
RESEARCH ARTICLE

Using Educational Games in Teaching English as a Foreign Language

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ABSTRACT

The objective of learning and acquiring languages via peers and social interaction is greatly aided by the use of educational games in English language teaching and learning. Prior research has shown the value of games as a fundamental teaching method in language instruction. Playing is good for individuals of all ages, even though it is crucial for a child's growth. Gardner's hypothesis of multiple intelligences is closely linked to the use of games in language instruction. Including games in the classroom may make learning more enjoyable and joyful, reduce stress, and help students form connections with one another and the outside world. Learning may be enhanced by the use of games, whether they are played online or in person. This study aims to clarify some fundamental components, as well as their characteristics, trends, and circumstances, that instructional games have to include. Lastly, this study provides an explanation of a few instructional game examples that educators might use in the classroom.

KEYWORDS

Games, Educational games, Learning, Teaching.

ARTICLE INFORMATION

ACCEPTED: 20 May 2024

PUBLISHED: 03 June 2024

DOI: 10.32996/ijels.2024.6.2.15

1. Introduction

Since it puts the student at the center of the learning process, using educational games to teach English as a foreign language is a contemporary educational approach. In addition to giving the student joy and psychological comfort, it also aids in the development of the physical, mental, psychological, and social facets of his personality and puts him in a constant state of activity, interaction, and discovery with the aim of achieving a specific objective.

Playing educational games may also be a source of refreshment, encouraging students to become more active and accomplish better academically. Playing educational games helps children acquire certain skills, such as mental growth, exploration, precision, and the understanding of ideas that support effective self-expression Melgani (2016).

One of the most crucial communication exercises in language classes is playing language games. Linguistic games reduce the industrialization that surrounds the teaching process within the classroom and achieve a great deal of realism in the practice of a language, which is an important complement to the educational process. This is because linguistic classes are artificial environments designed to teach language. Even adults find language learning to be tiresome, so language learners can speed up their language acquisition by engaging in educational games in a fun and enjoyable environment. This also fosters a competitive spirit among students and improves their ability to work both individually and in groups. If a teacher uses his imagination and ingenuity to build new games or create new ones, then not only will the students enjoy the language lesson, but they will also love playing these language games.

Play is an instructional method that is designed to help students grasp topics by bringing them closer to them and offering support so they can make sense of the world and adjust to it. Since games take into account the particular peculiarities of each learner,

they are useful instruments for fostering new vocabulary. It is well established that play serves as a major conduit for the generational and peer-to-generation transmission of technology, values, knowledge, traditions, conventions, and trends.

2. Literature Review

Hong (2002) seeks to highlight the significance of game usage in young people's English language development. The researcher emphasized the importance of selecting game techniques and including them in the lesson plan's explanation. It is important for educators to consider which games to employ, when to use them, how to connect them to the curriculum, a program, or a textbook, and most importantly, how various games will help students in different ways.

The goal of (Ibrahim, 2017) is to identify the benefits of teaching English as a foreign language in Sudan's elementary schools via the use of language games. English as a foreign language learner may benefit from language game instruction, according to one study's results. Students may develop positive relationships with the new language by playing language games. The researcher suggested that curriculum designers include appropriate language games in the curriculum in light of these results. The impact of gaming on vocabulary acquisition in English as a second language or as a foreign language is also included in the research.

In a research study, Khatir (2015) affirms that games may assist educators in establishing real-world situations in which language is applicable and significant. The study demonstrates how effective the game is in helping primary school students engage with one another while teaching English. This is so because toys serve a variety of purposes in a child's development, including aiding in learning, supporting the acquisition of more complex topics year, and subtly fostering the development of necessary capabilities.

The goal of (Caganaga, 2016) is to determine the value and efficacy of games for English language learners. The study comes to the conclusion that games should be employed in the classroom to teach foreign languages since they provide English language learners with a positive environment where they are more motivated and like learning, which will undoubtedly lead to great academic success.

Furthermore, a number of studies have shown that games help students acquire vocabulary because they increase their enthusiasm, foster student engagement, improve their memorization of words, and improve their communication abilities.

3. Games and their relation to Multiple Intelligences Theory (MIT)

Gardner postulated an eight-intelligence fundamental hypothesis. These intelligences include naturalist, mathematical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, linguistic, musical, visual-spatial, and bodily-kinaesthetic. Multiple Intelligences provides strong support for game-based learning when it is implemented as a teaching paradigm. Playing games enables students to communicate, interact, and express themselves on their own, which aids in their language acquisition by utilizing their dominant intellect. Linguistic intelligence is associated with games that require learners to utilize more of their verbal skills, such as storytelling games. Mathematically gifted students gravitate toward games that include numbers and require them to use reasoning.

