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# Some Suggested Games to Teach Speaking Skills in a Massive EFL Classroom

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**Abstract:** *There are difficulties in teaching speaking skills, especially in a massive class. These difficulties are caused by the limitation of time and learners' problems such as shyness and inhibitions; finding things to say; low participation of individuals; first language use. To deal with this, teachers can use language games to create a stress-free and compelling environment. With this environment, learners are more motivated and collaborative to learn and use English.*

**Key words:** *Games, Speaking skills, Massive classroom*

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## I. Introduction

In teaching English as a foreign language (EFL), there are many factors that have strong influence on a successful lesson. One of them is maintaining the motivation of ESL learners. There are several effective techniques to motivate learners including challenging tasks, competitive activities, or funny games.

In a massive EFL class, time is limitative for every learner to have efficient time to speak English. Moreover, it is also not easy to have all learners give a speech in front of the others because it takes a lot of time and some of them are too shy or worried to say something in English. Therefore, there should be a solution that can ease those problems. EFL games are one of the optimum choices for this situation.

A funny game easily attracts most of learners' attention both high and low achievers. It can be called a "life jacket" in critical situations namely getting bored with difficult knowledge, studying for many periods, having a stressful test. Additionally, games can create a stress-free environment where almost learners are willing to participate in or more confident to perform their language competence.

## II. Literature review

### 1.1. Difficulties in learning and teaching speaking skills

Almost English language learners highly desire good speaking skills. A learner is often called a good learner when they speak English spontaneously. Despite their desire and admiration of good speaking skills, many learners are not willing to speak English in public and even in a private or small group. There are several common obstacles that hinder their speaking. According to Ur (2012), there are some problems in getting learners to talk in the classroom namely shyness and inhibitions; finding things to say; low participation of individuals; first language use.

*Shyness and inhibitions*

Making mistakes, being scared of criticism or losing face, or being shy of the attention that their speech attracts are their constant worries. These negative emotions prevent them from contributing to the lesson even when they have an intrinsic desire to answer teachers' questions, to convey their opinions, or to show their agreement and disagreement with other learners' opinions.

*Finding things to say*

Learners often complain that they have nothing say about a certain topic even an interesting one. They feel that it is worth making effort to talk about something relevant and original. This situation is easy for teachers to encounter in a classroom with Generation Z learners. Their background knowledge is quite narrow. They have far more enthusiasm for trendy phenomena in entertaining fields than others such as science, news, culture, geography and more.

*Low participation of individuals*

In a massive classroom, each learner has a limited amount of time to speak. In addition, dominated learners often occupy a large proportion of time with their high tendency. Therefore, group-works should be given more to maximize their opportunities of speaking English in the classroom.

*First language use*

The use of the first language in a classroom is inevitable, especially all learners speak the same first language. It is much easier to communicate to teachers or other learners in the first language.

To eliminate of above problems in EFL classroom, teachers can employ different techniques and methods. Using games is one of the most effective methods. In terms of encouragement, motivation and collaborations, games are convenient and effective for teachers to make use of them.

**1.2. The importance of using games in teaching EFL**

Krashen (2011) claims that learners' language acquisition is enhanced best when they receive a compelling input to them. He also shows that learners acquire the target language naturally whether they are conscious of improving that language or not. Playing language game is one of the best compelling input. It has been proved that using games bring a lot of advantages in teaching languages. They are useful tools for effective language teaching. Games can attract enthusiasm participation of learners because they provide great enjoyment, intense pleasure, passionate involvement and motivation (Mahmoud& Tanni, 2014). Results of recent studies reinforce this role of language games in teaching language (Sochetra, 2017; Dewi et al., 2017; Biloon, 2016). They find that language games create enjoyable learning environment and promote the enjoyment of learners in English lessons.

According to Franklin, Peat & Lewis (2003), language games foster collaboration of students in classrooms and generate learners' a high level of involvement. Normally, learners in a class are divided into teams to play games. This creates a stress- free and safe environment for learners especially the weaker ones which lead to enhancement of team work skills and cognitive abilities. In addition, Krashen's (2013) affective filter hypothesis claims that if a learner has a low level of self-esteem, anxiety and consideration of not a potential member of a group that speaks the target language, they will not reach the language acquisition device, the part of the brain responsible for language acquisition. Therefore, lowering the stress level and anxiety of language learners is extremely crucial in learning and teaching a language.

