THE EFFECTIVE USE OF GAMES IN THE GERMAN AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (GFL) CLASSROOM

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This thesis considers the reasons why language learning games are a powerful and effective language teaching tool. It defines the term “language learning game” and examines its typical characteristics. The thesis also discusses the different types of language learning games. Language learning games are commonly understood to have motivational and enjoyable aspects. Despite cognitive and neurological evidence the instructional effectiveness of language learning games is still questioned by critics. This thesis strongly states that necessary research is missing to convince critics of games’ instructional value. Individual subchapters consider the implications of using language learning games in terms of the teacher’s role, the student’s role, productive error correction and cost-effectiveness. The thesis also discusses practical issues of how to make language learning games actually work in class. These include in-class organization, useful language for playing and organizing games, forms of classroom interaction and classroom setting. In addition to a presentation of decisive factors for the suitability of games, potential problems in the classroom are also discussed. In this thesis the author also presents a collection of accuracy-focused and fluency-focused language learning games that allow teachers to help students develop communicative competence in the foreign language.
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INTRODUCTION

At the elementary school level and in the field of special education, games have long been advocated as an effective tool to assist learning. Teachers of elementary school students, for example, use language learning games to keep restless children motivated and interested in the language. There is also overwhelming consensus among secondary school and college educators that language learning games are fun and motivating while allowing variation from a monotonous classroom routine. However, many teachers are still hesitant about implementing language learning games as a central teaching tool in the classroom.

The purpose of this thesis is twofold. First, it is to show teachers that language learning games should be considered for their enjoyable aspects but first and foremost because they represent an effective instructional tool that allows teachers to help students acquire active spoken mastery of a foreign language. Second, this thesis presents a collection of games through which teachers can enable their learners to communicate in a foreign language in real time. Thus, the main focus of this thesis is the development of students’ oral proficiency rather than their written skills.

In the first chapter of this thesis, the starting point is a definition of the term “language learning game” and a discussion of its typical characteristics. Chapter I is also concerned with the different types of language learning games and discusses the difficulty of coming up with a satisfactory categorization of games.

The second chapter is mainly concerned with the question of why to use language learning games and will highlight their advantages. I will draw attention to the difference between declarative and procedural knowledge and discuss the findings in modern neuroscience research concerning the effectiveness of language learning games. Furthermore, Chapter II
shows how positive emotions brought forth by games stimulate our brain and therefore facilitate and promote the learning process. This chapter will shed light on the new roles of teacher and student in a game-based classroom. In the second chapter, I will also discuss the stages of language learning at which games can be used and how productive error correction can happen when using them. Finally, in Chapter II I will discuss the findings of empirical studies concerning the usefulness and effectiveness of language learning games.

The third chapter moves the focus on games from “why to use” them to “how to use” them. An objective of this chapter is to illuminate important organizational steps that a teacher has to take to ensure smooth playing of games. This chapter also discusses different social forms of classroom interaction and seating arrangements required by language learning games. It will further raise the issue of problems typically associated with the use of language learning games (noise, time constraint, etc.). Moreover, Chapter III will endeavor to discuss decisive criteria for choosing a game, like the students’ age, their proficiency level, etc. Lastly, in Chapter III I will also show how easily a traditional language learning exercise can be converted into a language learning game.

Finally, Chapter IV, the last chapter of this thesis, will provide a practical collection of language learning games (focusing on grammar, vocabulary, communication and culture) that I have successfully applied in class. The presented examples of games are designed for teaching German. However, almost all of the games can be adapted for the use of other foreign languages. I have taught French and English, in addition to German, as a foreign language and I have used these games with all three languages. My language teaching experience has been with middle and high school students, college students, adult and senior learners. While writing this thesis, I have had all these types of learners in mind. I would like to invite all teachers to change and
adapt the ideas at their discretion to make the suggested games suitable for another foreign language and for their specific group of learners. Apart from factors like age, proficiency level, intellectual capabilities, social relationships and cultural background, every group is different concerning what they enjoy and what helps them learn most effectively.

In the end, a short apologetic note for all female readers. I chose to use the masculine pronoun “he” when referring to the “teacher,” “student” and “learner” even though these terms are not gender specific to males. This decision does not reflect my view on gender relations or a depreciatory perception of women. I am also referring to female teachers and learners; I opted for the pronoun “he” only to simplify matters.
CHAPTER I. WHAT IS A LANGUAGE LEARNING GAME?

Definition and characteristics of language learning games

What is a language learning game? Interestingly there is not a consistent definition of games in general. In 1986 Rixon came up with a definition for a game that will serve as a basis for discussion in this thesis. According to Rixon, a game is “a ‘closed activity’, that is, one which ends naturally when some goal or outcome has been achieved. There are players who compete or cooperate to achieve that outcome, and there are rules which restrict or determine how the players can work towards their ends” (“Language teaching games” 62).

Rixon goes on defining language learning games as “[…] games in which language provides either the major content or else the means by which the game is played’ (“Language teaching games” 62).

In order to illustrate this definition of language learning games more clearly, let us take a look at the individual characteristics revealed in the definition and demonstrate them with the help of a game that will be presented later in the chapter on games. Each language learning game has a number of distinct and clearly defined objectives. The language learning card game *Happy Families* consists of 8-10 families. Four cards within a similar category make up one family. The students get cards from other students by applying specific language functions and their objective is to collect as many whole families as possible. Therefore, language is a tool used in reaching the game’s objective. All language learning games have a closure. They finish at a specific point of time that is decided in advance, namely when the participants have met the objectives of the game. In the case of *Happy Families* the game finishes when students have exchanged their cards to the point that all families are matched. Rixon indicates that this game-specific characteristic of closure accommodates the teacher in his role as monitor. A lot of games
can for the most part run themselves without a lot of directed control from the teacher, because the clearly marked end of a game gives the students structure. Consequently the teacher can focus more on observing, counseling and assisting his students during the game playing process (Rixon, *How To Use 4*). When playing a language learning game students have to acknowledge and adhere to specific rules. Learners know what they are allowed or not allowed to do when they are trying to reach specific goals. In the case of *Happy Families* the rules are as follows: if a student has the requested card, he has to give it to the questioner. The questioner is allowed to continue to ask for cards until he does not receive a card he has asked for. Then the turn goes to the student who could not produce the requested card. Language learning games either require players to compete or to cooperate to achieve a specific goal. *Happy Families* is a competitive game. The student who has the most Families in the end is the winner.

**Types of language learning games**

Games can be classified into a lot of different categories. For example they can be categorized by the materials needed (card games, dice games, board games), the topic covered (family relationships, objects in the house, prepositions), the sort of activity performed by the students (ordering, ranking, asking for information, disagreeing), the main principle (question and answer games, guessing games, discussion games) or by the main language point practiced (listening, speaking, grammar, vocabulary, culture). Coming up with a satisfactory classification for games is tricky because all categories overlap in one way or another. In her review essay of books about different games books, Rixon calls our attention to this problem by showing how different authors organized their games. In their book *Games for Language Teaching*, Wright and al. classify their games into categories like ”Question and Answer Games,” “True/False
Games,” “Picture Games.” Their classification, however, forces the authors to give one category the vague title of “Miscellaneous Games.” Carrier also combined certain games in rather imprecise categories like “Language Points” or “Fillers” in his book *Take 5: Games and Activities for the Language Learner*. Greenall groups the games in his book *Language Games and Activities* according to “Topic Areas.” This classification, however, disregards the fact that the same game can be used in different topic areas (Rixon, “Language teaching games” 64). In their book *Spiele im Deutschunterricht*, Dauvillier and Lévy-Hillerich classify games according to the types of language skills that can be developed through the use of particular games. The grouping of games under categories like “Spiele zum Hören und Sprechen” and “Spiele zum Wortschatz” is also problematic because a game does not practice only one single skill. Although there is certainly a focus on one main language point, a game always requires a combination of skills simultaneously.

The only game categorization that seems satisfactory and helpful to me for practical teaching purposes is to divide them by focus on correctness of language or on successful communicative performance. The general distinction between accuracy and fluency in language teaching and learning comes into play here. The two types of games are equally valid and valuable because it is important to develop both, linguistic correctness as well as communicative effectiveness when learning a foreign language (Rixon, *How To Use* 22).

The two game types are used at different stages of the language learning process and different stages of students’ skill development. In order to develop a command of language skills at a lower level, students first manipulate individual linguistic features of the foreign language. Once they master these skills, they move on to develop skills at a higher level and carry out more complex communicative operations. However, once again the skills that students develop in
these two types of games overlap to a certain extent. It would be too simplistic to see linguistic skill development as a strict hierarchical process. For students to be able to produce correct language forms, they must to a certain extent already understand spoken or written communication. The primary skills that are to be developed through the particular games create the distinction between accuracy and communication focused games (Omaggio vi). For easier reference, I will designate these two types as “accuracy games” and “communication games” in the following paragraphs.

The primary purpose of accuracy games is to reinforce or extend the learners’ command of formally correct linguistic features. Depending on the stage of the language learning process during which games are used, students have to either show that they can passively understand the linguistic structure or actively supply correct language forms. The players are required to correctly recognize or say vocabulary words and grammatical forms or to correctly pronounce or spell words or phrases of language. Because the focus lies in producing singular pieces of correct language, accuracy games generally only involve single words or one-sentence utterances. Although the main focus is on form rather than content, accuracy games require students to convey a message and communicate some information. Repetition plays a vital role in accuracy games. In a way they are an enjoyable modification of traditional language drills. Accuracy games are usually directed by the teacher who, as a judge, decides who and what is right and gives points accordingly (Rixon, *How To Use* 22-23).

The main aim of communication games is to help students develop communication skills. Although correct language is still important, communication games emphasize a successful exchange of information and ideas. Content is more important than form. The players have succeeded in reaching the objective of the game and the communicative goal has been met if
another player understands the message that was to be conveyed and reacts accordingly.

