
A THEORETICAL ANALYSIS OF LANGUAGE GAMES IN LANGUAGE VOCABULARY ACQUISITION

Sudesh Yadav,

Research Scholar, Dept of Education, Kalinga University

Dr. Usha Baxi,

Professor, Dept of Education, Kalinga University

ABSTRACT

Learning a language is a difficult endeavor that calls for consistent work, particularly for younger students. Through the provision of meaningful circumstances, games motivate language learners to focus their efforts on language acquisition. As a result, it's critical that educators incorporate games into their foreign language instruction curricula rather than viewing them as amusing diversion or time waster. It is possible to find numerous explanations on the nature of games put forth by different researchers. Playing games with language can be entertaining and enjoyable. Thus, the likelihood of acquiring input is increased. Playing games can inspire motivation. By fostering a competitive environment for the usage of the target language, they give pupils an incentive to persevere through the hardship and strain of learning a foreign language. Games' competitive element draws students' attention as well. Because they are entertaining, games help pupils forget that they are learning. Playing games helps students concentrate on language use rather than language forms, which help them, use vocabulary and grammar automatically. Playing language games offers the chance for extensive practice. By providing a relevant, authentic environment for language use, games help the target language come to life. Playing games in the classroom helps students retain material more quickly and effectively by lowering tension and anxiety. Students can use all of their senses to study through games. Playing games enables simultaneous language practice in speaking, writing, listening, and reading (LSRW). Playing games is a good way to break up the monotony of language school. The researcher discovered during the study project that students found language games to be engaging when studying English. Language games have never been used to teach English to the students. Every student was eager to take part and delighted in using language games to learn. Additionally, teaching English to pupils through language games made the classroom happy. When teaching using language games, it was discovered that even the students' favorable attitudes regarding the material were present. Pupils were at ease to discuss with group members in a group setting, clear up any doubts, and come to a final solution by solving problems together and expressing their opinions.

Keywords : language, educators, English, teaching

INTRODUCTION

Our surroundings are illuminated by language, and each language does so in a different way (National Focus Group on Education Goals, 2006). No matter the topic area, language is how learners integrate new concepts. It serves as a channel for communication between community members. One of the main foundations for the cultural transmission is language. It is a tool for communicating customs and values associated with a common culture. It is, in a way, a formal system of sign, gesture, sound, and symbol used to convey ideas or concepts. In addition, there are roughly 6000 languages spoken in the globe. It encourages students to express themselves in their own unique ways, developing their natural curiosity and inventiveness and assisting them in coming to terms with who they are (NCF, 2005).

Language is an essential tool for empowering people. Animals speak a language that is not limited to humans. As a result, language development and usage are essential for fostering positive interpersonal interactions at work, at home, and in the classroom. Consequently, learning the language that links us to other nations becomes crucial to succeeding in a globalized society.

The means by which people communicate with one another is language. Both humans and animals have a tendency to communicate with one another. While most animals express their feelings through noises and movements, humans utilize words to communicate. Language uses phonology, syntax, morphology, and other rules to connect words to form questions or phrases. New words are constantly being added to the language to describe novel concepts.

Without language, man cannot operate in society as he should. All people have a need to communicate their thoughts, feelings, and emotions. Language is a vital component of existence that expresses identity and serves as a communal symbol. A person's language usage style might give away information about their educational background and other aspects of their standard of living. A successful career in life is made possible by having a strong command of the language. The primary function of language is speech, which is expressed through dialogue or conversation.

People might be united or divided by a language due to the disparities in slang and speech patterns. Proficiency and in-depth language knowledge are prerequisites for success in every community or society. Every language has a unique forte. Because of its validity and dependability, English is regarded as the worldwide language among all other languages. A language can be viewed as a code of art, a means of expressing sentiments and emotions, a means of acquiring knowledge, and a unifying factor among states, nations, societies, and regions.

A language is an ordered, methodical pattern of code. Since language is essential to civilization, it is impossible to envision a society existing without it. It is regarded as a social component in that it has to do with social interaction. They consist of the words, sounds, and structures. It is impossible to speak without using words. Communication is language's primary function. A person studying a foreign language must become conversant in both the language and the culture of the target population. Thus, language is very important.

