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USE OF GAMES IN TEACHING ENGLISH GRAMMAR

There are many ways how to define the concept of grammar. For example Thornbury [6] uses definition from Longman's *Active Study Dictionary* in which grammar is described as the rules by which words change their forms and are combined into sentences. Also Bruder and Paulston [1] give a similar definition of grammar; it is described as "*the possible forms and arrangements of words in phrases and sentences.*" Harmer [5] concludes that to be proficient in grammar means to know how the grammatical elements can be tied together to form the chains of words. Thornbury [7] then mentions that "*grammar is partly the study of what forms (or structures) are possible in a language.*" It is also suggested that grammar is closely connected with syntax and morphology and finally, we can express and articulate meaning by grammar. Grammar can be regarded from the different perspectives – for example as spoken and written grammar (both have its typical features).

The role of grammar in language teaching was observed and discussed by many authors. Teachers at primary and secondary schools cannot avoid teaching grammar because it is included in language curriculum and syllabus. Also the course books are partly based on grammar – pupils start with easy basic issues and the level of difficulty rises with the age.

Moreover, learning grammar is really important to achieve the higher levels of the language. On the other hand, the word grammar could be horrifying for students. It could be a hardnut to crack for the teacher to persuade pupils that learning grammar could be fun. However, it depends on the teacher how s/he solves this problem. S/he need not follow traditional methods in teaching grammar like setting the rules, filling

the grammar exercises or testing, but s/he can use another amusing way – games.

Games are definitely the most natural way of learning something. Playing is the most effective method for young learners. Through playing they meet with their environment, understand many principles of how things work, and it is easy for them to remember something which is connected with pleasure, fun or amusement. Even though games are often associated with fun, we should not lose sight of their pedagogical value, particularly in foreign language teaching and learning. Games are effective as they create motivation, lower students' stress, and give language learners the opportunity for real communication.

According to Haldfield [2], “a game is an activity with rules, a goal and an element of fun.... Games should be regarded as an integral part of the language syllabus”. This definition highly evaluates the importance of games in teaching. It shows that games serve not only as an ‘amusing activity’, but also as a technique to carry out many pedagogical tasks.

Classifying games into categories can be difficult because categories often overlap. Hadfield [2] proposes two ways of classifying language games. First, language games are divided into two types: linguistic and communicative games. Linguistic games focus on accuracy, such as supplying the correct antonym. Communicative games presuppose successful exchange of information and ideas. He also offers to classify language games into many more categories: sorting, ordering, or arranging, information gap games, guessing, search games, matching games, labeling, exchanging games, board games, role play games.

According to Lee [3], games can be classified into ten categories: structure games which provide experience of the use of particular patterns of syntax in communication; vocabulary games in which the learners' attention is focused mainly on words; spelling, pronunciation games; number games; listen-and-do games; games and writing; miming and role play; discussion games.

Riedle emphasizes the advantage of games in improving learners' achievements: “We are teaching a new generation of students, which requires unconventional teaching strategies to be put into practice in the classroom. And when

schools use games, student benefits speak for themselves – a greater desire to learn and higher test scores” [4].

In brief, games prove to be a useful tool in language teaching. Games not only motivate learners and create a friendly atmosphere, they are aimed at developing all language skills. Consequently, games can motivate, promote learners’ interaction, improve their acquisition and increase their achievement.

Games can be a very worthwhile teaching element. A successful game is successful because of the reason that it is based on specific time allocation, it has clear relevance to the material, there is appropriateness to all members of the class, and ultimately, the enjoyment of the learners is increased through their active engagement with the language.

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