Communication games require a greater, more varied range of language and more complex, freer communicative operations than accuracy games. Consequently, students are more likely to make mistakes when playing them. However, mistakes are not a problem provided they do not distort the message to a degree that it becomes incomprehensible and communication thus fails. The overall meaning of the message the players communicate has to be clear even if the language that is used is not perfect and error free. The success or failure of a communicative operation becomes immediately visible to the players as the other players react or do not react appropriately. Therefore, the students can judge themselves if they have reached the objective of the game and they can evaluate their own success by assessing how quickly and efficiently they conveyed their message. The teacher’s role changes from director and judge of the game to observer, counselor and language informant (Rixon, *How To Use* 27, 30).
CHAPTER II. THE ROLE OF GAMES IN THE LANGUAGE LEARNING PROCESS

Why use games in language teaching?

Everyone that has studied a foreign language knows that it can be a very difficult and demanding endeavor at times. The expression “No pain, no gain” is a point of view commonly held by language teachers. Teachers often only credit games for their fun factor and, therefore, tend to use them merely as time-filling activities with no teaching value. Some teachers even refuse to use games since they consider them a waste of time. This subchapter aims to show that games are not an alternative to work in class but that they are in fact an effective pedagogical device that helps students on their way to becoming proficient language users. As the game manufacturer Parker Brothers puts it, “Playing games is fun, and […] many games instruct and uplift while entertaining” (qtd. in Palmer: 5).

Although the element of fun should not be the only reason to use games in the language classroom, it is a valid reason. The word “game-playing” provokes many positive associations in our head. We immediately think of fun, leisure time, get-togethers with friends, etc. When we hear the word “studying,” however, a lot of powerful negative images and associations are activated in our brain (i.e. sitting still, feeling bored, getting bad grades, etc.). Normally, when a student is told to study new vocabulary words, he will not be very happy. However, when he is told to play a game with new words, he will have a much more positive attitude towards the learning material and the task and consequently memorize the new words faster and better. The reason for this is the so-called “affective filter” which can either promote or prevent comprehensible input from being used for language acquisition and which will be discussed in
further detail in a following subchapter (Macedonia, *Sprachspiele 5*). Thus, playing games can make the sometimes difficult language learning process a fun and enjoyable experience.

Considering that language learning requires a great deal of hard work, it is obvious that teachers have to be constantly motivating the students in order to keep their interest and effort levels high. Games offer competition as a logical motive for using the target language. Lee explains that the competitive element in games also spurs students’ motivation as “[…] the essence of many games lies in outstripping, in friendly fashion, someone else’s performance, or in bettering one’s own [performance], as in the world of sport” (1). In addition to that, competitive games capture students’ attention. Learners have to wait for turns and pay attention to what their opponents say. In order to detect errors made by their opponents and consequently to take the lead in a game, students have to show increased attention and are more likely to stay on task.

Dorry ties the positive and motivating aspect of competitive games to another advantage: “Young learners, especially, have such a high competitive spirit that nearly any type of practice can become a contest in which participants learn, almost without realizing what is happening to them” (v). When playing games, students learn the language without realizing it.

Lee points out a further advantage. When language learners play a game, their focus is led away from the study of correct language forms; like advanced learners do, they use language receptively or productively instead of thinking about learning linguistic forms (2-3). Wright puts it in this way, “Games provide one way of helping the learners to experience language rather than to merely study it” (*Games for Language Learning* 2).

“Practice makes perfect” - all of us are aware that practice is of central importance in any skill acquisition and consequently that practice is also the driving force behind the acquisition of
foreign languages. The repeated use of language forms, in other words a great deal of practice, is necessary in order to develop linguistic competence or improve language performance. Similar to conventional drills, games facilitate a very concentrated and intense practice of language. Games’ main advantage over drills is that they offer meaningful language practice. As Wright puts it, “By making language convey information and opinion, games provide the key features of ‘drill’ with the added opportunity to sense the working of language as living communication. Games involve the emotions, and the meaning of the language is thus more vividly experienced. It is, for this reason, probably better absorbed than learning based on mechanical drills” (Games for Language Learning 2). A lot of researchers with their respective theories and approaches (for example N. Chomsky’s language acquisition device (LAD), S. Krashen’s input hypothesis, T.D. Terrell’s natural approach, and B. VanPatten’s input processing) agree that students learn and acquire a foreign language most quickly and efficiently when exposed to meaningful input. Lee argues that teachers should not get rid of mechanical drills entirely. But he agrees with Wright that games provide a higher quality form of practice, “[…] it seems to be repetition of successful and interesting communication which counts and which has the most encouraging, ‘language advancing’, and motivating effect” (3).

Danesi points out another reason why games should be accepted as effective teaching tools in the foreign language classroom: games create a relaxed classroom atmosphere and reduce students’ anxiety level. A low-anxiety environment not only makes the acquisition of input more likely (due to the abovementioned affective filter) but students will also learn faster and better. A relaxed classroom atmosphere gives students a feeling of comfort and encourages them to express themselves. Introverted students are often hesitant to speak in a conventional classroom environment. When playing a game, however, they are very active and eager to
communicate (42). Cortez claims that this is because their “[…] attention has been diverted away from […] [themselves] and towards the goal of the game” (206). Abt comes up with another explanation why shy students often turn into very eager participants within the context of a game: “This may be because all those involved are playing roles and normal relationships are suspended – risk-taking and the possibility of losing face are accepted because ‘it’s only a game’” (66). So-called icebreakers, which are fun, amusing, and sometimes just plain silly games, have become a popular way to start meetings or training sessions. Their use even in the business world is proof that games help build a relaxed atmosphere and loosen up tension. These short games generate enthusiasm, get people in a mood to participate, make them feel comfortable with their surroundings and peers, and consequently turn people into more receptive and productive participants.

Furthermore, games facilitate learning because they involve more senses. Traditional teaching techniques mostly favor auditory and visual learners and the high numbers of kinesthetic learners are often neglected in the conventional language classroom. Most games have some type of hands-on element (cards, game pieces, etc.), which facilitates the learning process for kinesthetic and tactual learners who cannot internalize information or skills unless they touch, feel or experience the material as they learn or use it in real-life activities. Although we all learn differently and have a preferred way of learning, studies have shown that the more senses we utilize the more successful we are at learning something or retaining information. This becomes obvious when we think back on our childhood and how we remembered childhood songs or nursery rhymes. The words were usually combined with movements like jumping, stepping, or stomping. Although years have passed in between, we can still remember each line
of the songs or rhymes. Benjamin Franklin’s maxim probably summarizes this advantage of games best, “Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn.”

Most of the time a game does not just focus on and train a single skill, but some of the four skills (speaking, writing, listening and reading) are applied and developed at the same time (Lee 3).

Moreover, games can add elements of innovation and diversity to a sometimes monotonous and mostly very formal process of language instruction.

Although the highly valuable function of games as “diagnostic tools” is hardly ever mentioned in literature it is important to note that games allow teachers to discern a student’s specific language deficiencies or difficulties with particular language points (Hadfield, Intermediate v). Consequently teachers can provide appropriate assistance in the area of language difficulty. In addition to this, winning or losing games enables students to assess their stage of language learning. They recognize that it is not the teacher that gives them bad grades. Games show them that the positive or negative outcome is a consequence of their own activity. The teacher’s traditional role as a judge is therefore diminished.

Macedonia suggests that games also allow the proceduralization of declarative knowledge in language learners (“Games” 135). This process, elaborated on in a subsequent subchapter, is essential as it enables students to speak without consciously thinking about grammar and vocabulary and thus communicate in real time.

That fact that most games require students to work in pairs or groups brings about many advantages, which will be dealt with in greater depth in a following chapter. The student-centered environment of games makes the teacher give up his traditional role as the “sage on the stage” and become the students’ “guide on the side” instead. This leads to a positive change in
the teacher-student relationship. Lee claims, “[…] games bring teacher and learners into a more agreeable and more intimate relationship, and that helps to ease the process of learning and teaching” (12). Moreover, games oblige all learners in a group to be active and consequently the amount of student speaking time increases. When playing a game with a partner or in a small group, shy and introverted students are more confident to take part. Furthermore, games allow peer teaching and peer correction (more proficient learners help less proficient ones) and give students an opportunity to develop team spirit and cooperation skills. Finally, having students play games in small groups allows a teacher to accommodate the different learning pace of his students.

The above discussion shows that the advantages of games are wide-ranging. The benefits can be summed up in 20 points:

- Games are fun and amusing. The acquisition of input is therefore more likely.
- Games are motivating. They provide students an incentive to keep up with the hard work and strain of learning a foreign language by creating a competitive environment to use the target language. The competitive component of games also increases students’ attention.
- Games are engaging and make students forget that they are actually learning.
- Games make students focus on the use of language, rather than on the language forms, so that they unconsciously apply grammar and vocabulary.
- Games are an opportunity for intensive practice.
- Games bring the foreign language to life by creating a meaningful, real-life context for using the foreign language.
- Games reduce anxiety and stress in the classroom, which helps learners remember things faster and better.
• Games allow students to learn using all their senses.
• Games allow language practice in various skills at the same time (speaking, writing, listening and reading).
• Games are a positive diversion from the regular language class routine.
• Games are an evaluative tool for the teacher and the student.
• Games allow the proceduralization of declarative knowledge (see subsequent subchapter).
• Games create a learner-centered environment because they are usually played in groups or pairs.
• Games positively influence the teacher-student relationship.
• Games engage all learners and involve them actively rather than passively.
• Games increase the amount of student speaking time.
• Games encourage shy students to participate.
• Games promote and increase cooperation among students in groups and create a feeling of team spirit.
• Games allow peer teaching and peer correction.
• Games allow interior differentiation and accommodate the different learning paces of students.

It is undeniable that games have a high pedagogical value in the foreign language classroom when they are appropriately chosen and used. Hadfield’s claim is valid that “Games should be regarded as an integral part of the language syllabus, not as an amusing activity for Friday afternoon or for the end of term” (Intermediate v). Lee admits that there are actually end-of-term games and party games that can be occasionally used in the classroom as time fillers,
reward or for pure enjoyment “[…] but on the whole games […] should be central to the language teaching programme” (3). In order to ensure all the suggested benefits of games, consideration must be given to the questions of which games are appropriate and when and how they should be used. These issues will be addressed in the following chapter.

