Improving Teaching and Learning Process Through Language Games

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Keywords:	**ABSTRACT**
EFL, Language Games, Classroom Activities.	Teaching and learning process in the classroom tends to be boring. This happened especially in EFL classroom where the students are not fully aware on the material given. Boring class will also happen when teacher brings very difficult or advance material. In fact, this matter will affect the process itself. This problem can be solved through the usage of games in the classroom. Games can be regarded as entertainment during lesson, media to deliver the material, tool for exercise and assignment, and technique to enhance student's learning. There are four (4) games delivered in this workshop. They are hot potato, big and small number, tic-tac-toe, and chaining the story. These four games are introduced to the instructors of English Transmigration Village in Mandastana, Barito Kuala. The result of this workshop are the instructors enjoyed the activities, they deliberately asking the actual implementation of the games on the classroom, and they have improved their teaching ability.

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INTRODUCTION

The emergence of communicative approach, then, raises the idea that teaching and learning should be in meaningful ways. This approach help students to practice the foreign language in meaningful ways. Richards and Rodgers (2001: 165) state that they are many activities suit this approach. Game is one of them because it facilitates the students to learn the language in a creatively (Saricoban and Metin, 2000). Therefore, the use of games makes classroom atmosphere becomes more interesting and this condition can make the language acquisition run fast and smoothly.

Hadfield (1998: 4) mentions games are fun and it can be a medium for learning as long as it is accompanied with rules and goals. These two latter elements make games has its purpose and not just a time filler in the classroom. Ersoz (as cited in Azar, 2012) said that games are always entertaining and engaging for students. Games encourage the students to learn by doing and they do not feel that they are forced to learn. Shy students also have more opportunities to express and use their language since it provides a lower-anxiety environment. Next, Friermuth (as cited in Uzun, 2009) stated that games makes students to be more active in the classroom and they teach them problem-solving skill without too much intervention from the teacher. Games create a competitive atmosphere, which raises the willingness to win and to show up their best ability so learning and teaching process becomes more livened. In this kind of situation, the students can build their confidence to practice the target language.

There are many reasons why games are effective for teaching. Azar (2012) and others study (see Nguyen and Khuat, 2003; Yip and Kwan 2006) support those reasons. However, it is undeniable that there are also some counter-arguments, which say that games is not that good for teaching. On one hand, games are appreciated for teaching and learning since they are supported by some theories. First, according to communicative approach, learning should be in meaningful ways and it should facilitate students to have a desire to communicate something (Harmer, 2001: 85). Azar (2010) mentioned that by playing games, students are required to actively communicate with their classmates so that it promotes them to learn vocabulary easily and effectively. Next, Connolly et al (2004) who investigated the use of computer games argued that constructivism supports the ideas of games-based learning. On constructivism perspective, learning is viewed as active processes in which learners create a bridge to connect new ideas and concepts based upon their past and current knowledge. This view is compatible with the characteristics of games which motivate player (to achieve goals), gratify the ego when winning, and spark the players' creativity (Prensky as cited by Yip and Kwan, 2006). In addition, Krashen's affective filter hypothesis (Dulay, Burt, & Krashen, 1982) also stated that students will have a better rate of acquisition if they are in a lower-anxiety environment. In line with this hypothesis, the application of games in the classroom provides students with an enjoyable atmosphere and they feel that they are not forced to learn.

On other hands, the use of games issued several disadvantages. Stojkovic and Jerotijevic (2011) explain the negative effects of using games in the classroom based on their research in Sarajevo. They list the reasons for avoiding games in the classroom such as: (1) the students play too much so they can easily forget what they have learnt, (2) the students, sometimes, cannot be controlled so there will be lot of noisy, (3) the teachers have lack of time, (4) the teachers and the students are unfamiliar with the methods, (5) the teachers worry about parents' opinion and their colleagues' remark, and (6) the school would not permit the usage of game in the classroom. These reasons make teachers commonly uninterested in applying games in their classroom.

Still from Stojkovic and Jerotijevic's study, they also discuss that there are more reasons for teacher to use games in the classroom than to avoid them. Furthermore, for the writers' knowledge, the study which revealed a result of ineffectiveness of using games for teaching is also rarely found. Therefore, based on this short discussion, the pro perspective for the use of games for teaching still has stronger arguments than the cons one. This conclusion then makes the writers feel that it is important to spread the use of games for improving the quality of teaching. In South Kalimantan, there is one village which focus on developing English courses. This village is projected as "Kampung Inggris" as we can find in the East Java. It is expected that this village can be one of destinations, especially for those who want to learn English in Kalimantan. However, one of the problems is the interest of the learners to learn English there is still not significant. Therefore, by conducting a community service on this topic, we expect that teaching and learning process will be more interesting for the students so it will attract more people to come and learn English there.

