives to traditional methods because different skills for working students, combining education and entertainment. They make viable the development of cognitive aspects and social attitudes such as initiative, responsibility, respect, creativity, and communicability, among others.

Another advantage of the games is that they can approach the teacher and the special needs of their students. That is possible because the game creates a pleasant atmosphere, where students express more freely and without inhibitions public communication in a foreign language.

In addition, the use of games in class often inspire students and reduce anxiety to the extent that in these activities, it is possible to reduce the importance of errors and understand them as part of the learning process. In traditional activities that clearly mark the place and role of the teacher and students, insecurity and fear inhibit error class participation. However, when recreational activities take place, a new working atmosphere in which the student acquires more confidence you create and feel free to participate in the learning process in a responsible and autonomous.

GAMES MOTIVATE LEARNERS

Students enjoy the games are not only motivating and fun, but can also provide an excellent practice to improve pronunciation, grammar, and therefore the four language skills. The games help make students feel secure and confident.

But in order to fully exploit the games, we have to carefully consider both the benefits that language learning can bring, like any other educational or conceptual benefit. We, as teachers, we must be aware of the variety of language elements and the work of the different skills that can promote different games.

Games are highly motivating since they are amusing, interesting and at the same time challenging. The activities in a game get all the students to move around, activate their mental capacities and stimulate neural networks, thus motivating learners in learning and retention. At that time, students who are shy also attend the activities with fun, forgetting their shyness and feeling of fear.

Motivation through the games is absolutely necessary to achieve this end we must awaken in our students since motivation is a set of reasons that drive a person to learn a new language. If we motivate students we can make them work harder without realizing and may evolve positively acquiring knowledge much faster.

Let's take the grammar lesson, which is considered as a boring one in a traditional way as a typical example. If the teacher just follows the tasks given in the textbook, students have to do the tasks in writing and reading, then the teacher herself will lead a grammar lesson to a boring, hard-digesting experience to their students and surely, do not meet the need for a more interesting and effective grammar class. At that time, game is the most useful. Games employ meaningful and useful language in real contexts. They can be used to give practice in all language skills and grammar points in this case, and be used to practice many types of communication. If these games are good then learners will be learning while they are playing.

Avedon & Sutton-Smith (1971: 28- 29) believes, "The main reason why games are considered effective learning aids is that they spur motivation and students get very absorbed in the competitive aspects of the games; moreover, they try harder at games than in other courses."

It can be clearly seen that games can capture students' attention and participation. Thus, they can motivate students to want to learn more. Moreover, they can transform a boring class into a challenging one.

But keeping interest and motivation throughout the course is not an easy task; if we consider the students in learning the game much importance charged; To be a good teacher you need

to have a mind very alert and agile, and browse resources in everything around you, and know how to properly adapt classroom situations.

A good exercise is not well connected with the main theme will lose all the strength of novelty and surprise and may become more activity. That you should do is put all the pieces, not forgetting that excessive use of the game as well as a poor match to the needs of this group can cause a feeling of loss of time.

RESULTS

The researched information has a common denominator in all the concepts and opinions, which provide important facts about the topic. The findings constitute a relevant part of the investigation work, because there are different factors to consider at the moment to create an own criteria of games in the teaching learning process.

The authors agreed that games as a methodology are really significant to students to learn the language and at the same time enjoy what they are learning. Authors as Lee, Rixon, McCallum, consider games not only a fun word when students hear games we are going to play, the word games need to contain educational parts to reinforce the knowledge acquired.

Hansen states "Games are highly motivating and entertaining, and they can give shy learners more opportunity to express their opinions and feelings." Agreed with this opinion I can noticed about that quote it is truly certain in classrooms, when I observed some stages of the class where a game take place, students that never want to participate in class, suddenly wants to be part of the game, perhaps they need an enjoyable activity to feel free to express what they want to share with classmates.

In the research, I found a phrase that was observed in the classes in many times "Games help the teacher to create contexts in which the language is useful and meaningful." Teachers at the moment to develop their curriculum, plans and theories what they want to teach to their students, need to use games to help their class be relevant and understood. Because, maybe students do not remember the concepts, the theories, the process that teachers want to teach, but if a game is immersed in the process and contain a part of the class, definitely the aims of the teacher will be achieve, through the game students learn without realized that they are learning. An example about the criteria exposed, it is important to teach grammar rules in the teaching learning process; the adjective must to be before the noun, for instance: big house, red car, small chair; in the context of the class students did not catch this simple rule, but if teacher combines a game with the class students will be attentive and always remember this rule.

About the needs of the students it is important to take care at the moment to expose a game in the class, I realized some game are not enjoyable for students, but teachers continue using, because of lack of research of game, or they only have a least list of games. We have to dedicate a little more time to prepare our classes and make a questions, really am I using the correct strategies to teach my classes.

Students grow up, and their imagination too, they need to be satisfy their expectative about their classes, to encourage them to like English and take advantage of all the stages.

I was in need to develop a short recapitulation of games according to the age and another factors that I noticed students need. This is a booklet that will be helpful to teachers to contain a bunch of games and, teachers only have to select the more helpful.

Although memorization and practice are important components to teach English, games also help break up the monotony. The games encourage students to interact with each other and think creatively and actively about the language they are using. It involves them proposing games to help them learn the language by applying it in new and unique situations. Select related to their interests and activities in their daily lives.

CONCLUSIONS

After the observation developed and the data collected I considerate the following conclusions:

- The games enhance entertain and fluency. It has been shown that these have advantages and effectiveness in the educational vocabulary in various forms.
- The games bring relaxation and fun for students. So, help them to learn and retain new words easier.
- Play games usually extends the friendly competition and they keep fair play. These create the motivation for learning English, get involved and actively participate in educational activities.
- Students enjoy the games, these are not only motivating and fun, but can also provide an excellent practice to improve pronunciation, grammar, and therefore the four language skills.
- A game in class is a motivator that encourages creativity and spontaneity of the student in class.
- Throughout, the preparation of my work practice is highlighting the importance of games in the acquisition of English language, its functions, the criteria for selecting a game to suit our class and some procedures to introduce students.
- In games, the students' participation is voluntary and pay more attention to the content, and therefore improve overall performance.
- The game in the classroom is effective to learn the English language. The student generates knowledge through play and motivation dissociates between compulsory and routine class.

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