3.1 Definition of Educational Games

While the notion of educational games remains unclear and sometimes misunderstood, several scholars have formulated specific criteria. Educational games, as defined by Mubaslat (2012), refer to activities that can occur within or outside of school, either individually or collectively. These activities are led by a person who possesses the necessary skills to guide learners, such as a supervisor, teacher, or guardian. The person in charge selects the appropriate game for the specific context and time while considering the age and performance level of the students. If these criteria are fulfilled, the game offers enjoyment to the learners and motivates them to demonstrate their abilities. Other studies attempted to center their definition on the structure of games and to differentiate gaming from simulation. Dempsey, Lucassen, Gilley, & Rasmussen (1993-94) defined games as any explicit instructional or learning framework that includes competition and is regulated by rules. (Willis J. et al., 2017) provide a definition of a game as being explicitly designed for instructional objectives. An optimal definition of educational games encompasses a multitude of beneficial components.

3.2 Basic elements of educational games

For any game to be educational, it should have the following basic elements:

1. **Goal:** Every game should include a distinct and precise learning objective that aligns with the goal the player intends to achieve at the conclusion of their session. An effective approach to understanding objectives is to thoroughly examine Bloom's Revised Taxonomy.
2. **Rules:** Every game must have a demanding element, namely a set of rules that instruct pupils on how to play the game. Prior to playing the game, it is essential to inform kids of these guidelines.

3. **Competition:** Competition plays a crucial role in determining the success of a lesson. It might include a learner competing against another person, an organization, a test, or a set standard. The purpose of this competition is to improve skills and accomplish specified objectives.
4. **Challenge:** The game should have a suitable level of difficulty that exhausts the individual's capabilities to the maximum degree. This challenge should be somewhat more advanced than the current level of the pupils.
5. **Imagination:** The game stimulates the learners' creativity, which in turn enhances their inherent drive and desire to study.
6. **Entertainment:** The game should possess a discernible aspect of enjoyment and satisfaction. The objective of the game does not align with that. Nonetheless, it is crucial to consider the equilibrium between enjoyment and instructional substance.

Electronic educational games need certain components that are not present in conventional educational games since they frequently replace the job of the instructor. The following items are included:

1. **Adaptation:** It is important to consider the diverse learning styles, prior knowledge, and individual expectations and goals of the pupils.
2. **Excitement and Positive Response:** The teaching approach in online games requires a favorable reaction from the student in order to progress to the next stage, generating excitement and enthusiasm.
3. **Feedback and instant enhancement:** When the student engages with the exciting educational game, they get rapid feedback on their performance. This provides motivation for the learner to continue playing and improve their skills (Syukroni, 2020).

3.3 Features of Educational Games

- By incorporating audiovisual elements, learning becomes more effective and impactful as it engages several senses beyond just the human sense.
- The inherent inclination of learners towards play may be used to enhance their drive to learn and explore unfamiliar concepts (Misa, 2022).
- Independence from opposition and disagreement while engaging in unilateral activities without requiring the involvement of a colleague.
- Demonstrate one's abilities by independently playing and successfully attaining the objective without using the assistance of others.
- E-games are enjoyable and highly engaging instructional instruments.
- Utilizing games is a very stimulating method for learners that enhances their mental growth, particularly in the area of creative thinking.
- E-Learning games are not restricted by time limitations. Individuals have the freedom to engage in learning activities at their own discretion, without any restrictions on the timing or duration of their participation.
- The user's text is a bullet point. Electronic educational games use a method of breaking down knowledge into smaller increments that need a response from the learner and provide prompt feedback. The primary emphasis is on achieving the educational goal and motivating the learner to persist in playing.
- Play allows the learner to alleviate the psychological constraints that arise from educational methods or socialization.
- Combines information with abilities such as logical reasoning, problem-solving, planning, and decision-making.
- They are efficient instruments for promoting individualized learning by addressing learners' unique characteristics and educating them based on their potential and talents. By including instructional gaming programs that can be repeated, students have the opportunity to continuously enhance their learning and progress toward achieving mastery. Ibrahim (2017)
- They provide practical training for learners to develop skills in using computer devices and get valuable hands-on experience that may be difficult to obtain via intentional instruction.
- The regular use of e-learning games without proper justification and oversight poses health and behavioral hazards for learners, notwithstanding its advantages and benefits.

