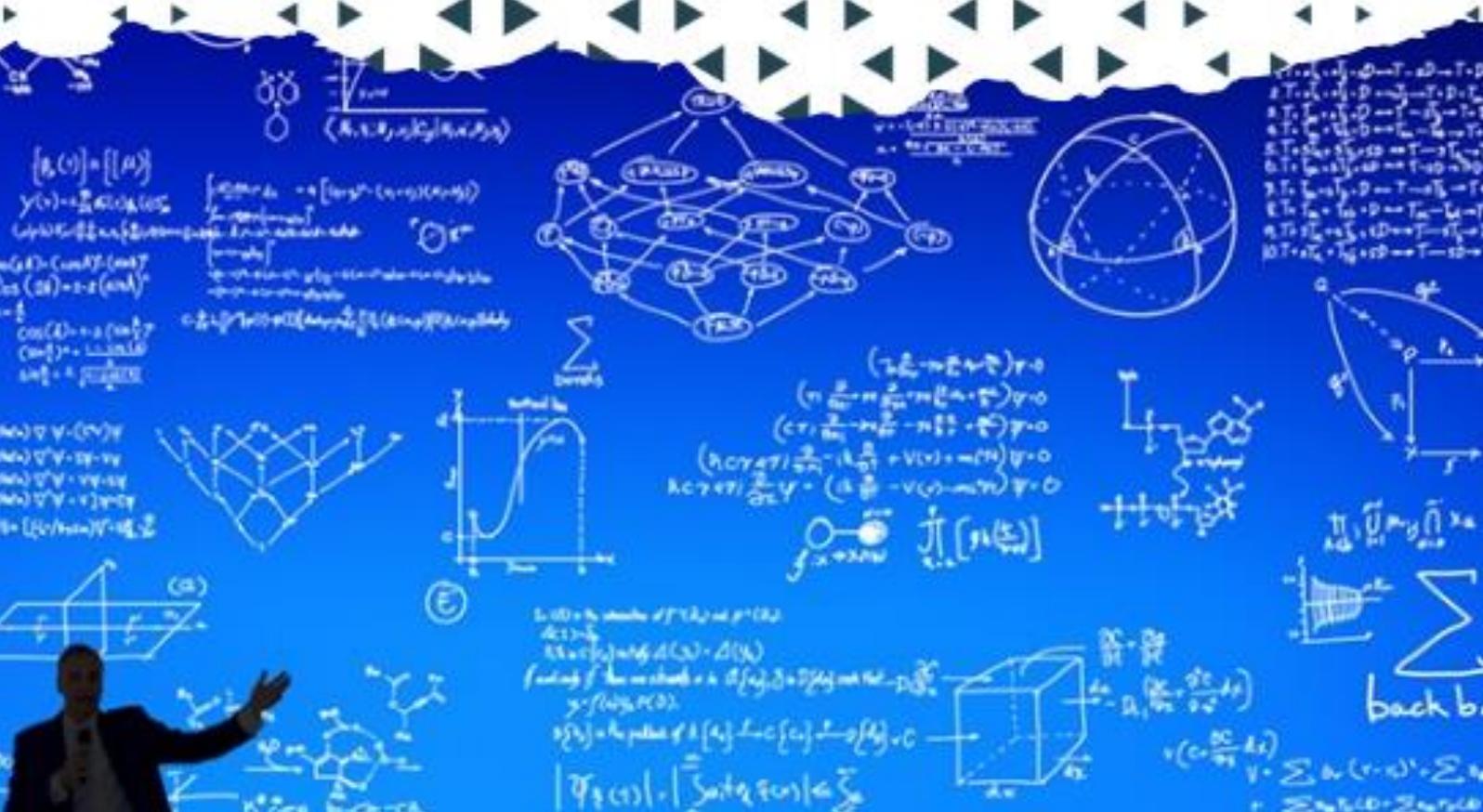




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THE IMPORTANCE OF LANGUAGE GAMES IN TEACHING ENGLISH.

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Annotation. This thesis explores the role of language games in teaching English as a foreign language. It examines how games improve learners' motivation, communication skills, vocabulary retention, and classroom interaction. The study highlights the psychological and pedagogical benefits of using game-based activities, such as reducing anxiety, increasing participation, and creating a supportive learning environment. The thesis also discusses practical types of language games for different language skills and offers recommendations for teachers to integrate them effectively into lesson planning. Overall, the paper emphasizes that language games are not merely entertaining tasks but powerful instructional tools that enhance learners' linguistic competence.

Key words: games, students, emotions, context, mental engagement, new vocabulary, memorable experience, skills, clearer understanding.

Introduction. Why games? Language learning is hard work. One must make an effort to understand, to repeat accurately, to adapt and to use newly understood language in conversation and in written composition. Effort is required at every moment and must be maintained over a long period of time. Games help and encourage many learners to sustain their interest and work. Games also help the teacher to create contexts in which the language is useful and meaningful. The learners want to take part, and in order to do so must understand what others are saying or have written, and they must speak or write in order to express their own point of view or give information. Games provide one way of helping the learners to experience language rather than merely study it.

From this perspective, the use of games in the classroom brings significant advantages to both teachers and learners. Games help break the routine structure of traditional lessons and turn students into active participants in the learning process. As a result, issues such as boredom, fatigue, or a decline in motivation—common in long-term language learning—are greatly reduced.