Declarative versus procedural knowledge

It goes without saying that one of a teacher’s hardest tasks in a language classroom is to help students develop spoken fluency and accurate speech. Very often learners are not able to speak a language fluently after years of instruction. They fail to retain vocabulary words, are hesitant about verb, noun, or adjective endings and have problems forming sentences in real time. As Macedonia points out, there are two reasons for this problem. First, in a lot of classrooms foreign languages are still taught as theoretical knowledge (declarative knowledge). Second, the types of exercises used in the foreign language classroom do not help students to transfer classroom learning to real communication, in other words to develop procedural knowledge. A targeted use of games in language teaching allows the proceduralization of declarative knowledge in language learners, which enables them to speak without consciously thinking about grammar and vocabulary. In this way, the students also communicate in real time (Macedonia, “Games” 135).

What are declarative and procedural knowledge? Gagné et al. define declarative knowledge as “knowing that something is the case,” in other words “knowledge of facts, theories, events, and objects” and procedural knowledge as “knowing how to do something” namely “motor skills [like riding a bike] and cognitive skills [like reading]” (60). Gass points out that declarative knowledge is accessible to conscious awareness. This means that we can
produce information when asked for it. Procedural knowledge, however, is almost inaccessible (242). To illustrate the relationship between these two types of knowledge let us take the example of learning how to drive a car. To begin with, we get theoretical instruction (declarative knowledge). We learn to identify the different pedals, what they do and how to operate them. We are taught that the clutch is the pedal to the far left and that it allows us to shift gears. We learn that we first have to hold the clutch pedal to the floor, move the gear shift to first gear, slowly release the clutch and simultaneously push down on the gas pedal. This declarative knowledge has to be proceduralized. We have to practice driving until we can steer a car without consciously thinking of what we have to do next. Why is this important in respect to foreign language learning? The answer is simple: in order for foreign language production to be successful, declarative knowledge has to be transformed into procedural knowledge. We know, for example, that in German an adjective in the dative is formed by adding -en. When German native speakers describe a person or an object in the dative case they say automatically “Ich gebe dem alten Mann eine Zeitung” without ever having heard about or having learned the rule for applying German adjective endings. They know “how to do something”; in other words, they have procedural knowledge regarding their native language at their disposal. Likewise, language learners who are proficient in German are able to add correct endings to adjectives and can perform innumerable other actions in the foreign language without thinking of the rules all the time. They too possess procedural knowledge. Macedonia points out that “For this and other reasons, many language and cognitive scientists assert, and provide evidence, that language is procedural knowledge” (“Games” 136).

When we learn a foreign language it is not enough to know about rules of the language. Having declarative knowledge about a language does not mean that we can actually speak it. For
it is not possible to consciously apply all necessary rules fast enough to communicate in real time. Our declarative knowledge has to be proceduralized. In other words the initially conscious action of adding -en to an adjective in the dative has to become an unconscious process, or automated. Anderson summarizes it this way: “Skill development […] starts out as the interpretive application of declarative knowledge; this is compiled into a procedural form; and this procedural form undergoes a process of continual refinement of conditions and raw increase in speed” (255).

The identification of both types of knowledge allows a teacher to choose an appropriate teaching method according to his main goal. In communicative foreign language teaching for example the primary goal is to automate language skills. Therefore, the development of procedural knowledge is necessary. Teaching history, however, asks for more declarative knowledge and not as much procedural knowledge. Historical information is the object of thought and a history teacher wants his students to know facts, “that something is the case” rather than “how to do something.” Having students develop practical skills is not the main concern of a history class. However, Jiamu admits that “[…] contact with elaborate experiences (e.g. study trips) can make declarative acquisition more efficient, i.e. it is ‘easier’ to learn of things when you have prior meaningful connection to them available via past experience” (560). Even though a lot of reformist pedagogic approaches and teaching techniques have found their way into foreign language classrooms in the past years, often the instruction still focuses on the transmission of rules, in other words declarative knowledge. This type of instruction is valid for ancient languages like Latin and Ancient Greek, because they only require students to read and translate texts. Modern languages, however, aim at the development of spoken fluency and therefore a proceduralization of linguistic knowledge is necessary.
How can students’ declarative knowledge be proceduralized? The answer is simply practice. To illustrate this point let us again take the example of driving a car. The goal of any driver is not to talk about the different functions of the clutch and gas pedal (the “grammar” of car driving) but knowing how to use them. Learning to drive a manual transmission car in an automated way requires quite a bit of practice. The same is true for foreign languages. Learners do not need to be able to speak about rules that they have learned. Their goal is to produce language in order to communicate effectively. Needless to say, repeated practice is also central when learning a foreign language. Students need to automate their language skills because, as Bloom claims “the mastery of any skill […] depends on the ability to perform it unconsciously with speed and accuracy while consciously carrying on other brain functions” (qtd. in Jiamu: 563). Once students have applied correct adjective endings a lot of times, the process becomes automated and they do not think about the rules anymore.

Marton describes the effective stages of grammar teaching as follows: “[…] the first stage should emphasize the noticing of the target [language] structure and the establishing of the form-meaning relationship, the second stage should involve the proceduralisation of relevant declarative knowledge through various types of production practice” (1). This leads to the question of what types of activities allow the proceduralization of declarative knowledge or automated application of grammar rules. Macedonia argues that conventional fill-in-the-blanks exercises do not allow students to automate speech production. The explanation for her claim is convincing: “[…] the brain can only (re)produce what it has learned. If its task is to fill in blanks with verb endings, it will be able to handle the task. However, this does not imply that it will be able to attach correct verb endings on demand in real time at speech tempo” (“Games” 137). A proceduralization of spoken language can only been achieved through oral activities for “[…]
with this type of practice [written exercises] the retrieval of learned material is too slow and often too incomplete to enable successful speech” (“Games” 135). Language games allow intensive oral practice of grammar structures and vocabulary. This repetition takes place in the manner it needs to be practiced, that is, spoken language. In addition to that, the amount of repetition that games provide is far greater than the repetition from conventional written exercises.

Summing up, we can see that the distinction between declarative and procedural knowledge is crucial for every teacher, as it allows him to make full use of learners’ inherent abilities. Depending on the goal toward which he wants to train his students, he chooses appropriate teaching techniques, strategies, and resources. Thus, students acquire knowledge and language skills with comparatively little effort and make progress more rapidly than if they simply learn with written exercises. By optimizing the instruction and the acquisition process, teaching and learning outcomes are maximized and better results are achieved with less effort.

The role of emotion in learning with games

The finding that feelings or emotions play a crucial role in any learning process is not new. Most likely we have all experienced the relationship between emotion and learning back in our own school days. We remembered things better that were taught in an engaging and interesting way and in an atmosphere that made us feel relaxed and confident. Facts presented in a boring lecture most likely did not stick in our minds. Likewise we would feel very uncomfortable when a teacher called us out in class for not knowing a fact.

Stephen Krashen’s concept of the Affective Filter aims to explain why emotion can have such a big influence on language learning success or failure. According to Krashen, language
acquisition can only be successful if the affective conditions in the classroom are optimal. This is the case if “[…] the acquirer is motivated; he has self-confidence and a good self-image; and his level of anxiety is low” (Hadley 62). However, the acquisition process will fail if the learner is bored, angry, tense or anxious. The reason for this is the Affective Filter. Krashen views students’ emotions and attitudes as an imaginary barrier, an adaptable filter that lets the input necessary for acquisition pass into the brain or prevents it from passing. If a student has negative emotions the affective filter is high. Even if it is understood, input is screened out and made unavailable for acquisition. Students with a positive attitude, however, have a low affective filter and the input will reach the brain. Krashen argues that a positive attitude not only lowers students’ affective filter but also makes students seek and consequently obtain more input (Gass 402-403).

In order to better understand the correlation between cognition and emotion that Krashen’s concept tries to account for, it seems legitimate to have a closer look at how our brain works. Until recently, it was believed that memory is located in specific regions of the brain. New evidence suggests that memory is not restricted to a specific area of our brain. Rather it is the result of an interconnection of nerve cells found throughout the brain. When information from the outside world flows into our brain through our peripheral organs (eyes, mouth, ears, nose, etc.) these nerve cells or neurons are stimulated. Consequently they develop extensions called dendrites. At the end of dendrites, we find synapses across which information flows from one neuron to another. When we learn things, neurons send messages repeatedly back and forth to other neurons. After a while connections or pathways between the neurons are formed and neural networks are created in the brain. These neural networks store information. In order to learn something new, neural pathways and connections among existing networks have to be
established. Once such a neural network is stable and allows the recall of information, a learning process can be considered successful (Macedonia, “Games” 136). These new findings about the brain can help us understand two important assumptions made in the previous subchapter. Firstly, time is needed to establish new neural networks and connections between existing networks. Therefore learning takes time. Secondly, students need practice in order to strengthen neural pathways and networks.

Positive emotions reinforce brain activity. A positive emotional assessment of a situation leads to a growth of synapses, an enhanced transmission of information in neural networks, and the formation of new networks. Negative emotions, however, lead to a release of stress hormones which prevent information flow between neurons (Macedonia, “Games” 139).

The awareness that emotion can either enhance or restrain learning on a neurological level is important for teachers. Although teachers can hardly influence students’ fundamental motivation they can amplify the learning process by stimulating positive emotions with students. Teachers should try to create an animating, supportive and relaxed classroom environment that increases students’ motivation and self-confidence and that reduces their anxiety.

Motivation seems to be the second most important success factor in learning a foreign language, only beaten by aptitude (Gass 426). Students who are motivated learn a foreign language faster and more substantially, which allows them a more successful performance in the foreign language. Since learning a foreign language is a long-term endeavor, a great amount of motivation is also necessary to keep up the strain of studying the language. A high degree of self-confidence is important as it increases students’ willingness to take risks. Risk-taking is an important learning strategy that allows students “[…] to improve their own progress in developing skills in a second or foreign language” (Oxford 518). Anxiety can have a beneficial
but also inhibitory effect. Like stress, if it stays at a low level it can aid performance. A high level of anxiety, however, can have a detrimental effect. As Gass puts it, “[…] if one doesn’t care at all, there is little reason to try to do well. On the other hand, too much concern about failure can get in the way of success” (400-401). Anxious students are not only hesitant to speak. According to Hoffmann they also tend to neglect semantic content and pay more attention to form than meaning (261).

Games are influential tools that help a teacher to create optimal affective conditions in the classroom as they motivate students, provide them with self-confidence and alleviate their anxiety.