Learning a language need sustainable efforts from learners for a long time. Wright et al. (2006) claims that games are helpful and encouraged for learners to their interest and work. Moreover, through playing games, learners can experience language instead of study it solely. Teachers can make use of games to create a

context where the language is useful and meaningful. To participate in an ESL game, learners need to figure out what other learners are saying or have written. In other hand, they must speak or write to convey their messages, opinions or information (Wright et al., 2006). In line with this, results of Biloon's (2016) and Wang's (2010) studies, language games helped learners experience real life communication with their peers. They also learned how to apply the knowledge of the target language that they had just learned in practical cases.

### III. Some suggested games to teach speaking skills

Here are some games that can be used for speaking lessons as well as the steps of doing the game:

#### 1. Who are they?

The game is good for teaching speaking and vocabularies to describe a person's appearance. This game also allows the learners to practice their listening skill by listening to the other learners' description about someone. Here are the steps:

- Divide the class into groups, each group takes turn to play
- Ask one member of the playing group to come forward
- Show them a photo of a celebrity
- Ask them to describe the celebrity physical appearance. They should use appearance vocabulary that they have learned and make sentences with verb Be.
- The rest members listen and guess who the celebrity is
- One who can guess who the celebrity is immediately say the name of the celebrity and get some points.

#### 2. Giving directions

The game "Giving directions" is good for improving the learners' speaking ability and knowledge. Through this game, learners can practice expressions of giving and asking directions in spontaneous situations. Here are the steps:

- Prepare some maps to show on the screen by a projector; or draw them on the board
- Divide the class into groups, each group takes turn to play
- Ask one member of the playing group to be the player
- Other groups decide where the start and arrival are on the map; the player is only showed where the start is
- The rest members give directions to the player as fast as possible
- Teacher record the time when the player reaches the arrival
- After several turns, which group has the least total time is the winner.

#### 3. Board game – What did you do?

This board game help learners practice using the past simple and past time expressions. Through playing this game, they also practice their speaking and listening skills. Here are the steps:

- Tell learners that they are going to play a board game, using the past simple. Remind them that the aim of the game is to move their counter from the start square to the finish square.
- Explain that in this game, every time they land on a square, they must make a past simple sentence including the word on that square. If it's a time expression or time period square, they can use any verb in the past simple. If they land on a verb square, they must include a past time expression or time period in their sentence.
- The player then stays where they are on the board until their next turn. If the sentence isn't correct, the player must go back one square and wait there until their next turn.
- Organize the class into groups of five or six learners and give each group a copy of the board game, a dice and five or six counters.
- Give learners about 30 minutes to play the game. Teacher should go around the class to give help and support when necessary. Give some points to ones reaching the Finish square first and a funny punishment (sing a song or make some funny poses) to the last one.

- To make it more advanced, other members can make some following questions about what the player says.

#### 4. How often do they do it?

The target of this game is reviewing what learners have studied and improve their spontaneity in speaking English. This game can apply to many topics or grammar points. Here are the steps:

- Tell learners that they are going to play a game, using vocabulary of free time activities and sports, adverbs and expressions of frequency.
- Organize the class into groups, a member of each group takes turn to play the game. All groups compete each other.
- Explain that in this game, they are shown a photo and a word or phrase. They should say out loud as fast as possible a sentence with a word or phrase given to say what the photo illustrates.
- To make it more interesting and hilarious, show something or someone who is trendy, popular, or funny.

#### 5. Who/Which is the best?

This game aims at practicing superlative structure. Learners can experience real situations in using superlative structure and improve their spontaneity in speaking English. Here are the steps:

- Tell learners that they are going to play a game, using superlative structure.
- Organize the class into groups, a member of each group takes turn to play the game. All groups compete each other.
- Explain that in this game, they are shown three photos or video clips of people, objects, locations. They should say out loud as fast as possible a sentence with superlative structure to say who or which is the best.
- To make it more interesting and hilarious, show something or someone who is trendy, popular, or funny; especially something related to the computer games that they play.

### IV. Conclusion

In brief, it can be seen that language games bring a lot of benefits in teaching English speaking skills. They are the great source of motivation and enthusiasm for learners that teachers should make use of. They make learning English more enjoyable and meaningful. Suggested games above are easy for teachers to implement and adapt. They are used to teach not only speaking skills but also other skills and aspects of English language. Therefore, teachers flexibly employ this powerful tool in various situations.

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### Appendices

#### Board game – What did you do?

START	yesterday	go	MOVE AHEAD TWO SQUARES	last night
visit	ago	on	last	play
MISS A TURN	day	sing	buy	listen
year	GO BACK FIVE SQUARE	get	see	summer
month	week	FINISH	be	July 7 <sup>th</sup>
when	make	in	MISS A TURN	2000
GO BACK THREE SQUARE	run	watch	write	MOVE AHEAD THREE SQUARES