CREATING WARM ATMOSPHERE IN THE CLASS THROUGH GAMES. AIR POLLUTION

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ABSTRACT

Games offer students a fun-filled and relaxing learning atmosphere. After learning and practicing new vocabulary, students have the opportunity to use language in non- stressful way. While playing games the learner's attention is on the message, not on the language. Rather than pay attention to the correctness of linguistic forms, most participants will do all they can to win. This eases the fear of negative evaluation, the concern of being negatively judged in public, and which is one of the main factors inhibiting language learners from using the target language in front of other people.

INTRODUCTION

In a game-oriented context, anxiety is reduced and speech fluency is generated thus communicative competence is achieved. He benefits of using games in language-learning can be summed up in nine points.

Games are learner centered:

1.   Promote communicative competence.
2.   Create a meaningful context for language use.
3.   Increase learning motivation.
4.   Reduce learning anxiety.
5.   Integrate various   linguistic skills.
6.   Encourage creative and spontaneous use of language.
7.   Construct a cooperative learning environment.
8.   Foster participatory attitudes of the students.

In recent years' language researchers and practitioners have shifted their focus from developing individual linguistic skills to the use of language to achieve the speakers' objectives. This new area of focus, known as communicative competence, leads language teachers to seek task-oriented activities that engage their students in creative language use. Games which are task based and have a purpose beyond the production of correct speech, serve excellent communicative activities. On the surface, the aim of all language games is for students to "use the language", however, during game play learners also use the target language to persuade and negotiate their way to desired results. This process involves the productive and receptive skills simultaneously. Standing on such ground, I considered the theme of the work actual enough to make investigation.

1. To improve the process of the English language teaching through communicative language teaching approach at the higher educational establishments.
2. To identify the situation when games are implemented in the speaking class.

I teach practical English for ESP course, from the first to the fourth year students of different faculties of the Agrarian University. As any ESP teachers, I have to design courses in accordance with the students' professional needs, taking into account their target language situations. This is one of the main problems that I faced as a teacher. When I first started teaching at the Agrarian University I had to study in depth some of the agrarian aspects, such as the apiculture, equine industry, the silk breeding, and others. Also, I faced some challenging situations at the beginning of the semester with some groups while taking a class, setting classroom activities, selecting lesson topics. With the group I chose for homework task one, I also faced some problems. This is group 1-70 of the Faculty of Agrobiology, students of this group have different levels of English (from elementary to intermediate), as well as different age groups and different views on learning English. So, some of them believe that learning English is tedious and difficult work and that is not necessary for the development of their future profession. I had to not only to interest them in English but also to motivate them to learn the language.

Language learning is understood as learning to communicate through communication. The emphasis is put on the meaningful and motivated use of language by the people who communicate in order to achieve a certain goal. Language for learning is derived from communicative experience in a variety of real world situations. Fluency is put over accuracy. Interactive learning is encouraged as a way of acquiring communication skills. The learners are taught "negotiating the meaning" (working towards better understanding each other), and "using communication strategies" (e.g. circumlocution). Communicative competence breaks down into the two major components of the knowledge: knowledge of the language and knowledge of how to achieve the goal of communication. Therefore, I try to use communicative language through innovative teaching techniques in the classroom with the combination of theoretical knowledge to solve these problems. In addition, through CLT, I can manage and motivate students to increase efficiency in their L2. Now I think that CLT is more useful for learning a language, although I cannot say that I completely abandoned the traditional method. The term linguistic competence refers to the unconscious knowledge of grammar that allows a speaker to use and understand a language. Linguistic competence is knowing how to use grammar, syntax, and vocabulary of a language. Linguistic competence asks: What words do I use? How do I put them into phrases and sentences?

Linguistic competences are related to the use of language through the expression and interpretation of concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts, and opinions in order to perform oral and written discussions. Such interactions may take place in diverse social and cultural contexts, which will determine the characteristics of the language written or spoken, such as grammar, pragmatic, and sociolinguistic characteristics. Phonology, Lexis and Syntax, which are objects of linguistic description constitute only a part of the elements in the code used for communication. The meaning of an utterance (a sentence, a clause, a phrase, a word, etc.) does not depend entirely on its form; a lot depend on who says what, to whom, where, why, in what manner and in what effect. In other words, the context of situation in which an utterance is said, who said it, and to whom are very important. For instance, the occurrence "Can I have the salt please?" is interrogative in form but expresses a polite request in a dining room.