METHODS

The workshop consists of two parts. The first part is the introduction of the games which are hot potato, big and small number, tic-tac-toe, and chaining the story. In this part the participants are given the overview of the games, their usage in the classroom, and the preparation need to do the games. The second part is practice. All of the participants are encouraged to practice on the games' procedures. This part is intended to show the participant on how to do the games and how to implement them in the classroom activities. Below are the procedure and preparation of the games.

1. Hot Potato
Aim: To make the students practice asking and answering questions
Preparation: Prepare pieces of paper and bring music.
Steps to play the game:
a. Ask the students to write a question.
b. Students sit in a circle. When you play the music, students throw the paper ball to each other. When you stop the music, a student holding the ball should take a question and answer it.
c. Play the game until all students answer the question.

2. Big and Small Number
Aim: Give students practice their language skills: speaking, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation

Preparation: a deck of domino cards and a set of questions.
Steps to play the game:
a. Each player picks a card from the deck. Whoever has the highest ranking card is the dealer. The dealer shuffles the deck and deals out all the cards, one of the time, face down to the players.
b. The dealer throws the card first. Everyone must build on that card, in either direction, to create a stack. Each number must be related. A player with the biggest number earn a point and one with the lowest one should take a question and answer it.
c. The winner is the one who gets the biggest point and successfully play all the cards.

3. Tic-Tac-Toe
Aim: Help students to practice grammar and review vocabulary or reading passage
Preparation: Make a list of words or questions you want to review
Steps to play the game:
a. Draw a chart with nine squares on the board. Write one word or number in each square.

Know	Give	Think
Fall	Feel	Buy
Come	Sing	Swim

b. Divide the class into two groups: (X and O)
c. Explain the game. Group X points a word on the board and use the word based on the instruction discussed before playing the games (for instance, change it into past tense and make a sentence). If they give a correct answer, the teacher replaces the word with "X". If the answer is incorrect, group O get a chance to answer.
d. The winner is the group who can get a straight line of three Xs or Os (across, down, or diagonally).

4. Chaining Story
Aim: Helps students practice speaking and grammar
Preparation: -
Steps to play the game:
a. Ask the students to stand in a circle
b. Give a sentence to start a story
c. Each student should make a sentence to continue the story.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
The workshop run for a day and each participant were actively participated in every game. They got chance to practice four games during the workshop and here is the detail of the result.

1. Hot Potato
This game gets a lot of attention from the participants. Their testimonies showed that this game has high possibility to be implemented in the classroom. The participants are happy with the practice and can grasp the essence of the game. Since this game is aimed to force the participants to talk and response to certain answer, it can be implemented on speaking class to relieve the anxiety of the students and motivate them to talk.

2. Big and Small Number
At the beginning of the practice, the participants asked whether this game has high benefit to the classroom. At the end, they find out that game is highly recommended to check students' understanding of the materials. This game can be implemented on every aspect of the teaching process. It can also be regarded as stress reliever at the end of the meeting.

3. Tic-Tac-Toe
This game is simple but challenging. The participants seemed confused at the beginning. However, when they grasp the ideas, they feel motivated and challenged to be a winner since this game demonstrates the grammar and reading ability of the participants. they also know how to measure students' grammar ability using this game.

4. Chaining Story
This game is about logic and sense. Chaining a story can be amusing yet silly at the same time. The silly parts then encourage the participants to think more and more. They then demonstrate their speaking and grammar ability unconsciously. They will also enhance their logic and sense in using correct expression in English.

Based on the above findings, it can be said that most of the participants enjoyed the workshop. They also realized that some of those games are actually similar to the traditional games. It is true that any games actually can be adapted into a language class. Richards and Rodgers (2001: 165) state that games for language class are unlimited and it is just a matter of teacher's creativity. After joining this workshop, they committed to make the classroom atmosphere to be more engaging and interesting so the students get more motivation to learn.

CONCLUSION

There are several conclusions that can be taken. The participants have fun throughout the activities. They enjoy every act and every task given. The participants show high interest in the usage of games in teaching. They carefully observe the steps while playing. The participants are fully encouraged to find out more about games for teaching. The continuation of the workshop is needed.

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