# Selecting games for developing ESP students' speaking skill

**SAPAROVA NARGIZA ERGASHEVNA**
A teacher of TerSU, Uzbekistan

As EFL teachers, we know that one of the important tasks put forward for us is conducting effective English classes. One of the most effective approaches in teaching languages is communicative approach. In Communicative Language Teaching, the teacher spends less time on the structures of the language and more time encouraging the learners to use the language. It is frequent that communication activities such as games and puzzles, which are often carried out in pairs or group, are encouraged in teaching with no much correction or intervention during the activity. There are many kinds of games designed for different levels as well as topics, so that students with different language proficiency levels can enjoy and gain the best results from them. Nowadays many researches have been conducted in order to work out the best and the most effective ways of using games in teaching communicative competence.

Using games in EFL classes is one of the actual themes among most researchers who worked in the sphere of teacher development, language teaching and methodology. Many scientists such as Hadfield, Caillois, McCallum, J. Foreman and other professionals have been conducting researches on this theme. Luu Trong Tuan and Nguyen Thi Minh Doan have carried out researches on using game technologies for teaching grammar.

Many researches have shown that using games in EFL classrooms is one of the effective methods in teaching languages. Games are fun activities that promote interaction, thinking, learning, and problem solving strategies. Games often 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 or complete a mental challenge. As Martinson and Chu states, "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". [1] 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] 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 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. "The learning process should be interesting, easy and it should be fun to learn. It also should fit with an everyday task and the working environment in order to achieve optimum results". [3]

As indicated in the approaches for teaching speaking interaction in the syllabus, we can use game technologies for developing students' speaking skills. In EFL classes, a teacher should select games according to the types of speaking. While choosing a game teacher should take into consideration the following:

· the age group

· the level of English

· the time limited for the game

· the learning styles theory

· multiple intelligences theory

· the idea that there should be no strict competition but cooperation

· that the students don't laugh at each other but laugh together

· the skills to practice

· that the story-games are repetitive

· the materials

By analyzing my findings about the definitions of the word "game" itself, I have come across several variations. Generalizing studied information I tried to give my own definition as:

· games are activities that help students to sustain their interest and motivation in learning languages;

· games are one of the most important tools for teaching all skills as well as speaking;

· games are a good way to promote ESP learners' interaction and improve their acquisition.

In conclusion, games prove to be a useful tool employed regularly in language teaching. Games not only offer learners a highly motivating, relaxing class, but most importantly meaningful practice to all language skills. Games as "Odd dreams", "The rest of the story", "The three COs" and others can be applied in ESP classes to promote students' speaking skills. Consequently, games can motivate learners, promote learners' interaction, improve their acquisition and increase their achievement.

### References

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