Moreover, because games create meaningful communicative situations, learners are required to use the language for real purposes. Activities such as asking for information, expressing opinions, agreeing or disagreeing, or

completing a task take place naturally within the game. This makes the learning experience more authentic and enhances students' communicative competence. In addition, games help students acquire new vocabulary and reinforce grammar structures without feeling overwhelmed by theory. Through repeated exposure and meaningful use, learners memorize language more effectively and develop a clearer understanding of how it functions in context. Thus, the lesson becomes not just a theoretical exercise but an engaging and memorable experience.

Most importantly, games contribute to a positive psychological atmosphere in the classroom. Students feel less anxious, make fewer hesitations, and are more willing to express their ideas freely. They also learn to collaborate, interact with their peers, and build confidence in using the language. This reduction in anxiety is crucial, as emotional comfort significantly influences language acquisition.

Repeated use of language items Many games cause as much use of particular language items as more conventional drill exercises; some games do not. What matters, however, is the quality of practice. The contribution of drill exercises lies in the concentration on a language form and its frequent occurrence during a limited period of time. Many games similarly provide repeated occurrence and use of a particular language form. By making language convey information and opinion, games provide the key features of 'drill' with the added opportunity to sense the working of language as living communication. Games involve the emotions, and the meaning of the language is thus more vividly experienced. It is, for this reason, probably better absorbed than learning based on mechanical drills.

Benefits of using games.

So, what are the benefits of this teaching method? The results of the eight researches are relevantly similar although they were conducted differently regarding time, place, learners' level. In his study, Lawrence (2013) selected 250 student teachers who were doing their B. Ed. Degree in the College of Education and he concluded that "the majority of the student teachers have a favorable attitude towards the using grammar games for teaching English at the secondary level". He further investigated and found out that gender also affected the situation of using games in teaching. In particular, he indicated that the female student teachers have more positive attitude than the male student teachers. This is also understandable in Vietnamese context when more female teachers use games to teach than the male ones. Moreover, he pointed out some factors affecting the attitude towards using games to teach grammar which are educational qualification,



optional subjects and types of management. In general, there are differences in each criterion, but they all support the same idea that games brought about positive attitude towards teaching English. learning.

Types of game. Being aware of the essential character of a type of game (see below) and the way in which it engages the learner can be helpful in the adaptation of games or the creation of new games. The games in this edition of the book are grouped according to their family type within each of the eight sections. The family name is always a verb. This verb summarises the most important way in which the learners are engaged in the game, for example, IDENTIFY or CREATE. In every case this verb refers to the mental engagement on the part of the learners. The use of language arises out of the way the learner is engaged.

CARE AND SHARE .‘Caring and sharing’ games include all those games in which the learner feels comfortable while sharing personal information with other learners. These games relate more to invitation than to challenge. The striving implied by challenge is incompatible with the notion of ‘caring and sharing’. The origin of this established phrase is the title of the classic book written by Gertrude Moskowitz, Caring and Sharing in the Foreign Language Class (Newbury House 1978). See games 1.1–1.12. Games for Language Learning 4

DO: MOVE, MIME, DRAW, OBEY The learner is expected to do something non-verbally in response to a read or a heard text. See, for example, games 3.1, 5.1, 7.1.

IDENTIFY: DISCRIMINATE, GUESS, SPECULATE The learner is challenged to identify something which is difficult to identify or to hypothesise about something which is then compared with the facts. See, for example, games 2.1, 5.2, 7.4.

DESCRIBE The learner is challenged to describe something to another learner, by speaking or writing, so well that the other learner can do something, for example, draw a picture. The learner may describe something objectively or subjectively, communicating his or her own feelings and associations. See, for example, games 2.3, 4.2, 7.15.

CONNECT: COMPARE, MATCH, GROUP The learner is challenged to connect, compare, match or group various items of information, perhaps pictures or texts, objectively or subjectively. He or she uses language to describe or comment on the pairs or groups of information. See, for example, games 3.6, 6.7, 7.16. **ORDER** The learner is challenged to put various bits of information into an order of quality and importance, subjectively or



objectively, or to put texts, pictures, objects, into a developmental sequence, also subjectively or objectively. See, for example, games 5.6, 6.10, 7.18.

REMEMBER The learner tries to remember something and then communicate what he or she has remembered. See, for example, games 5.8, 6.11, 7.21.

CREATE .The learner is challenged or invited to make a story, write a poem or produce some other kind of material using their imagination. Here the distinction between 'challenged' and 'invited' is worth making. 'Challenged' might Introduction 5 include those story-making starters in which you stipulate certain features: for example, you stipulate that a certain tense form must occur very often, or that the story must be exactly 50 words long. 'Invited', because sometimes the best way to stir the creative forces is to 'invite', 'encourage', 'show interest', and so on.

Conclusion.

Language games play an essential role in teaching English because they make learning more engaging, meaningful, and effective. Games increase motivation, reduce anxiety, and create real communicative situations where learners can practice new vocabulary and grammar naturally. They also provide repeated exposure to language structures while keeping students emotionally involved. Different types of games—such as identifying, describing, connecting, or creating—help develop various language skills and support active participation. Overall, games transform traditional lessons into dynamic learning experiences and significantly improve students' confidence and competence in English.

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