3.4 Educational Gaming Patterns

Educational games take diverse patterns. Among them are:

Competitive style: In this pattern, there is always a victor or a vanquished party, regardless of whether it is a contest between a student and another individual, a competition between two educated groups, or a matchup between a student and an educational equipment, such as a computer.

Exploratory Scientific Style: The instructional game in this format seeks to foster innovation, creativity, and critical thinking among players. The game relies on the use of clever and astute tactics to surpass a person or team in order to acquire mastery of a talent or accomplish a certain objective.

3.5 Types of educational games

There are several categories in which educational games may be classified. Activities might vary in terms of the number of participants, location, and the physical or mental elements.

3.6 The role of educational games in EFL learning

Games may be very advantageous when appropriately used in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning and instruction. Competitive games provide students with an inherent opportunity to collaborate and interact, facilitating their acquisition of a foreign language in a manner akin to the acquisition of their mother tongue. These games clearly promote and engage with users, resulting in improved speed and efficiency in information processing. Moreover, educational games have a tendency to motivate foreign language learners to engage in any activity because of their inherent will to succeed. Implementing this approach will lead to a decrease in students' stress levels, hence enhancing their desire to study (Talak-Kiry, 2010).

Furthermore, instead of just engaging in language practice within a traditional classroom environment, the use of educational games in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms may effectively instruct students in the proficient application of the language. It is indisputable that genuine discussion takes place when individuals engage with one another in real-life circumstances. Consequently, educators have the ability to use games as a means of cultivating a calm atmosphere, so promoting heightened focus and decreased levels of tension and anxiety.

Many educators and academics strongly feel that the use of games for learning, which involves hands-on activities and play, is very important. This might help pupils alleviate the monotony induced by rigorous, stringent, and repetitious classroom instructional methods. Educational games using e-learning technology may be integrated into classroom settings. Diverse forms of electronic games are being used in a broad array of methods to augment educational practice. One straightforward approach involves using gaming as a multiple-choice examination, where the game itself acts as the genuine incentive for the pupils.

Moreover, one of the most notable advantages of incorporating educational games into English instruction is that they foster spontaneous and happy communication among youngsters learning the language as non-native speakers. Utilizing games may effectively alleviate students' tension and anxiety levels, promoting a state of relaxation. Moreover, the use of such games might facilitate the cultivation of conscientious characters in learners by enhancing their self-assurance and self-worth. (Farrah, 2019).

3.7 Conditions of learning by games

1. The selection of games should align with the child's age, as well as their degree of physical and cerebral development.
2. Games should not be convoluted or unintelligible; the most crucial aspect should be defined by simplicity, clarity, and absence of intricacy.
3. These games have to be integrated with the adjacent educational setting.
4. These games do not pose any threats to the safety of youngsters.
5. The game should be thrilling and pleasurable.

These activities are designed to enhance the child's ability to notice, reflect, balance, acquire, and retrieve information via logical and observable procedures.

7. The game should be tailored to match the children's aptitudes, past encounters, and inclinations.
8. The game should provide learners with the option to choose.
9. These games are designed to assist the trainer in evaluating the student's capacity to gain further expertise and abilities, as well as identify their deficiencies. The objective is to enhance these weaknesses by instructing the student in relevant experiences that target these areas.
10. The crucial factor is the degree to which the game is connected to the teacher's specific instructional goals or desired results.

3.8 Teaching Using Educational Games

Educational games are a primary method of instruction that focuses on engaging students and fostering their positive attitudes. These games aim to promote the holistic development of students' personalities across several dimensions. They embody abstract notions by enticing learners to engage with educational attitudes via effective teaching materials and focused educational activities. These instructional environments, which closely resemble reality, enhance student engagement and provide them with opportunities to successfully accomplish the course objectives. (Yunus, 2019)

Utilizing educational games as a teaching method is a crucial strategy that considers the psychological aspect of learners. This approach requires active engagement between teachers and students through structured and scientifically designed activities and games.

Educational activities are crucial in the educational process at all levels of education. They help to accomplish educational goals and are a fundamental component of the curriculum, facilitating the integration of diverse subject areas. This curriculum facilitates instructors in offering children direct experiences that allow them to comprehend and assimilate fundamental meanings and concepts in a comprehensive manner.