There are many different ways to interpret what the term "language" actually means. Language, according to Robins (2003), "is a symbol system built on pure or arbitrary norms...endlessly adjustable and changeable to accommodate the speakers' evolving demands and circumstances. This definition makes it clear that language is a symbolic system. Since most languages are written, sound is taken into consideration while choosing symbols. For instance, the symbol for the sound "/k/" varies according on the language; in English, it is represented by the letter "k." These symbols create a meaningful phrase by framing the language's alphabets and junctions in various ways. The structure is capricious. It is imperative that the symbol be combined. For instance, the letter combination "f.a.n"= "fan" Either "a.f.n" or "n.a.f" won't work. Nothing in combination is unassailable. Lastly, it is unchangeable and can be connected. Language is extensible and changeable. Every day, words can take on new meanings. A language can always add new terms to adapt to the shifting needs of the populace.

Humans do not have an innate ability to speak. According to Sapir (2012), humans are universally linguistically literate, but animals lack any form of communication. The first language that children learn comes from their parents and neighbors. For the purpose of survival, they pick up a new language that is non-intuitive. Speaking is the formation of oral auditory symbols through language. Oral sound is produced by the speaker and transmitted through the air to the listener. When it finally reaches the brain, symbols and their meaning are produced. According to Chomsky, the sentence has a structure. He explains that despite having a finite number of symbols, the human brain is capable of creating various sentences in the same language.

A person frames a shared code that constitutes the language. Humans use a wide variety of additional communication channels. These include hand signals, winks, nods, flags, smiles, sketching, maps, acting, miming, dancing, horns, mathematical symbols, braille alphabet, shorthand, sirens, and more. These exchanges lack the flexibility and comprehensiveness that language offers, and they are also far too constrained. From generation to generation, language transmits civilization, culture, ideas, and philosophy. Air is vital, but so is language. All people are endowed with the ability to communicate through language.

Language utilized by humans—also referred to as talking animals—is stated by Loquens [1980]. Animals cannot communicate through language. Although it can communicate through a limited amount of messages and convey

emotions such as hunger, thirst, fear, and rage, human circumstances are completely different. There is no correlation between the meaning of a word and its arbitrary use in English. The ideas are carefully communicated, yet the words are chosen at random.

The terms "woman" in English, "femine" in French, "isthree" in Hindi, and "aurat" in Urdu refer to adult females. The words that were chosen are not predetermined. It is comparable like naming a newborn. Since a name is connected to a person's entire existence, naming a kid is random. It is difficult to alter. Language is deemed arbitrary as this is also the case. An array of systems makes up language. Language is a system of symbols and a semiotic system. When everything is correctly arranged, interconnected, and in a stable position, a system is created. The methodical job can be completed in a predictable manner. In architecture, there is a clear and organized layout. The language has elements and a hierarchical structure.

ORIGIN OF LANGUAGE

Scholarly debates about the earliest human language date back several centuries. Regarding the origins and age of human language, there is no proof or evidence. The dearth of concrete evidence makes the topic difficult to investigate. As a result, researchers who seek to understand the origins of language must make deductions from a variety of sources, including fossil evidence, archaeological data, the diversity of languages spoken today, studies on language learning, and analogies between animal communication systems and human language.

Numerous designs on rocks and shapes on wooden bark have been discovered, and scientists speculate that these may represent the language or interpretation that prehistoric humans used to communicate. There are ideas that explain the origins of the language. Some theories claim that nature is the mother of languages, including the Bow-wow, Pooh-pooh, Ding-dong, Yo-he-ho, and Ta-ta theories. These ideas claim that language emerged from the sounds of nature. According to contemporary scholars, there is likely a direct connection between the beginnings of language and current human behavior and lifestyle.

Humans employ language in inventive ways, and they may pick it up from animal signals as well. The speech community's disclosure may determine the precise phrase used. Words can be artistically learned from the outside world; they are not inherently inborn. This skill is referred to as a Language Acquisition Device (LAD) by Chomsky and Katz [1975]. There are two theories on the genesis of language. They hold to the ideas of natural evolution and divine creation.

