

Use of Games in Learning Foreign Language at the University

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ABSTRACT

The article discusses the possibilities of using word games in the process of teaching a foreign language at a university. The main classifications of games are given, with the main attention being paid to games of a lexical nature. The article substantiates the conditions that allow use word games as efficiently as possible in foreign language classes, as well as examples of games at different stages of work with students.

KEYWORDS: *teaching a foreign language, game method foreign language learning, language games, vocabulary games, adult education*

Mastering a foreign language at a university implies the formation students have a range of competencies. In particular, graduates should be able to communicate orally and in writing in a foreign language and solve problems of interpersonal and intercultural interaction. Therefore, students must have certain knowledge (for example, knowledge of language means) and skills (use the formulas of verbal communication, formulate their point of view, etc.), as well as be able to correlate linguistic means with specific situations of intercultural speech communication. The solution of this complex, "global" task occurs during the entire period of teaching a foreign language at a university and requires the use of rational and effective approaches and technologies, forms and methods of teaching. In this context, it is customary to talk about the use of new information and communication technologies, active teaching methods, and a differentiated approach. However, the "basic element" is the methods and techniques of teaching a foreign language, which the teacher uses in the classroom, working directly with students. Knowledge and possession of language means by students, their use in communication depends on how effectively this material was presented, consolidated, worked out.

The method that allows: a) to motivate students to study the subject, b) contributes to the development of language and speech competence, c) contributes to faster and stronger assimilation of the material, is a game. Is the use of games in a student audience justified? And if so, which games will best contribute to the development of language skills? In modern science, games are considered as a method that can be effectively used in teaching a foreign language to both children and adults. It would be appropriate to give classifications of games that will allow you to find out which games can contribute to the development of certain language skills.

So, M. F. Stronin distinguishes the following types of game: 1. Lexical. 2. Grammar. 3. Phonetic. 4. Spelling. 5. Creative [1]. The first four can be classified as so-called language, the purpose of which is the formation of relevant skills. Creative games are complex in nature, they imply the creative application of acquired knowledge and skills in a game

situation. There are other classifications of games. A. V. Konyshcheva divides games according to their purpose into language and speech (communicative). E. V. Dushina speaks about linguistic games and divides them into non-communicative, pre-communicative and communicative, depending on the formed competencies [2]. It is obvious that in all classifications we are talking about 1) games, in the process of which the assimilation of material (new lexical units, grammatical structures), the development of individual language skills (phonetic, grammatical) and 2) games aimed at transferring the studied material and worked out skills in non-standard situations, in communication within the game. At the same time, it is important to take into account the principle of didactic sequence: first, assignments are completed for learning, to reproduction (including the model), and then to the creative application of the studied material.

For the games that will be discussed in the article, we suggest the name "word games" - they are all associated with the word, its spelling, meaning, compatibility with other words (in Stronin's terminology, both lexical and spelling games can be included here).

Word games allow students to:

- expand vocabulary, getting acquainted with new lexical units;
- it is stronger to assimilate already familiar lexical units;
- work out the spelling of words;
- to activate verbal-thinking activity;
- gets acquainted with the compatibility of lexical units, set expressions, phraseological units.

Word games include:

1. Anagrams
2. Crosswords
3. Search for words among alphabetic chaos (Wordsearch)
4. "Gallows" (Hangman)
5. "Balda" (a word game in which it is necessary to compose words using letters added in a certain way to a square playing field).
6. "Words" (composing shorter words from one long one, often for a while).
7. "Unscramble" (composing a word from an existing set of letters).
8. Word chain (compiling a list of words by replacing one letter in each subsequent word, possibly based on definitions).
9. Constructor (composing words from morphemes presented on separate cards).

10. "One letter - many words" (students name the words they know for a certain letter of the alphabet).
11. "Last letter" (name a word that begins with the last letter of the previous one; it is worth noting that in English, taking into account the unpronounceable -e at the end of a word, it may be suggested to start a word with the last sound of the previous one).
12. "Missing letters" (guess the word only by vowels / consonants).
13. Hot Seat (guess the word by its definition, synonyms, antonyms, etc.) and others.