Grammatical knowledge is not enough to help us participate effectively in communicative situation.

One of my favorite activities is introducing grammatical structures that are prevalent in a reading comprehension text, and designing speaking and writing activities that involve using the structures. For example, teachers can identify and draw learners' attention to the use of simple present tense in a factual text that describes air pollution and then ask them to use this when writing or speaking about a different factual topic. Advanced learners can be guided to identify some grammatical features of a text for themselves. When selecting words for a vocabulary lesson, teachers should always present them in context. In other words, words should be selected from or related to a text that learners read or listen to. Follow-up activities should allow learners to use the words, either in speaking or writing activities. Spelling activities can maximize exposure to the words. In order to present these words in context in a spelling activity, teachers can read a sentence that has the target word followed by the word. For example, a teacher can read aloud, Toxic waste causes harm to the environment – toxic waste.

Sociolinguistic competence is knowing how to use and respond to language appropriately, given the setting, the topic, and the relationships among the people communicating.

Strictly speaking about sociolinguistics it reveals that people say the same thing different ways. There are lots of processes and they are related to variables such as age, sex, birthplace, social standing, etc. Sometimes younger speakers reject elder speech but then they get older and go back to speaking the way their parents speak. In this sense, not all variation is studied since there are patterns that rarely change. Culture is revealed to have features that dictate different behaviours in different contexts. People adjust their speech to the setting; they can use different registers to achieve a successful communication. Sociolinguistics helps us to determine patterns in language change, how a culture expresses itself through speech. Sociolinguistic competence also refers to the ability to select topics that are appropriate for a communicative event. For example, expressing strong views about politics and religion over dinner is generally avoided. This rule is also moderated depending on the relationship between the guest and the host. If politics and religion are their favorite topics and if they know each other very well, these topics might well be appropriate.

So, how can I increase the sociolinguistic competence of my students? An obvious possibility might be to teach culture and sociolinguistic issues explicitly in the classroom; however, this approach is quite problematic. Culture is hard to define, most of the students not yet fully competent in the language of instruction that is why culture is often taught only in the advanced levels classes. In the case of English for ESP, teaching such topics as culture to a classroom of students with multi levels can be challenging. Useful strategy is to help learners become analysts themselves. For example, teachers can play a video clip of a dinner conversation and have learners compare the interaction, such as choice of topic and turn taking, with what they are familiar with. Such a clip should be used as a prompt to promote critical reflection rather than as a stereotype of a particular culture.

The ability to understand another speaker's intended meaning is called pragmatic competence. Pragmatics studies how the meaning depends not only on structural and linguistic knowledge (e.g., grammar, lexicon, etc.) of the speaker and listener, but also on the context of the utterance,

any pre-existing knowledge about those involved, the inferred intent of the speaker, and other factors. People who interact with each other work jointly to co-construct and negotiate meaning depending on factors such as their respective social status, the social distance between them, the place of interaction, and their mutual rights and obligations.

Pragmatics is about behavior and relationships then. So even when and where and how even how often and how fast to do speech acts are important, e.g. when/how to greet people, how slowly to respond a question that is embarrassing, etc.

Teachers who only teach vocabulary and grammar are not giving their students the tools they need to use the language. The consequences of pragmatic differences, unlike grammatical errors, are often interpreted on a social or personal level rather than a result of the language learning process. Therefore, committing a type of pragmatic mistake may have various consequences: it may hinder good communication between speakers, make the speaker appear abrupt or brusque in social interaction, rude or uncaring.

To be able to provide language learners with ample opportunities to develop their pragmatic repertoire of the target language, a developmental program that is relevant to the pedagogical objectives are to be devised. In the case of teaching pragmatic competence, the requirements are:

 The need for awareness activities; the need for authentic language samples; and the priority of input to interpretation.

The Activity: Softening Short Requests can serve for developing the pragmatic competence of students. In this activity students are required to reflect on the ways requests are used in the target community, become acquainted with some of the devices used to soften them. It includes a group of example requests and a number of settings. The example requests can be used in a matching activity that highlights different ways of making requests and how requests vary across speakers in different situations.