The teacher’s role in games

Teachers are often expected to be constantly actively engaged and to interact with their students. When games are integrated into the curriculum, the teacher's role is still important, but there is a shift from simple classroom instruction and the distribution of judgments to the design and coordination of carefully crafted activities (games) that actively engage the students and put them in the center of the learning process. The teacher does not need to direct everything every moment and is, in fact, required to step back, taking on a new role in the classroom with many different facets. Eloide Kilp enumerates 13 different roles that a teacher is charged with when deciding to integrate language learning games into the curriculum (97-99).

First, the teacher is charged with the role of an organizer, an educational manager (role 1), determining the demand of games, analyzing their cost-benefit-ratio and ensuring the game runs smoothly. Doing that first requires assessing the suitability of the game (age, level of
education, linguistic competence, intellectual abilities, cultural and social background of the
players) and preparing explanations that are necessary so that a game can be played successfully.

When playing a game, students expect a person to issue proper orders and instructions
that they have to follow. The teacher therefore also has to take the role of an authoritative figure,
a referee or arbiter (role 2) who distributes rewards and sanctions.

Although it is not the primary role of the teacher in a game-based classroom context
anymore, the teacher still acts as a transmitter of knowledge (role 3), informing the students
about the content, the structure, the course, and the benefits of a specific game.

As a mediator and negotiator (role 4) the teacher is responsible for mediating between all
players, managing group processes and group dynamics. Sometimes a teacher has to intervene as
a negotiator in order to guarantee a smooth course and successful conclusion of the game.

The teacher also acts as a facilitator of learning (role 5). The function of this role is to
create and set up learning materials and environments that are conducive to optimal learning.
The teacher should provide learning opportunities in the classroom that enable students to
engage with one another and to develop their understanding and skills in the language being
taught.

The use of games in language teaching also entails acting as an informant or language
consultant (role 6). If students have a question or need help with vocabulary or sentence
structures in order to be able to communicate effectively during a game playing process, they can
consult the teacher as a language resource. However, the teacher should only become active on
request. Rixon explains: “Part of the training consists in the struggling and experimenting with
the language to try to get the message across” (How To Use 63-64). Instead of providing new
linguistic input to the students that they do not necessarily need, the teacher should always try to
give the students hints so that they can communicate their ideas using expressions they already know. As Rixon puts it, “The aim should always be to show students that they can manage in more situations than they think they can” (How To Use 64). In a game-based context the teacher is also actively engaged as an observer, monitor and corrector (role 7) during the playing process, monitoring the course of the game and analyzing potential problems (errors) that occur. As will be discussed in more detail in a following subchapter the teacher either provides quick and immediate error correction or conducts a feedback session where the problems that arise are discussed and solved (errors corrected) once the game is over.

The fact that the teacher is a specialist in the specific field that is being practiced explains the significance of the role of an assessor and mentor (role 8). The teacher is expected to advise the students and to help them solve problems. Especially competitive games lead to disagreements among players that they cannot resolve on their own. A player’s answer could be considered too far-fetched by competitors and is therefore rejected. In such cases the teacher has to settle the conflict. When doing this it is, however, as Rixon suggests, “[…] much more effective to try to guide the group towards its own solution than to impose an immediate decision of your own […] [by requiring] a player to justify his move to you before you give your casting vote” (How To Use 67). But the teacher is the last and ultimate person to judge the correctness of the language used by the students.

In the capacity of a coach (role 9) the teacher observes, supervises and counsels learning processes and tries to help students become independent learners and eventually undertake learning tasks on their own.

The teacher also acts as a trainer (role 10) by giving students practice and training in specific abilities and skills.
In the role of a motivator (role 11) it is a teacher’s duty to explain the profit of acquiring specific knowledge and the advantages of the use of games in the learning process, and to forecast the benefits and possibilities the acquired knowledge will provide.

As an animator and activator (role 12) the teacher initiates games, encourages students to actively participate and lowers the students’ inhibitions.

Finally the teacher also acts as a judge and evaluator (role 13) who evaluates the success of the learning process, makes a cost-benefit analysis and, based on professional judgment, provides suggestions on how to improve the learning process.

Rixon also mentions the role of the teacher as a quizmaster, as a master of ceremonies who directs the game and who is in charge of asking questions of the students and challenging them (How To Use 59-60). Some games allow the teacher to step back after a few rounds so a student can assume the role of the quizmaster. In the role of a quizmaster a teacher or alternately a student can keep the learners engaged by using attention-seeking, slightly manipulative game-show-like elements like the dramatic pause before telling them whether an answer was right or wrong, or a dramatic gesture when finally approving or rejecting an answer or when writing the awarded points on the scoreboard. Rixon argues that “[Students] often enjoy some pantomime from the teacher – a thumbs-down sign, for example, an exaggerated grimace, or perhaps even a small bell for the right answers and a hooter for grotesquely wrong ones […]” (How To Use 59-60).

Dauvillier and Lévy-Hillerich claim that the teacher can also take the role of a co-participant in a game, depending on the optimal group size. If a game requires an intimate group size of 4-5 players the teacher’s presence and participation might lead to a feeling of uneasiness among students. However, if a game is designed for a large audience, the participation of the
teacher can loosen up the relationship between teacher and students (37). Some teachers do not feel comfortable putting themselves on the same level as students by participating in games. In fact, it can be hard for a teacher to create a relaxed atmosphere and to make students feel comfortable but at the same time retain a level of respect and remain in control of the classroom. Taking part in games as a teacher is definitely not the magic formula for developing a positive teacher-student relationship. Every teacher is different in temperament and style, and some teachers prefer a more formal and distant relationship with their students, while others prefer a more relaxed and casual one. There is no one correct decision for a teacher when it comes to participating in games. However, a teacher should never try to be the students' best friend. It is better to be friendly and approachable but at the same time always keep in mind who is the teacher.

It goes without saying that the role of the teacher greatly depends on the type of game being played. Teachers take on a different role during games that focus on communicative effectiveness and those whose main focus is on correctness. During communication games teachers act most importantly as monitor and resource center, supplying language needed by the students. They should interfere as little as possible as the focus is on communication and cooperation between the students. During games that require students to produce correct language the teacher’s main role is that of an authoritative evaluator who judges what is correct and who supervises the game-playing process.

As can be seen from the discussion above, the use of games implies an enhanced and more demanding role for the teacher. Many teachers are terrified of deviating from their regular role by integrating a completely new procedure of language instruction in their classroom, namely game playing. Palmer and Rodgers explain that for a teacher, playing games “[…] may
be doubly threatening in that the language teacher is being simultaneously urged to take on a new focus in language instruction […] as well as a new procedure (game-playing)” (10). That is why it is advisable that games are incorporated into a conventional curriculum and that teachers work slowly towards the integration of games if they have never used them before. Palmer and Rodgers suggest, “[…] if an activity involves reasonably familiar classroom procedures involving reasonably familiar instructional goals […], the initial teacher and student Angst can be minimized” (10). In addition to that it is even more important that the teacher is well acquainted with every game used, defines its objectives and knows how it pertains to the topic to be learned. Cruickshank and Telfer argue that half-knowledge of a game and ignorance about its pedagogic instructional value are most often the causes of teachers’ distrust and hesitation about the use of games in their classroom (77).

The student’s role in games

As the role of the teacher changes, a new role for the student also evolves in a game-based classroom. As previously mentioned, games involve a shift of focus from the teacher and his teaching to the learners and their learning. Games create a learner-centered classroom. Not the teacher but the students are now in charge of communication and therefore they take control and responsibility from the teacher. In the game-based, learner-centered classroom the students’ role changes from being passive recipients of knowledge imparted by the teacher to being active agents and personally engaged participants in learning activities. Importance is also attributed to the learning process itself. Games not only help students learn content through personal engagement, but they also assist them in developing learning skills, “learning how to learn.” This
is particularly important in an age of unprecedented technological and social change which requires lifelong learning.

Cuseo explains why a learner-centered classroom is so beneficial. It utilizes four research-based learning principles that increase student motivation and facilitate student learning and retention: active involvement, social integration, self-reflection and personal validation (49-50). If students are actively involved, their learning is more profound and longer-lasting. In addition to that, interaction and cooperation between students enhance learning. Learning is also reinforced if students consider their learning strategies and experiences. Last, but not least, if students feel important, influential and appreciated as individuals, their learning is also intensified.

McKeachie’s statement best summarizes the significance of the new, active role of students in the game-based classroom: “If we want students to become more effective in meaningful learning and thinking, they need to spend more time in active, meaningful learning and thinking – not just sitting passively receiving information” (77).

Productive error correction

The fear of making mistakes is one of the biggest factors that inhibit language learners and keep them from using the foreign language in the classroom. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the use of games in foreign language teaching reduces students’ anxiety about negative evaluation and judgment in public. However, many teachers feel that they have to correct mistakes immediately so that the errors made do not reinforce incorrect language production. In fact, error correction does have a place in a game-oriented classroom and it is definitely necessary. The assumption that learners just have to use the language and the rest all comes by
itself does not seem convincing. As Danesi suggests, “[…] errors and wrong guesses should be treated as any error in the classroom – as an integral part of the learning process” (7). How a teacher deals with errors occurring in games greatly depends on where a game is located in the fluency-accuracy spectrum. Correction plays a different role in a game that emphasizes the production of correct language than in one that focuses on successful communication between students.

Games that call attention to correctness of language produced by students and that draw on language drills definitely require immediate correction of wrong forms brought forward by the learners. The teacher has to make clear to the learners that a wrong form or structure was used. However, lengthy explanations why something was wrong should be avoided during the playing process and an explanatory feedback session should take place once the game is over; otherwise the competitive nature of the game would be spoiled and the game would be delayed. Rixon points out how students can even learn from their mistakes through an immediate, but not elaborated correction: “Students who fail to get an answer right will very often of their own accord listen more carefully to their fellow players in an effort to find out for themselves where they went wrong, so that they can do better on their next turn” (How To Use 60).