SIGNIFICANCE OF LANGUAGE

Language is employed to investigate people's experiences. Since it's implemented to suit human wants, it's stated to be an artificial object. It brings about a lot of adjustments based on the requirements of the language. It serves as a first line of communication and has many traits typical of historical, political, and economic change. It is a universal need and among the most important things for human survival. It creates individuality in each person and impacts social interactions. Language connects people to the outside world and helps shape them from an early age, which is how culture and society are intimately intertwined. Children learn more about the world as it is today, which is a vital component of civilization, with the use of language. Without language, humankind could not have evolved. Humans and animals are distinct from one another only by language.

One of the most amazing and fundamental aspects of being human is language. One cannot minimize the importance of language and society. People utilize it as a means of personality expression in addition to a means of communication. It facilitates social interactions between people and offers a forum for the exchange of views on a wide range of topics. The planet is home to a huge variety of languages. Every language investigates its customs and culture and contributes to the subtle interplay that unlocks human understanding.

In actuality, language serves as a communication medium. It is possible to paint the thoughts of others with this material. The man speaks because of language. Speaking is a form of art and a means of expression. One cannot voice their opinion by yelling or screaming. A discourse without of appropriate terminology is likened to a bus

without an engine. However, despite lacking linguistic understanding, the person's speaking abilities are still superior, and they could be compared to a heart without beats. In any civilization, language is essential. It is a meaning-based, abstract set of symbols. Grammar and its meaning are valued in communication according to this system. Human personalities grow through language. Learning multiple languages enhances social and cognitive development. Because of this, humans are unique from other animals, and only humans are capable of possessing language. Language is therefore essential to human society.

HUMAN AND LANGUAGE

Human language is distinct from mechanical communication systems and the innate communication mechanisms of insects, birds, and other creatures. The mechanical communication system that humans have constructed is not a part of the language's sound system. It is not appropriately classified as language. Fish communicate by doing zigzag dances, while bees communicate by fluttering their wings. Animal communication is rare in both quantity and variety. The possibilities for human communication are endless.

Human communication has a generative and endlessly productive quality. The structure of human language is organic and subject to growth and deterioration. Human language is unique in that vocal symbols are arbitrarily chosen to convey meaning. The only animal with the ability to use sounds symbolically and the genetic potential to learn languages is the human. Humans do not naturally speak any language; instead, everyone learns it. Culture transmits language. Learning a language requires both cognitive and perceptual abilities. According to the idea of nativism, or the innate capacity for language, people have a unique and specific ability to learn languages. The child's acquisition of language demonstrates that the human brain has a particular genetic capability for language learning.

Spoken language is the predominant form of language. Writing comes after speech. Language manifests itself through speech. Writing is the handwritten or printed graphic representation of communication. There is a steady and eternal existence for writing. Speech is one way that the language system is fully expressed. Written language has historically been given more weight since some people are limited to reading and writing. Esoteric knowledge is recorded in written books. Classical Arabic and Sanskrit are therefore more regarded and treasured than the varied spoken varieties. Spoken language is prioritized in contemporary linguistics. Spoken language can demonstrate language's potential. Before learning to write, every person learns to speak. Speech is affected by the force of changes that occur in language. Only speech is connected with suprasegmental features like stress, intonation, and paralinguistics.

LANGUAGE AND COMMUNITY

Language has a unifying power. The reality of language is social. Speech serves as a social component and is the expression of language. By exchanging spoken words or reacting to one another, it happens as a dialogue or conversation. The type of language employed is determined by the social situation. A youngster uses the language to interact with others in the community. Language and culture are closely related in a group. People are divided by language based on the slang they employ. Slavery and power are brought about by language. Being proficient in a well-known language opens doors to coveted employment. In the majority of the nation, English is the language that is used for proficiency. Gandhi has noted that the widespread usage of English in India has undermined the country's regional languages.

There are understandable variations in the same language depending on the people who are geographically apart. Both social and regional variations exist. The language lacks any consistency or homogeneity. People live in groups, and each group has its own distinct etymology, syntax, and pronunciation. There are variations in the unitary grammatical, lexical, and phonological systems of language among speakers.