An aspect of Communicative Competence which describes the ability of speakers to use verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to compensate for breakdown in communication or to improve the effectiveness of communication. For example, a learner may lack a particular word or structure and may have to use a paraphrase or circumlocution to compensate. This indicates that, communication strategies are the means of strategic competence, and that the use of strategy is called for only when the learner faces some problems in a communicative situation. This implies that communication strategies are used only when a speaker perceives that there is a problem which might interrupt communication. Strategic competence is relevant to both L1 and L2 since communication breakdowns occur and must be overcome not only in a foreign language but in one's mother tongue as well. However, since strategic competence involves strategies to be used when communication is difficult, it is of crucial importance for foreign language learners. A lack of strategic competence may account for situations when students with a firm knowledge of grammar and a wide range of vocabulary get stuck and are unable to carry out their communicative intent.

For students learning English, much like learning any language, the overall goal is to be able to communicate clearly and effectively in the language they are learning. For most students, this will mean having a grasp on the mechanics and grammar of the language, and being able to speak, listen, write and read in English. As teachers, we need

to think bigger. We need to teach students to think beyond common classroom tasks and awaken their desire to excel in English (and in life). But how do we do that? Now our government pays much attention to learning foreign languages. Teachers are responsible for many things that happen inside and outside a classroom. Their primary responsibility is to instruct students and facilitate learning, which is complex and demanding work.

Communicative Language teaching is an approach to the teaching of foreign languages that emphasis interactive as both the means and the basic real of learning languages. It is also referred to as communicative approach "CLT has been a response to the audio-lingual and as extension of the National-Functional syllabus.

According to Richards (2006) there are the following principles of Communicative Language Teaching. I am going to write about some of them:

1.   Authentic language "in real context should be introduced in the classroom whenever possible.

2.   By teaching language, students should be able to make out speaker's or writer's intention. So that students will be communicatively competent.

3.   There should be connectively among all the language skills such as listening, reading, writing and speaking together since they are regularly used in real life.

4.   The target language is a tool for classroom communication, not just the object of study. The main attention should be given to nteaching language for communication.

5.   Students have to learn language properties live cohesion and coherence which are helpful to combine sentences together.

6.   In CLT, games, role-plays, group work, pair work, play an important role as they have certain feature in common to learn language effectively.

7.   The social contexts of the communicative situations are essential for giving meaning to the utterances.

8.   The grammar and vocabulary that the students learn follow from the functions, situational context and the role of the interlocutors.

CLT is usually characterized as a broad approach to teaching, rather than a teaching method with classroom practices.

According to David Menan (1991) there are five the most recognized features of CLT. They are:

1.   An emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language.

2.   The introduction of authentic texts into the learning situation.

3.   The provision of opportunities for learners to focus, not only a language but also on the learning process itself.

4.   An improvement of the student's own personal experiences as important contributing elements to classroom learning.

5.   An attempt to line classroom language learning with language activities outside the classroom.

In a previous time using the GTM I made students to do role-play, interviews, information gap, games, pair work. But those ones didn't help to improve their speaking abilities. They served only to learn the rules and making up true sentences.

Using games has become a popular technique exercised by many educators in the classroom and recommended by methodologists. Though the main objectives of the games are to acquaint

students with new words or phrases and help them consolidate lexical items, they also help develop the student's ' communicative competence. I noticed that those groups of students who practised grammar activity with games felt more motivated and interested in what they are doing. However, the time they spent working on the words was usually slightly longer than when other techniques were used with different groups. This may suggest that more time devoted to activities leads to better results. The marks students received suggested that the fun and relaxed atmosphere accompanying the activities facilitated students′ learning. But this is not the only possible explanation of such an outcome. The use of games during the lessons might have motivated students to work more on the vocabulary items on their own, so the game might have only been a good stimulus for extra work. Although it cannot be said that games are always better and easier to cope with for everyone, an overwhelming majority of students find games relaxing and motivating. Games should be an integral part of a lesson, providing the possibility of intensive practice while at the same time immensely enjoyable for both students and teachers.

Games can help students become more communicative competent. Besides, the atmosphere during the implementing of games also improves. In language teaching and learning, it is necessary to implement an appropriate method and technique. It can be seen from this result findings that to make the teaching-learning process successful, the teacher is not only the source of the knowledge and dominates the learning process. The teacher should create a situation where the students are involved in experiencing learning. Games can make the students think intensively and concentrate on the learning process. By so doing, they will able to express their idea, think naturally. Games increase creativity and courage; they have more discussion with their friends. It also increases their enthusiasts to ask the teacher about their difficulties. Games create fun learning situation, therefore it either makes the students enjoy or become more involved in their learning.

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