When students are involved in a communication game the teacher’s role as corrector is definitely different. Communication games often call for experiments made by students with language and the use of linguistic elements that are beyond the learners’ knowledge. It goes without saying that students will repeatedly make errors when exploring and testing out new language structures. Rixon stresses, “[…] error is an essential part of the experimentation […] provided that the errors are not so serious that they lead to breakdown in communication” (How To Use 64). The role of errors in a communication game explains the role of the teacher as a
corrector. In general the teacher should not interrupt and correct the students because this would interfere with fluency and would ruin the game atmosphere. Rixon even goes as far as saying “[…] students may even get the idea that the games have only been set to trap them into mistakes, and if this happens, they may become too self-conscious to get anything very much out of the activities” (How To Use 64). What is crucial is that the students get the message across. It is not necessary for the teacher to act as an evaluator, as the students can judge their own success. In case of minor errors, however, it is perfectly acceptable for a teacher to provide a quick correction while moving around between the groups. If students use a wrong language form, which happens quite often in the heat of battle, the teacher should correct them as indirectly as possible. As Rixon argues, “[…] just a look at the offender as a signal that something is wrong often elicits the correct form, for example” (How To Use 65). In communication games, just as in games focusing on correctness, if an error correction requires a detailed explanation, the teacher should just make a note and discuss it during an error feedback session after the game is over. It is advisable for every teacher to have a monitoring sheet to collect repeated errors and to make notes concerning areas of difficulty they perceive while moving between the groups. Rixon points out two very important advantages of monitoring sheets. First, difficulties with specific language deficiencies that the teacher never expected might become clear. Second, a teacher might find out that a certain game could be used to practice a particular language point to which the teacher had not yet related it (How To Use 65-67). Having a general follow-up correction session allows all students to benefit from an analysis of mistakes that were made.

Peer correction can be another effective tool in the cooperative classroom context that games produce. Very often learners do notice mistakes made by their co-players and
interestingly they correct each other without specific instruction from the teacher. Most students feel less exposed and intimidated when corrected by a peer in their group. Chater mentions another advantage of peer-correction: “The genuine sharing of the responsibility of assessment conveys to the pupils the sense that what they have to say about their own or their peers’ work is important too” (qtd. in Mishra: 68).

Correction activities can be valid and effective games in themselves. The Grammar/Sentence Auction, for example, that will be presented in the games chapter is a fun game during which students bid for correct sentences and have to correct common and recurring grammar mistakes.

Although error correction in a game-based context certainly requires some fingertip feel, it is necessary. As a rule of thumb Rixon suggests, “You should use your judgment about whether intervening will disrupt the game too much, and if there is a danger of this, don’t do it” (How To Use 65).

When to use games

A lot of teachers are still hesitant about implementing language-learning games as a central teaching tool in their class. They tend to use them only as a peripheral element, as a time-filler at the end of class or to keep fast students busy while weaker ones catch up on an assigned task. Rixon shows that games can be used effectively at all phases of a language class.

New language is usually taught in three stages: a presentation stage, a controlled practice stage and a communicative practice stage. In the presentation phase the teacher presents a model of the new piece of language in order to help the students comprehend and take in the meaning, form and use of it. A lot of repetition is necessary until students grasp the correct meaning and
usage of the language. In this first phase the students are not yet able to produce the new piece of language themselves. They respond to the teacher’s cues and demonstrate their understanding by calling out simple answers like yes/no or single words, or by performing simple actions. The teacher is in charge of directing and controlling the game, judging answers and reactions and giving immediate feedback on correctness (Rixon, *How To Use* 69-74).

During the controlled or guided practice stage students begin generating and using the new language themselves. They try to imitate and transform the presented model so that they can respond appropriately in a specific situation. The teacher still directs the game and makes corrections, but students interact with each other and not just with the teacher (Rixon, *How To Use* 70, 75).

In the last stage, the communicative or free practice stage, the students are prepared to confidently apply the newly acquired language in a freer and more flexible way. They must apply the language to attain/obtain a practical goal. The teacher does not directly control the game or act as judge and evaluator anymore. He steps back and the students interact with each other either as individuals, in pairs, or in small groups. In this final phase the teacher takes on a role as observer and language consultant, moving among the students. As the teacher cannot give undivided attention to all students, they have to assess their own success themselves.

Using games for revision of already covered material at the beginning or at the end of a class has so far been the most accepted practice. Introductory review games have a lot of advantages. Students are more motivated to work in the class after they have experienced a feeling of success from a game and they can concentrate better after being accustomed to the subject. In addition, the teacher can find out whether the students already have a command of something or whether they need some further reinforcement and additional assistance. When
choosing a game for revision it is important to make sure that all learners are involved and that the game does not exceed a time limit of 5-7 minutes (Dauvillier 45).

Using games as a diagnostic tool at the beginning of a new language class is also highly effective for a teacher. Having students play communication games allows a teacher to evaluate the oral proficiency of his students in a quick and at the same time inconspicuous way. By recording students’ errors and language deficiencies while monitoring them, a teacher knows right from the start which language areas he will have to review again or still cover in his future classes (Rixon, How To Use 82).

The cost-effectiveness of games

The most frequent question brought up by critics is, “Are games played in the classroom really worth all the trouble?” The cost of language learning games is undoubtedly high. Abt distinguishes between the monetary costs of a game (i.e. materials needed for making it) and non-monetary costs like time, energy and intellectual resources needed by the teacher and also by the students when playing the game (111). Sometimes it takes a teacher several hours to prepare one single game and the students one hour to play it. It is thus not surprising that a lot of critics raise the question, “Can the desired learning results be achieved more easily through the traditional methods?” A number of educators, myself included, would answer no to this question, but critics would still be tough to convince due to their differing outlook on language learning. Many teachers still equate knowing a foreign language with knowing about and being able to reproduce the rules of the language. However, as already discussed in an earlier subchapter, knowledge of a foreign language is communicating in real time while unconsciously applying all of the necessary rules. The subsequently necessary proceduralization of declarative knowledge
can be achieved not through conventional filling-in-blanks-exercises, but through intensive oral practice which games can provide.

Unfortunately, hardly any empirical research has actually been done on the instructional effectiveness of language learning games and Robert Loucks’ observation from 1958 is still valid today: “Little has been written in regard to the game approach in teaching foreign languages […] To the best of the experimenter’s knowledge, […] [hardly any] published research is available at the present time concerning the teaching of Spanish or any other foreign language through the use of a method based on games” (7-8).

Due to the lack of reliable data it is very hard to evaluate the instructional effectiveness of language learning games. One mostly has to rely on the accounts of experienced language teachers and the research that has been done on the use of games in other areas of education. In 1972, Edwards, Devries, and Snyder had a look at the performance of students of mathematics who were taught either by conventional methods or by games. Whereas average-ability students from the game-taught group could complete creative tasks better than their peers who were taught conventionally, low-ability students needed extra practice in addition to the game to attain better results. This study presents two interesting observations. First, students’ capacity prior to using a game shapes their performance while playing a game. Second, games lead to better results among students when used in combination with traditional techniques. This combination of techniques is especially important when dealing with weak students. In 1978 De Vries and Slavin reviewed ten classroom experiments on playing games and came to the same conclusion that games should be used in combination with other types of instructional methods in order to satisfy the students’ different learning styles. In another study conducted in 1973 Livingston and Kidder found that the type of game used also influences learning. Games have to be well
structured in order to promote effective learning. By researching the effectiveness of games conducted in other areas of education, one discovers benefits that are certainly pertinent for language learning as well. However, certain questions about the usefulness of games in language learning are left unanswered (Danesi 3-4).

To my knowledge, so far only three studies have been conducted which tried to evaluate the effectiveness of language learning games. In 1976 and 1981 Palmer carried out two studies with Thai university students in their first year of studying English. He compared two groups of learners: one was taught by traditional methods and the other one by a game-playing method. Palmer found “few differences in cognitive (conscious) learning but significant differences in affect” (Palmer and Rodgers 17). His studies support the assumption that games have a recreational effect and foster a positive attitude towards the foreign language being learned. Therefore, Palmer and Rodgers conclude that “[…] games are at least as learning-effective as alternative instructional strategies and in addition generally promote more positive attitudes towards learning than do those alternative strategies against which games have been compared” (18). The significance of the positive emotions that are created by language learning games becomes clear if we recall Stephen Krashen’s assumption that positive feelings lead to a low affective filter and consequently facilitate unconscious acquisition.

In 2003 Nguyen Thi Thanh Huyen and Khuat Thi Thu Nga carried out some research in order to determine the effectiveness of learning vocabulary through games in the English classroom in Vietnam. They began their study with the question, “Do games help students learn vocabulary effectively, and if so, how?” Their goals were to collect data concerning both the students’ attitudes when learning vocabulary through games and their progress in gaining vocabulary building skills. Over a period of two weeks the two English teachers integrated as
many games as possible in their classes at the Distance Education Center and reflected on the students’ reactions. In order to supplement their own perspective, the two researchers reviewed lesson plans for games and also observed classes taught by two other teachers at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies in Korea who applied vocabulary games. As a follow-up, they conducted oral interviews with students and teachers and carried out a small survey among students (n.pag.).

The vast majority of the students, even shy ones, actively took part in the vocabulary games played in class. They reported a high satisfaction because they felt at ease and enjoyed the competitive and motivational aspects of the games. Occasionally one or two students appeared to disassociate from the games and did not collaborate with their classmates. They did not want to leave their seats, a requirement for the games, and some just reported that they did not enjoy playing games (n.pag.).

The two researchers admit that, because learning vocabulary is a cumulative process, the limited research period of two weeks makes it hard to properly evaluate the students’ progress. However, the interviewed teachers stated that their students appeared to acquire new vocabulary words faster and also memorized them better when taught through games. Afterward, most students also declared that they would like to play more games and they had the impression that the games were beneficial for their learning as long as they were actively engaged in them. Consequently, Nguyen Thi Thanh Huyen and Khuat Thi Thu Nga conclude that the results of their research “[…] suggest that games are used not only for mere fun, but more importantly, for the useful practice and review of language lessons, thus leading toward the goal of improving learners' communicative competence” (n.pag.).
Palmer and Rodgers admit that the “[existing] studies are clearly an insufficient base from which to generalise and make strong claims” (12). In order to be able to convince critics of the cost-effectiveness of language learning games, more and substantial research concerning their instructional efficiency has to be done. Games should not only be considered valuable because of their recreational effect and because they foster a positive attitude in the classroom. More importantly, they allow useful practice and review of foreign language, thus improving learners' communicative competence. Practical studies need to show that games are efficient and acceptable tools in a teacher's repertoire, allowing him to achieve his objective of helping students become fluent in a foreign language. Critics will probably continue to question the games’ instructional effectiveness until we are able to put forward experimental data that back up the already existing theoretical, scientific evaluation of games.