Because there are shared foundations, there are some differences within the same language. Interpretability might not be impacted. For them, the language is distinct and strange. Variations in language can influence a user's socioeconomic status. "Socollects" is another word for social dialect. It is not a problem if the speaker uses a regional or social dialect. They must be adaptable in order to fit the speaker's dialect. Code shifting or code

swapping refers to this transition. There may be many different dialects within the speech group; therefore, one dialect is given more weight than the others. The term "standard dialect" refers to this dialect.

LANGUAGE GAMES IN TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE VOCABULARY

During their early years, children enjoy to play games and engage in activities, which lead to them constantly learning new things while they play. Regarding this matter, Bakhsh (2016) proposes that the use of games in language classes might foster an engaging and enlightening atmosphere for younger students. Additionally, Lee (1979) notes that mastering the four fundamental language skills—listening, reading, writing, and speaking—can be accomplished through games or other activities (Bakhsh, 2016). Gardner (1999) also highlights how games help young students improve their visual, kinesthetic, and cognitive abilities. According to Newton (1995), students can acquire vocabulary for the intended language more quickly if they use the words in conversation as opposed to only learning their definitions. A lot of games that teach languages let users voice their opinions and talk in the target language. It goes without saying that these games help young students improve their vocabulary. Ultimately, regardless of academic level, games become a part of students' lives. The students interact with games informally or formally in their classrooms, on their laptops, on the internet, and on their mobile devices.

Furthermore, one setting where students might not have regularly been permitted to play games is the classroom. While some educators may want to incorporate games into their lesson plans or presentations, most would not have the same idea. In actuality, educators who employ games as a teaching tool might not be making the most of them. It is advisable to invest a significant amount of time in the initial stages to examine the diverse connotations and attributes of the game in order to determine whether or not it is linked to language acquisition. Harfield (1999) asserts that specific guidelines and goals merged with the core of enjoyment. Rather than viewing language games as a fun pastime, Harfield (1999) focused on them as an essential component of language curricula. At one end of the spectrum, language games serve as a learning tool and a drill for repetition; at the other, they foster the ability to use the language voluntarily and as a means to an end rather than as an end in and of itself. Language games should be used at all stages of the transition from regulated to free activity. Teachers can use these as a tool for evaluation so they can identify the problem areas and implement appropriate corrective action. There is a lot of instructional value to games as well. According to Lee (1979), the majority of language games encourage young learners to utilize the language rather than stressing about learning the precise form. He went on to say that games ought to be included in the curriculum for learning foreign languages rather than being seen as an afterthought. Ironically, Lee's theory—which suggested that games could lessen anxiety-inducing behaviors and improve the effectiveness of content acquisition—was supported by Richard-Amato (1996).

According on the descriptions and viewpoints on language games provided above by many researchers, games have a great place in the classroom. This further emphasizes how using language games in the classroom not only increases student efficiency but also makes learning enjoyable. Because of this, language educators—teachers in particular—have started to understand that games may serve as both a "fun exercise" and a tool for students to complete their assignments in an enjoyable manner when it comes to teaching methodologies. Given on the facts, Chen (2005) highlighted nine major benefits when discussing the use and implementation of games for language study. These benefits include:

- Learner-centric games still place a strong emphasis on the student.
- Games foster teamwork abilities.
- Games increase reading interest;
- Games reduce anxiety;
- Games create an important language background.
- Games help players integrate language skills.
- Playing games encourages creativity and spontaneous speech.
- Games help people use the language together.
- Students' perceptions of engagement are enhanced by games.

One way to think of language games is as a kind of tool that simultaneously inspires, amuses, educates, and helps with fluency. Games can be effective teaching tools for students' comprehension when they are used appropriately and customized for the learning environment (Chen, 2005). The main reason these exercises should be included—despite the adamant opposition of conservative teachers—is that they let students witness the wonders of learning a second language rather than just the tediousness and exhaustion of the process itself.

To put it simply, language games offer a variety of exercises that target language components including syntax, sentence structure, vocabulary, and pronunciation while also enhancing communication abilities. These are mostly goal and task oriented. Three categories can be used to classify the priorities: communication, language structure revision, and a mix of the two. The games that stress good interaction are the communication games. In grammar games, the player performs by using the language correctly. When it comes to games in language classrooms, they can be utilized to improve students' language and communication skills while also being entertaining, engaging, and well-organized. Engaging, interactive games offer a multitude of avenues for students to interact with one another. These help the students become more spontaneous, imaginative, and have a larger vocabulary in addition to improving their tertiary level fluency in the target language.