3.9 Examples of games that can be used to teach languages

3.9.1 Grammar Installation Game

The instructor bisects cardboard, then proceeds to quarter it, allocating one half of the panel for composing interrogative statements. The remaining portion would include the solution, while the other side of the solution board would have a detailed, vibrant figure. The board is partitioned into four distinct regions, and each group is required to pair the question with its corresponding answer. The victorious group may assess the accuracy of its response by examining the accuracy of the configuration of the posterior form. This game may be constructed using either cardboard or sponge material.

3.9.2 Wooden pocket panel game

The instructor constructs an enlarged wooden panel with an immovable foundation, which is then divided into six wooden compartments as needed. The instructor instructs each group to choose a card from the wooden pocket panel and categorize the words based on the designated pocket in front of them. Following the students' responses, questions and corresponding answers might be shown on the computer as a means of self-evaluation.

3.9.3 Language Fluency Game

The instructor instructs each group to compile an extensive list of terms that are exclusively associated with the category of "names," such as personal names, on a sheet of paper. Students attempt to recite the words they have written from memory without referring to the written text. The victorious team is the one that is able to articulate all the terms listed on their document.

3.9.4 Who am I?

The instructor assigns some students the task of portraying various grammatical principles via educational puzzles named "Who am I?" The group that successfully solves these challenges may do it either by donning masks or via the use of the puppet theater. This game may be implemented either via spoken communication or by using puppets in a puppet theater.

3.9.5 Game of Boxes

The instructor presents two boxes, each symbolizing either a grammar or a spelling topic. Every group must categorize the words based on the two preceding boxes.

3.9.6 Clown Game

A student dresses as a clown and identifies himself as saying, "Welcome, my friends, I am your friend, Tarbush, with the embossed face, with circumstances, prizes, and sharks; I will play a beautiful game. Listen to me, I will pass you a basket of questions, and each group will have to withdraw one card and answer the question in the card and the winning group will answer the question correctly and quickly, and I will present it with a valuable award.

3.9.7 Cat and Mouse Game

The game is created using sponge or cardboard pieces. The teacher constructs square models out of cardboard, which contains questions related to a specific linguistic skill along with corresponding digitized answers. The answers are provided in the form of numbered letters. Sponge pieces in the shape of a cat and a mouse are used to validate the correct answer, such as selecting an option.

3.9.8 Tipper Board Game

The teacher is given each set a miniature tipper panel in the form of a calendar, which contains questions including the extended name, and the opposite side contains a hidden answer to the question.

3.9.9 Debate game

The class is partitioned into several groups, each with a name corresponding to a certain grammatical notion (he and her sisters). Each group is mandated to assert its identity and differentiate itself from other groups by highlighting their respective advantages, similarities, and disparities.

3.9.10 Game Discover Error

The instructor presents many sets of word floors, with each level including the word mistake (born-picnic-beach-adventure). The group's task is to identify the spelling error on each floor.

3.9.11 Silent Acting Game

The instructor chooses a student to represent one of the hobbies he engages in, as long as the interest involves a linguistic construct known as pronouns (such as I, it, us). The student performed it in front of the students without speaking. The whole group tries to come up with a solution.

3.9.12 Game words and letters

The instructor illustrates a rectangle shape, partitioning it into five portions to symbolize individual word letters that correspond to a particular linguistic notion. The victorious group is the one that has the ability to ascertain the term.

4. Conclusion

Utilizing games as a pedagogical tool in English instruction is a contemporary educational approach that capitalizes on the influence of games on young learners. The aim is to harness this influence to create a positive and effective educational tool that enhances students' engagement with their learning materials, and fosters increased verbal interactions. Consequently, students can acquire new vocabulary in the language more effectively. Instructional games are activities that engage children's physical and cerebral energies, allowing them to acquire knowledge via fun instructional approaches. Utilizing games as a learning tool has a more profound influence on memory, as it enables students to absorb a substantial amount of linguistic aspects and use them effectively in the classroom.

Utilizing games as a method of learning English provides students with a valuable chance to enhance their speaking, language, and listening abilities. Children engage in verbal communication and actively listen while playing, which fosters their development of independent language skills. Utilizing games enables youngsters to acquire a variety of novel abilities, such as experience, exploration, and tradition, which assist them in accomplishing the developmental milestones throughout their lives. Engaging in play and learning at a young age enables children to get a deeper understanding of themselves and the world around them. Textbook designers include games in their books to provide guidance for both rookie and expert instructors in their courses.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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