Some of the games involve group work, team competition (for example, Hot Seat, Constructor, etc.), some work in pairs; such games as "Gallows", "Anagrams", "Word chain" are appropriate to carry out frontally, presenting the material on the board. If we speak about the Hot Seat, we can say that this activity can be used as a whole-class activity. If you teach students who can work independently, you might use it as a small group or pair activity once students are familiar with the activity's rules. In this activity, one student is selected to come to the front of the class and take the "hot seat." The hot seat is located a few feet in front of a chalkboard, whiteboard, or chart. The student sits in a chair facing his or her classmates and with his or her back to the board or chart. The student also should have a clear view of the class word wall. The teacher or a classmate selects a word from the word wall (or from students' spelling or vocabulary lists) and writes that word on the board or chart. The student in the hot seat is unable to see the word, but it is his/her job to guess the word by asking questions that help to narrow down the possibilities.

Most students like to play this kind of games, and also do crossword puzzles in the process of learning English. In general, students consider the use of games in English classes "an interesting, effective method that allows them to better remember the material."

Of course, verbal play in English classes at a university should not be an end in itself, although in some cases it can serve as a kind of "relaxation" after hard work. When organizing a game in a foreign language class at a university, the teacher should take into account the general methodological principles, as well as the principles of adult education pedagogy (after all, the student audience often claims to be "adult", and at the same time equally willingly responds to the techniques and methods used with children):

Adults need to know why they are learning this or that material.

Therefore, the teacher should be ready to explain how the game will help students in learning a foreign language;

- adults view learning as a solution to problems, they also learn from their own experience, "by practice", and the use of word games can provide more opportunities for this than simple completing exercises from the textbook;
- the game should be well thought out, have clear rules and simple conditions, be controlled by the teacher;
- the game should be held in a friendly atmosphere, providing the student with opportunities for self-expression, self-development;

- the game should contain an element of competition (under the initial condition of equality of participants / teams), which can activate the mental activity of students, encourage their active participation.

Let us give examples of the use of various games at different stages of organizing a foreign language lesson. At the warm-up stage, when the task of the teacher is to update the students' knowledge, experience on a particular topic, "setting up" for work, you can invite students to play "Missing Letters", "Unscramble", "Designer". In this case, the word should be either already familiar to most students, or can be predicted based on the topic. For example, the word "adventure" in the game "Missing letters" can be represented on the board as ". d v . n t . r ." as part of the discussion of the general theme "adventure holidays".

Games like Word search, crossword puzzles, Unscramble are often used to practice vocabulary on a specific topic. In school and foreign textbooks / workbooks, such a task is not uncommon, however, textbooks for higher education, especially professional ones, are not often offer students such an exercise-game. The technique is quite effective when, as a creative task, students themselves create a "letter chaos" / crossword puzzle and offer it in class for work in small groups. The Hot Chair team game can be offered to students at the end of work on a topic, when lexical units / phrases have already been repeatedly presented to students in texts and exercises. The essence of the game is as follows: the representative of the team needs to guess the word written on the board, which can be offered by the teacher or another team, according to the prompts and explanation of his team. The student sits with his back to the blackboard and does not see the word. Associations and ways to explain the word that come to mind of modern students sometimes amaze with originality and creativity, showing that students are trying to update and transfer knowledge from other subject areas in a foreign language. It is necessary to encourage students to express ideas in a foreign language, so they are involved in communication, work out the skills of constructing sentences, certain speech formulas. At the same stage, you can play the "gallows"; usually students actively think, offer options, not wanting the game to end in a loss. The Word Chain game can be played with beginner level students as it often contains short, simple 3-4 letter words. However, if definitions of inflected words are used, the task for students becomes more difficult. Some games can be used to present new words by focusing on their spelling.

The teacher can be advised not to "take the whole blow" on compiling the game on himself, but to delegate part of the work to students - for example, on the choice of lexical units in the game within the framework of the topic. Thus, they feel involved, responsible for the correctness of the presentation.

Material, for the success of the game. And in this case, the use of the game in a foreign language lesson actually becomes an effective technique.

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