PROCESSES OF LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Language development can be divided into two main categories: acquisition and learning. These two approaches to language development are presented by Stephen Krashen (1981) as distinct processes. **Acquisition:** Acquisition follows a similar natural process to that of a child's first language development. Krashen (1981) asserts that language acquisition is an unconscious process that entails the naturalistic development of language competency through engagement in authentic, meaningful communication situations that call for both language usage and comprehension. Learning a language involves picking it up, or gaining the ability to use it in situations where communication is natural and mistakes are not likely to be laughed at or criticized. Frequent exposure to the language in normal settings, low anxiety levels, a strong desire to learn the language, little conscious effort, and no formal instruction are all necessary for language learning. Generally speaking, one acquires their first language. Conversely, learning is the deliberate process of picking up a language in order to use it. Studying the rules and developing a cognitive understanding of syntax and vocabulary constitute language learning. It needs deliberate work and, for the most part, a guided environment. Learning a language is the result of making a conscious, intentional effort, such as studying and practicing grammar rules with the aid of text books or directions from a teacher or other authority figure, usually in a formal setting. Any language that is not one's mother tongue or first language should generally be learned. **Use of Acquisition and Learning:** According to Krashen (1981), the acquired system initiates utterances. We base our production fluency on the lessons we have 'learned' via engaged dialogue. Sometimes before and sometimes after the utterance is formed, we can modify the output of the learnt system using our 'formal' knowledge of the second language, or conscious learning. Therefore, acquisition comes before fluency in language production, although intentionally learned language norms frequently do not contribute to language production. In other words, studying alone is useless for effective communication.

CLASSIFICATIONS OF LANGUAGE GAMES

According to Haycraft's 1978 study, "games ignite the spark of English usage in the class," according to researchers studying English as a second language (ESL). It gives students a chance to utilize the language in authentic settings while they are confined to a classroom.

According to Langran and Purcell (1994), language games can be used with young children and language learners who are just starting out, or they can be more complex and are typically used with experienced language learners. In general, there are three types of games. While teams or individuals strive to reach a goal first in competitive games, they collaborate to achieve a common goal in cooperative games (Hadfield, 2004). Additionally, in individualistic games, every student gets their own game, and the winner is the one who finishes first—much like in a crossword puzzle.

Bedson & Gordon (1999) proposed another classification of games, with the following ten categories: guessing games, role-playing games, movement games, card games, board games, dice games, drawing games, singing and chanting games, team games, and word games. Linguistic teachers should, however, take into account games that are enjoyable, promote participation, have a clear linguistic purpose, and keep all students' attention to prevent boredom (Cakir, 2004). Since kids, unlike adults, do not yet have complete control over their lives, games may be beneficial. When learning a new or second language, children don't have defined demands or objectives (Brewster et al., 2004). It is the teacher's responsibility to design engaging and meaningful exercises that inspire and encourage students to acquire that language.

Out of all the games available, cooperative and competitive games are thought to be the most effective for language learning. In order to approach a task-based game, they maximize and encourage social interactions amongst learners to communicate significantly in the target language. These games offer an enjoyable educational setting where students collaborate in pairs and groups toward a common objective. As a result, they perceive a lower level of pressure than in regular sessions when students are usually working alone.

Vygotsky explained the connection between language games and the foundation of socio-cultural theory. It is evident from the ZPD concept that students are expected to possess the capacity for independent work. When kids are engaged in a playful setting, this potential can be increased. In order to provide the required scaffolding and use the conversation that students produce while playing language games as mediation to speed up the learning process, teachers should take use of the relationship that they have with their students and games. Children may eventually benefit from this as they learn to work independently and develop their capacity for learning—which is the only mechanism that leads to learning (Johnson & Johnson, 1987).

ADVANTAGES OF LANGUAGE GAMES IN ESL CLASSROOM

Jung (2005) asserts that games educate, entertain, instill, and promote communication and fluency. Students enjoy and gain essential practice from games as well. The use of games should be based on the kids' interests. Thus, language games shouldn't be seen as a meaningless pastime. According to Chen (2005), if games are played in a lighthearted and comfortable setting, they will lessen learning anxiety when learning a second language. Consequently, the element of surprise and change in the classroom environment encourages learning among the pupils.

