The role of games on improving speaking skills

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In the globalization age today, English assumes as a more and more important part as a means of international communication than ever. Therefore, in some recent years, the focus of teaching has been promoting oral skills in order to respond to the students' needs for effective communication.

In language teaching, language games have proved themselves not merely as "time filler activities" but as an important factor which can create more chances and interest to motivate students to speak. Nevertheless, language games have not successfully applied to speaking classes in many educational institutions.

Speaking is one of the basic language skills that have to do be mastered by English foreign learners due to its significant and its use for communication. There are many characteristics of a successful speaking activity which are introduced by Penny Ur as follows:

· Learners talk a lot: As much as possible of the period time allotted to the activity is in fact occupied by learner talk.

· Participation is even: Classroom discussion is not dominated by a minority of talkative participants: all get a chance to speak and contributions are fairly evenly distributed.

· Motivation is high: Learners are eager to speak because they are interested in the topic and have something new to say about it, or because they want to contribute to achieving a task objective.

Nowadays I am a student but I've already begun my teaching process to young learners. While teaching them I've across to some problems on developing their speaking even I've used some games during my classes. According to Penny Ur, there still exist some problems with speaking activities as follows:

· Inhibition: Unlike reading, writing and listening activities, speaking requires some degree of real-time exposure to an audience. Learners are often inhibited about trying to say things in a foreign language in the classroom: worried about making mistakes, fearful of criticism or losing face, or simply shy of the attention that their speech attracts.

· Low or uneven participation: Only one participant can talk at a time if he or she is to be heard, and in a large group this means that each one will have only very little time talking.

· Mother-tongue use: In classes where all, or a number of, the learners share the same mother tongue, they may tend to use it: because it is easier, because it feels unnatural to speak to one another in a foreign language, and because they feel less "exposed" if they are speaking their mother tongue.

For being a good teacher I'll try to find solutions, sometimes I need to some advices from my experienced teachers. Because in some my learners I noticed some difficulties which were faced by the students in speaking English such as fear of making mistakes, fear of being laughed by their friend as they have no idea about pronunciation and grammar that they use. Besides, they are also bored in learning English because the teaching —learning activities provided in a conventional way, for instance, the teacher asked the students to perform the text they memorized. Furthermore, they also cannot speak based on their willingness because what they want to speak is structured by the teacher, in other words they just repeat the word that has been produced. Afterward, those problems make students get lazy or less ability to speak. Therefore, for creating new atmosphere I began to use communicative games. Communicative

games can be an alternative way to overcome students` difficulties in learning how to speak English. In fact, they can improve their speaking skills by playing some communicative games. Therefore, it can give positive impact towards students` motivation.

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