As Emilio G. Cortez points out, it would be of specific interest to do further research and try to unravel amongst others the following questions:

- Do games become less attractive and less useful teaching tools when used perpetually?
- Is there a difference in the effectiveness of language-learning games depending on the learners’ age?
- Does a constant use of language-learning games change learners’ attitude toward the foreign language?
- Can particular cultural attitudes of learners prohibit an effective use of language-teaching games in the classroom? If this is the case, can such cultural challenges be prevented or solved, and how can this be done?
- Are students who are taught through games more likely to acquire a native-like intonation? (205).
CHAPTER III. PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR MAKING GAMES WORK IN CLASS

Often teachers are confronted with (classroom) conditions that make the teaching process a rather challenging endeavor. This chapter deals with some practical issues, problems and obstacles that might arise when games are integrated into the language teaching classroom and how these difficulties can be circumvented or solved. Some of the suggestions may seem self-explanatory, as they already constitute widely accepted teaching principles. Nevertheless it is worth pointing them out again in this new context.

In-class organization

When using a language learning game in the classroom a well-planned and organized introduction is crucial for its success. Such an introduction consists of clear instructions and a short practical demonstration.

Clear instructions are essential to maximize the learning derived from the game and to minimize the time wasted because students either do not know what they are supposed to be doing or simply do the wrong thing. When giving instructions for a game it is first of all vital to explain to the students “why” they are going to play the game and how they will profit from it. If learners are aware of what they gain from a game they will be more engaged participants. Second it is important to explain “what” students are going to do while playing the game. This explanation should be done step-by-step. Third, the teacher should explain “how” the students have to play the game. Handing out photocopied rule sheets to each group is very helpful, as the learners can refer back to them and refresh their memories if necessary during the game. Finally
it is important to clarify what the “outcome” will be. Students will be more focused and therefore will work more effectively if they know what they can expect at the end of the game.

Giving clear instructions is not always easy. Every teacher has given a seemingly clear instruction that has been surprisingly misinterpreted and that led to lost time, incomplete or undesirable results and frustration. It is not only important what we say, but also the way we say it. For every teacher it is very helpful to plan in advance what they are going to say, and to write down the instructions they are going to give on a piece of paper. The instructions should be short and simple. It is advisable to avoid complex language. Furthermore, it is important to present the instructions in logical order and with clear sequential words or ordinal numerals like “first, second, next” and not to confuse students by saying “Before you do this…” Last it is very important to make sure that the learners have actually understood the instructions. However, teachers should avoid asking the famous question “Does this make sense?” as students are very likely to say “Yes” even if they have not understood. Instead it is advisable to demonstrate a short part of the game. A dynamic and engaging demonstration is certainly an effective tool to arouse students’ interest and to make them want to play the game. Wright suggests that probable difficulties can be further reduced if a “[…] trial [game is played] by a group in front of the class” (Games for Language Learning 4).

Rixon suggests using the learners’ native language for the introduction if necessary. He argues that it “[…] is a waste of time to throw students unprepared into an activity that they have not yet fully grasped: things will go wrong very quickly, and you will then have to spend more time trying to repair the situation” (How To Use 57-58).

A problem that might arise when playing games in a culturally diverse classroom is that students might not be familiar with the cultural conventions of a specific form of game. The
popular game *Battleship* for example, which can be used to practice conjugating verbs, is not known in China and therefore requires additional, very fundamental explanations and instructions for Chinese students. In that case the teacher has to make sure that all students understand the key concept and rules of the game, and has to provide enough opportunities for clarification.

Dauvillier and Lévy-Hillerich point out that rules do not only necessarily diverge between different cultures but also within the same country. In Austria and Germany it is very common in some games to allow a player to throw the dice again if he rolls a 6. However, not all Austrian and German families accept this rule. A number of language learning games are based on prototypical game forms that are also played outside the classroom (e.g. *Happy Families*, *Memory*). Most students have played those games and they have their own set of rules in their mind. It is therefore necessary to point out that only the rules presented by the teacher are the ones that are valid for the game to be played in the classroom (32).

**Useful language for playing and organizing games**

In order to keep students from using their native language during a game, the teacher should provide useful expressions that are necessary to play it in the target language. Important phrases and vocabulary words should be collected with students’ participation, written on a poster, and hung up in the classroom. This way, new words and phrases can always be added when necessary, and the students can periodically refer back to the expressions if they forget them.

<p>| der Spieler | player |
| der Partner | partner |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>German</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>das Team</td>
<td>team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>der Gewinner</td>
<td>winner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>der Verlierer</td>
<td>loser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>das Spielbrett</td>
<td>board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>das Spielfeld</td>
<td>space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>der Würfel, die Würfel</td>
<td>die, dice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>der Spielstein / die Spielfigur</td>
<td>game pawn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>die Karte</td>
<td>card</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>der Kartenstapel</td>
<td>deck of cards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>der Chip</td>
<td>chip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>der Umschlag</td>
<td>envelope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>der Ball</td>
<td>ball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>das Leben</td>
<td>life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>der Zug</td>
<td>turn / go / move</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anfangen</td>
<td>to begin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>würfeln</td>
<td>to roll the die / dice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zeichnen</td>
<td>to draw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beschreiben</td>
<td>to describe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pantomimisch darstellen</td>
<td>to mime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eine Karte ziehen</td>
<td>to choose a card</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eine Karte aufdecken</td>
<td>to turn a card over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eine Karte abheben</td>
<td>to take a card</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eine Karte ablegen</td>
<td>to put down a card</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German Expression</td>
<td>English Translation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eine Karte anlegen</td>
<td>to match up cards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eine Frage vorlesen</td>
<td>to read a question out loud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>einen Zug machen</td>
<td>to make a move</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ein Feld vorrücken / weiterziehen</td>
<td>to move ahead one space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aussetzen</td>
<td>to miss a turn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>einen Punkt machen</td>
<td>to score a point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aufholen</td>
<td>to catch up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gewinnen</td>
<td>to win</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ausscheiden</td>
<td>to be eliminated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>verlieren</td>
<td>to lose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wer ist jetzt dran?</td>
<td>Whose turn is it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bin ich dran?</td>
<td>Is it my turn?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Du bist dran!</td>
<td>It’s your turn!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los, fang an!</td>
<td>You go first!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lies bitte die Frage vor!</td>
<td>Read the question, please!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Du musst aussetzen / eine Karte abheben / ....!</td>
<td>Miss a turn / Take a card!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Du darfst nochmals würfeln / ein Feld vorziehen / ...!</td>
<td>Roll the die again / Move ahead one space!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Das darfst du nicht!</td>
<td>You can’t do that!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass auf!</td>
<td>Watch out!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bist du dir sicher?</td>
<td>Are you sure?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mach das lieber / besser nicht!</td>
<td>I wouldn’t do that!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Das habe ich gar nicht gesehen!  I didn’t see that at all/ I missed that!
Was soll ich jetzt machen?  What should I do now?
Danke für den Tipp!  Thanks for the tip!
Wie oft darf ich würfeln?  How many times can I roll?
Wie viele Karten muss ich abheben?  How many cards do I need to pick up?
Wie viele Felder darf ich vorrücken?  How many spaces can I go ahead?
Was hast du aufgedeckt?  What did you get?
Gibst du mir bitte eine Karte / den Würfel /...!  Give me a card / the die, please!
Ein Punkt für dich / euer Team!  One point for you / for your team!
Wie ist der Punktestand?  What’s the score?
Unentschieden!  It’s a draw!
Du bist draußen!  You’re out!
Glück gehabt!  That was a close one!
Du hast / ihr habt vielleicht ein Glück!  You’re lucky!
So ein Pech!  Too bad!
Pech für dich! / für euch!  Tough luck for you!

**Forms of classroom interaction**

A lot of language learning games require students to work in pairs or groups. As mentioned earlier, these forms of classroom interaction are challenging for teachers who have to take on a new role and hand over control of the classroom to the students, who, during the game, are in charge of their learning process. Although it takes some time for most teachers to feel
comfortable in their new role, they should always keep in mind that organizing students into groups is a very effective teaching tool. First, group settings in the classroom allow the teacher to work more intensely and on a more personal level with his students. Second, group work ensures active participation of all students at the same time and consequently is a way to increase target language practice. Games played by pairs of students increase the amount of their language practice. However, as pair games lead to a higher number of groups that the teacher has to attend to in the classroom, students have fewer possibilities to consult the teacher and they tend to be corrected less often.

Determining the composition of pairs and groups can be a very challenging task for a teacher. There are two different ways of approaching this task. A teacher can let his students create their own groups. However, this self-selection of group members by the students has three main disadvantages that should be considered. First, forming groups can be very time consuming and tedious because students often lack enthusiasm. Weimer describes a situation potentially familiar to a lot of teachers: “[When the teacher asks the students to get together in groups] they just sit there; only with much urging do they look at those sitting nearby and move minimally in the direction of getting themselves seated as a group” (2). Secondly, peer pressure is a problem. Students tend to prefer working with classmates they know well. Self-selection keeps students from developing new relationships in the classroom. What is even more dangerous is the fact that some students feel rejected or left out when they do not get selected to become a group member and then they involuntarily take on the role of outsiders. Third, self-selection of group members done by students often leads to an uneven distribution of ability levels in teams or groups. This can be a problem because as Wright aptly states, “[…] sometimes
adding or removing one or two individuals from a group makes that group much more productive” (Games for Language Learning 9).

An alternative approach to self-selection can be random groupings directed by the teacher. When a teacher forms groups in a random way, this can save a lot of time. In addition to saving time, possibilities of peer pressure become irrelevant. However, random grouping will probably result in teams of students with unevenly matched abilities. This again, is a problem in the case of competitive games. For these types of games, mixed ability groups of students are most effective, as advanced students can support underperforming students and all teams have the same chance of winning.