As a result, when playing language games, pupils unwind and become engaged in the process of learning. Additionally, games encourage communication between participants and professors (Carrier, 1985). Games are employed as tactics or techniques to maintain students' interest in what they are studying. Well-planned and selected games are essential because they provide learners with a break while motivating them to practice language skills. The advantages of employing games in the classroom to teach vocabulary are listed by Huyen et al. (2003): Playing games helps children unwind and have fun, which helps them remember language; Games need friendly relationships to keep students interested and motivated. Language games in the classroom provide a real-world context, which fosters positive learning, collaboration, and involvement. Interactive learning strategies frequently provide benefits for memory, performance, and social interactions.

CONCLUSION

This research provides of the current investigation and highlights its conclusions. An outline for verifying the study's findings and improving and refining the pedagogical application for vocabulary development in English language classrooms is given in this paper. Because English is used so widely, it is a universal language that belongs to its users regardless of their nationality. English is widely used in India as a language of communication amongst speakers of various regional languages. Writing a research paper is typically done in English. Public exams, even the essential ones, are held in English. The world is rapidly becoming a smaller, more interconnected village, which is fostering international trade. English continues to be the only language used for communication in these situations. English is now considered essential in many professions, including education, business and commerce, engineering, and research, due to the widespread use of computers and the internet. As a result, English

now takes pride of position in the curricula offered at different levels of formal education. Education seeks to support a person's personality development on all fronts. Apart from the subjects covered in the curriculum, various extra activities are carried out in every educational program. Teachers can support their students' holistic growth by planning a wide range of extracurricular activities in addition to offering appropriate academic subjects that facilitate learning.

REFERENCE

- Abraham, L. B. (2001). The effects of multimedia on second language vocabulary learning and reading comprehension. University of New Mexico.
- Acha, J. (2009). The effectiveness of multimedia programmes in children's vocabulary learning, *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 40(1), 23–31
- Aribowo, P. N. (2008). The Effectiveness of teaching vocabulary using games to the third grade students of SD Negeri 03 Karangmojo, Karanganyar. Final Project Report, Universitas Sebalas Maret, Surakarta.
- Chang, M., Weng, C., & Zakharova, A. (2013). Vocabulary learning strategies and cognitive styles among junior high school students in Taiwan. Official Conference Proceedings, The Asian Conference on Language Learning, 443-455.
- Diamond, L., & Gutlohn, L. (2006). Teaching vocabulary. Retrieved on September 20, 2009, from <http://www.readingrockets.org/article/9943>.
- Garrett, H. E., & Woodworth, R. S. (1966). *Statistics in psychology and education*. New York: David McKay Company.
- Haynes, J., & Zacarian, D. (2010). *Teaching English language learners: Across the content areas*. Virginia: Alexandria.
- Jung, C. I. (2005). Using games to promote communicative skills in language learning. *The Internet TESL Journal*, 11(2) 50-62.
- Kavitha, K. (2007): A study on the difficulties in teaching-learning of English vocabulary in non-English medium high schools of Orissa. *Journal of Education and Psychology*, 21(2), 8-13.
- Kothari, D. S. (1966). Report of the education commission 1964-1966 (Education and national development). Delhi: Ministry of Education, GoI. Retrieved January 12, 2017 from
- Lewis, G., & Bedson, G. (1999). *Games for children - primary resource books for teachers*. Oxford University Press.
- Mohammad, & Amin. (2009). The effectiveness of customized course in teaching grammar. Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference of Teaching and Learning (ICTL. 2009), INTI University College, Malaysia.
- Nezhad, G.R.H.P., & Shokrpour, N. (2012). The impact of task type and cognitive style on vocabulary learning. *English Language Teaching*, 5(9), 17-23.
- Ranalli, J. (2008). Learning English with the sims: Exploiting authentic computer simulation games for L2 learning. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 21, 441-455.
- Scrivener, J. (1994). *Learning teaching: A guide book for English language teachers*. UK: Macmillan.