When a teacher plans and determines the composition of groups himself he has two possibilities. He can either form heterogeneous (mixed ability) groups or homogenous (similar ability) groups. Both ways of grouping have positive and negative aspects. In a heterogeneous group more proficient language learners help less proficient ones. One argument against heterogeneous groups is that they have little or no benefit to the more advanced students. This argument is not totally convincing, following the theory that to teach (a peer) is to learn twice. In addition grouping students of different abilities together is the best way to guarantee an equal chance for all teams when playing a competitive game. Still, it is true that this type of grouping poses the problem of being more profitable to lower level learners. Because the teacher should make sure that all learners benefit, heterogeneous groups should not be used every time.

Homogenous group formation has certain advantages and disadvantages as well. High-level learners do not have to wait on lower-level learners who might be feeling rushed to complete the task. Students can learn at their own level and each group plays the game at a pace that is most appropriate for them. Rather than being bored with what is being practiced in a
game, more advanced students are challenged; they have the freedom to move forward and progress faster. Less advanced students can slow down in their group and get extra help and instruction from the teacher if necessary. Consequently they can follow along in the game more easily and are not forced to proceed until they are ready. If a class contains students with widely differing levels, forming homogenous groups is probably the best solution. If necessary, a teacher can even provide slightly different games that are tailored to the different ability levels of the groups. This leads to an increased level of self-esteem among both higher and lower level students. However, there are also some drawbacks if students are grouped together according to their ability level. Groups might be quickly branded as the “smart group” or the “stupid group.” If a teacher decides to form homogenous groups it is important that he does not always place students in the same group. He should keep track of students’ progress and if possible move them into a higher-level group.

It is generally advisable to change student groupings frequently when playing language learning games in the classroom. There is no right way or wrong way for matching students in teams but the purpose of each game will affect the teacher’s decision differently. If grouping is done in a thoughtful manner and with a goal in mind, not only the students will benefit but the teacher will too, as he gets a sense of accomplishment every time he sees his students improving and genuinely enjoying a game.

It has also proven beneficial to have students choose a team or group name like “Die Helden” or “Die Überflieger” which is written on the board for keeping score. As can be seen in sports, a shared name increases team identification and social connection among the student team members.
As already mentioned, teacher-selected groupings can bring together students who do not commonly work with each other. When creating groups of students, a teacher has a variety of creative possibilities at hand. To determine the composition of groups, cards can be very useful tools. The teacher hands specific cards out to his students, keeping in mind whom he wants to work together. The students have to find their partner or partners by asking repeated questions to their peers. This process of matching students into pairs or small groups is a good way to get students motivated for the upcoming game and makes students practice different linguistic elements.

To form pairs and at the same time review grammar, students would match cards with the infinitive and a conjugated form of a verb, a preposition and an object, a question and an answer, or a main clause and a subordinate clause (Chart 1). When reviewing vocabulary such as countries and nationalities, for example, one student would ask: “Kommen Sie aus Frankreich?” and other students would answer, “Nein, ich bin Spanier.” or “Ja, ich bin Franzose.” Nouns and pictures can follow this same format. In more advanced classes students would match cards with idioms that are cut in half and possibly also described with a picture (Chart 1).

When forming small groups, the teacher distributes cards that contain a comparison of adjectives, different conjugated verbs, or prepositions requiring the same case (Chart 2). Additionally, any words of the same category (fruit, musical entertainment, etc.) can be written on the cards and matched by the students (Chart 2). If students are given cards with words that have less obvious connections (such as beginning with the same letter or words having a common trait like color) it takes them longer to figure out who their partners are. However, such cards encourage more dialogue between students and are fun.
When using cultural items for forming groups, famous artists and their work, cities of the same state, or any cultural items similar to each other could be matched (Chart 1 and Chart 2). Another possibility for forming small groups would be to cut pictures of German or Austrian cities or maps into pieces and hand them out to students. The same can be done with comic strips or picture stories.

When forming large groups the teacher can hand out different colored candies (e.g. Skittles, Jelly Beans) or playing cards with different symbols and ask students to form groups according to the color of their candy or the symbol on their card (Chart 3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chart 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pairs</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grammar</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vocabulary</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Culture</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Chart 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Small Groups</th>
<th>Card A</th>
<th>Card B</th>
<th>Card C</th>
<th>Card D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grammar</strong></td>
<td>groß</td>
<td>größer</td>
<td>am größten</td>
<td>ich laufe er läuft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ich gehe er geht</td>
<td>ich singe er singt</td>
<td>ich kocher kocht</td>
<td>mit (+Dativ) trotz (+Genitiv)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mit (+Dativ) trotz (+Genitiv)</td>
<td>nach (+Dativ) während (+Genitiv)</td>
<td>von (+Dativ) wegen (+Genitiv)</td>
<td>zu (+Dativ) innerhalb (+Genitiv)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vocabulary</strong></td>
<td>die Banane</td>
<td>der Apfel</td>
<td>die Birne</td>
<td>die Orange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>die Oper</td>
<td>das Musical</td>
<td>das Lied</td>
<td>die Operette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>der Salat (grün)</td>
<td>die Gurke (grün)</td>
<td>die Wiese (grün)</td>
<td>die Hoffnung (grün)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mango</td>
<td>Maus</td>
<td>Milch</td>
<td>Mappe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Culture</strong></td>
<td>Goethe</td>
<td>Schiller</td>
<td>Kleist</td>
<td>Kafka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Haydn</td>
<td>Mozart</td>
<td>Schubert</td>
<td>Strauß</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sachertorte</td>
<td>Apfelstrudel</td>
<td>Palatschinken</td>
<td>Gugelhupf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wiener Schnitzel</td>
<td>Tafelspitz</td>
<td>Zwiebelrostbraten</td>
<td>Gulasch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>München</td>
<td>Nürnberg</td>
<td>Augsburg</td>
<td>Regensburg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bonn (NRW)</td>
<td>Dortmund (NRW)</td>
<td>Düsseldorf (NRW)</td>
<td>Köln (NRW)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Chart 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Large groups</th>
<th>a red m&amp;m</th>
<th>a green m&amp;m</th>
<th>a blue m&amp;m</th>
<th>a yellow m&amp;m</th>
<th>a red m&amp;m</th>
<th>a green m&amp;m</th>
<th>a blue m&amp;m</th>
<th>a yellow m&amp;m</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>colorful candies</strong></td>
<td>König</td>
<td>Dame</td>
<td>Bube</td>
<td>Ass</td>
<td>König</td>
<td>Dame</td>
<td>Bube</td>
<td>Ass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>playing cards with different symbols</strong></td>
<td>König</td>
<td>Dame</td>
<td>Bube</td>
<td>Ass</td>
<td>König</td>
<td>Dame</td>
<td>Bube</td>
<td>Ass</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of course, all the aforementioned ways of planned groupings done by the teacher can
also be done as random groupings by the teacher. When a teacher wants to form groups less systematically, he can hand out the described cards, pictures or candy in no particular order to all students in the class. Random groupings can also be done quickly by having the students call out numbers or letters and then asking the students with the same number or letter to form a group.

To encourage communication among students, a teacher can also ask his students to line up by their birth date, their shoe size, etc. (Chart 4). In this way students have to talk to each other and participate actively to find out where they must stand in the line. Once a line is formed, the first four form a group, then the next four students, and so on. If a teacher asks students just to form groups according to their birth month, star sign, shoe size, the grouping may not always work out as there could be too many people with the same shoe size, born in the same month, etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chart 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Large Groups</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learners in a line say numbers.</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learners in a line say letters of the alphabet.</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With any format of pairing or grouping students, the teacher can give the pairs or teams that group together fastest some bonus points for the start of the actual game. This gives students an incentive to work and engage with others before the game even starts.

Classroom setting

Although one might not always think first about the significance of the right seating arrangement in a classroom, it is certainly a major component in creating a positive and
encouraging learning environment. But what is the right seating pattern? Hurt, Scott and McCroskey accurately claim that there is not one right seating arrangement, but that different patterns can be appropriate depending on the intended type of classroom interaction and the task to be performed (95-99). It goes without saying that the physical properties of classrooms, the size of the group and the behavior of the students are also decisive factors when arranging classroom seating. There are numerous ways to arrange desks in a classroom. In the following paragraphs, I would like to present the three most common seating arrangements. By showing how the arrangements influence teacher instruction, student participation, and student-student and teacher-student interaction, I try to evaluate which ones facilitate the use of games in a language classroom.

The traditional seating arrangement consists of straight rows of desks with the teacher’s desk in front of the room. The desks are usually moved far apart from each other in order to prevent cheating during tests. Interestingly, this arrangement is still prevalent in most secondary school and college classrooms today, although many educators disapprove of it and most modern educational writings attack and criticize it. However, in certain teaching and learning situations this seating arrangement is absolutely valid. Some classes require teacher-centered instruction because the aim is the distribution or presentation of information through lectures, board work or projections. When using games, however, this seating arrangement is not suitable. As previously mentioned, the teacher’s primary role in a game-based classroom environment is not to be the transmitter of knowledge who is in the center, but rather to be an initiator, facilitator and coordinator of learning who steps back and puts the students in the center. In this traditional seating, the teacher is the sole focus of the students, and student-student interaction, which is the objective of any game, is prohibited. Furthermore, participation often differs greatly between the
rows. Students sitting in the front or middle rows are often a lot more actively involved in the classroom activities. Students sitting in the back rows feel less a part of the arrangement and are therefore more likely to distance themselves mentally from the lesson. Rosenfeld and Civikly provide a very accurate description of this traditional seating arrangement: “[…] [the chairs and desks look] something like tombstones in a military cemetery” (161). The traditional row and column style seating arrangement does pack desks in a room very effectively but at the same time impedes the teacher’s role as a facilitator who needs to move around among the students in the classroom.

The so-called horseshoe seating arrangement consists of a U-shaped semi-circle of desks with the teacher’s desk still in the front. McCroskey notes that in order to avoid “dead space” in the middle a “double horseshoe,” which is two semi-circular rows, one inside the other, can be formed (100). A horseshoe seating arrangement allows both teacher-student and student-student interaction. Teacher-centered learning takes place when the teacher is up in the front at his desk and student-centered learning happens when the students work in groups and the teacher helps them at their desks. Switching between these two modes is easy, as the students do not have to move their chairs when the teacher wants to refocus their attention on him and on the board. This arrangement is very conducive for group work because it allows easy creation of different groups. If a game requires partner work, students can work with the person sitting next to them. Small groups can easily be created by simply having one pair of students move their chairs to the inner side of the horseshoe and work with an opposite pair. If a game requires two teams, the semi-circle is split in half and the opposing teams face each other. If a whole-class activity requires the students to move, they can do this in the empty space in the middle of the horseshoe. This U-style seating pattern also accommodates the teacher in his role as facilitator because it is
easy for him to move around the class. It also guarantees good visibility for all students and the teacher. Because this arrangement does not have students sitting in a back row, they all feel equal and part of the group. Consequently a lack of attention is less likely and a teacher most probably gets better participation.

In a group-work seating arrangement the students are seated in small groups spread out in the classroom. Each group sits around one desk. In this café-style seating pattern the teacher is completely removed from the focus of the students. This seating arrangement involves the greatest amount of student-student interaction and at the same time entails the least interference between the individual groups. The informal atmosphere reduces fear and encourages student participation. The arrangement also allows the teacher to circulate comfortably between the groups and act effectively as facilitator and mediator. Although this pattern is probably best for group work, it also entails one major problem. Some students have poor visibility, as their back is to the board and the teacher. Integrating a short instructor-centered teaching phase and keeping the same group-work seating arrangement is therefore not advantageous. Thus when using this pattern it takes some time to switch back from student-student interaction to teacher-student interaction.

Once again, it would be wrong to say that there is one ideal classroom seating arrangement. We should not just stick to a specific arrangement simply because of habit, a janitor’s preference or colleagues’ criticism that we teach in an unorganized class structure. The seating pattern that we choose for our classroom should always be based on and designed according to the desired amount of teacher-student and student-student interaction. In my experience a lot of games require some sort of introductory instruction and some conclusion session lead by the teacher. That is why I personally prefer to have a horseshoe seating
arrangement, as it allows me to switch between the two modes of interaction very fast and without any problems whatsoever. However, each teacher has a different seating arrangement that works best for his classroom and he should go for it.

Competition and scoring

When thinking of games, most people automatically think of competition. Although competition is characteristic of a lot of games, there are also numerous games that focus on cooperation. As there are two sides to every story, playing competitive games in the language classroom can have a lot of potential benefits, as well as some likely negative consequences.

First, competitive games can clearly increase the level of student motivation. This becomes obvious when we look at athletes who practice for hours, driven by the wish of winning a competition. Additionally, competitive games can enhance students’ self-esteem when they come out ahead of someone else. However, motivation is different for each person, and competitive games can also be counterproductive. With some students, they can damage self-esteem and lead to a fear of failure or feelings of anxiety. As Wright aptly puts it, “Competition may be stimulating for some, but it can also be destructive, making players anxious, with losers categorizing themselves as ‘no good’ and the winners categorizing themselves as ‘very good’. Neither of these things might be true, and neither helps learning” (Games for Language Learning 1-2).

Another argument for the use of competitive games in the classroom is a heightened level of student attention. However, competition can also potentially shift the players’ attitude concerning the goal of the game in a negative way. When involved in competitive games, students increasingly focus on the outcome and less on the process of their effort. In other words,
students pay increased attention to what they have to do to win and less to the learning process itself. This is why some teachers argue that competitive games do not necessarily enhance the quality of learning.

Another contentious point concerns the effect competitive games have on group dynamics. Some argue that competition has a very positive effect on student interaction in groups. Weak and less competent group members are often marginalized within a group; a competitive element in a game, however, changes the way group members regard one another. All group members have to work together as peers, and the contribution of every single team member is essential to accomplish the task. This clearly increases the sense of community within a group. Others, however suggest that competitive games destroy relationships and prevent the development of camaraderie among students, as one person or group always has to lose so that another person or group can win.

Weighing the potential benefits of competitive games with the potential disadvantages, it becomes obvious that teachers have to be judicious about their application in the classroom. Aristotle’s golden rule, ”Everything in moderation,” should also be applied here. Competitive games should be played once in a while but not always. Whenever they are played, the teacher has to make sure to create a fear-free and encouraging classroom environment that gives students the outlook that they are allowed to fail without being rejected and ridiculed, but, at the same time, a feeling of being pushed and encouraged. Furthermore, the nature of the competition (e.g. finishing first, getting the most points, surviving elimination, avoiding penalties, becoming or avoiding to become “challenger”), as well as the grouping or form of interaction involved (e.g. each person individually, one person against the rest, with a partner against the rest, with a team against the rest, everyone together against the teacher) should be changed and modified
frequently so that games do not become stale and all students feel that they have the chance to
win at some point. Wright suggests integrating “fewer games based on individuals playing
against each other, and more based on team work” so that a maximum number of students can
experience success in the classroom (Games for Language Learning 9). Another way of
preventing students from feeling discouraged when they are immediately out of a game due to
one mistake is to give each player multiple “lives.” In a very heterogeneous classroom, students’
chances of winning can be evened up by integrating non-linguistic skills such as running or
catching a ball. This way, even the best students do not automatically succeed. Little “tricks”
such as integrating reaction tasks into a game allow weaker students to win as well. However,language should be the focus of every game and students’ success should depend for the most
part upon their production of correct language. In general, games should have a well-balanced
mixture of chance and skill. Rixon puts it that way: “The ideal combination is a game in which
students have to react, by using language, to some challenge which may be decided by the luck
of drawing a card or throwing a die, for example” (How To Use 4).

Scoring is an essential trait of competitive games and very important to students, as they always want to know how well they are doing. Getting points for correct answers is very motivating for them. However, just drawing a point on the board every time a group answers correctly is not the most exciting way of scoring. Rixon suggests several creative and simple ways of keeping score in the classroom (How to use 61-63).

A well-liked form of scoring is building a picture on the board. The picture can be created by counting the correct answers or the incorrect answers of the contestants (as in the spelling game Hangman, for example). Figures that are easily broken apart and drawn are most suitable (for example, stick figures that climb a mountain, a ladder or a flight of steps, insects
like a spider or bug, houses, rival thermometers where the temperature rises every time students answer correctly, adding wagons to a train, leaves to a tree, floors to a tower, etc.).

Some fun ways of scoring are instructional in themselves. For every point a team scores, a letter of the alphabet, a day of the week, or a month can be added to the scoreboard, with the goal of being the first to complete the alphabet, the weekdays, or the year.

Even keeping score for a game can be a game in itself. For example, the teacher draws a soccer field on the board with each side divided into sections leading up to the goal. Whenever a team answers a question correctly, that team receives a point and moves one section closer to the opposite team’s goal. Once a team answers enough questions correctly to score a goal, the game may come to an end or possibly just start over again with the ball in the center. Another game in which scoring can be kept could be a version of Tic-Tac-Toe, but on a larger scale, with the students putting down an X or an O with each correct answer. The team with five Xs or Os in a row wins the game. According to Rixon, this way of scoring has two additional advantages: “[...] [it] involves a tactical decision about the best place to put one’s mark“ and “[...] allows students to practice language like ‘the top left hand corner’ or ‘the middle square’“ (How To Use 63).

Lee mentions another possibility for keeping score in a non-visual way. The teacher can hand out beans or marbles to the students, which are then collected in bags and bowls and counted at the end of the game to determine the final score (9).

Potential problems in the classroom

Teachers who are opposed to games often bring forward the argument that they simply cannot use games in their classroom because of the large number of students in their class. It is
definitely challenging and time-wise often impossible for a teacher to create 15 pairs of game teaching material for a class of 30 students. If a game is played in a teacher-controlled way only single students in the class are actively involved which turns the game into an ineffective teaching tool. In order to solve the problem presented by a big class, Rixon suggests the use of games in which not single members of a team give the answer but the whole team answers at the same time (How To Use 53-54). She reassures that this does not inevitably lead to just a lot of noise in the classroom. For example, players do not necessarily have to give responses out loud but instead they can answer silently by raising their hand to indicate their choice between two potential answers. All team members have to answer simultaneously, in other words give a silent ‘mass-response,’ and they are not allowed to reconsider the answer once a choice has been made. The decision made by the majority of the team tips the scales and is taken into consideration for the score. If a group votes 50/50 it does not score a point. Another game that helps a teacher to get around the problem of limited participation in a big class is the popular game of Bingo. As will be seen in more detail in the games chapter, Bingo can be perfectly adapted for a variety of uses in foreign language teaching. Bingo cards are easy to make and can be reused several times. Finally, not all language-learning games require materials that are the product of a time-consuming and laborious process. The games I spy, Hangman or pencil-and-paper games actually do not require any teacher prepared material at all. Even in big classes students can play such games in pairs or small groups by themselves while the teacher walks around, observes and counsels the students.

The fear of a high noise level is another reason that keeps some teachers from integrating games into their language teaching. Of course, the noise that arises during games should not disturb classes taught in adjacent rooms. However, noise does not necessarily have to
be perceived as an obstacle. First, as mentioned above, some games allow students to respond silently. Second, a certain noise level gives the teacher confirmation that students are enthusiastic and excited about the game being played.

Some teachers are also opposed to using games because they have to take on the role of observer, coach, or perhaps even player. They fear the likelihood of a discipline problem when they are not directing, controlling or dictating the class activities. However, the concern is unjustified. First, the teacher’s new role can help create a more positive attitude from the students. Second, it is very unlikely that a teacher has to act as a disciplinarian when integrating games in the class, because they entail rules of conduct that students readily stick to. As Abt explains, “The peers of whatever age involved in the game rarely break these rules because they know that it will end the game for them. Rarely do children in baseball or football games let the game fall apart because they cannot abide by the rules” (30). If discipline problems are still likely to occur Wright advises to “establish a set of agreed general class rules at the beginning of the year [and to] write these discussed and agreed rules on a poster and keep it on the classroom wall” (Games for Language Learning 10).

Potential use of native language by students during games is another argument often brought up against their application in the classroom. When students work in pairs or groups a teacher cannot supervise all that they say and students do occasionally break into their native language. But why does this happen? One cause can be sheer excitement when students are about to win and forgetting everything around them they spontaneously use their native language. A second cause could be their incapability to express something successfully in the target language. According to Rixon the students’ use of their native language during a game can be seen as something positive in both cases: “In a way it is a compliment to the game that
they are so determined to play it successfully [...]” (How To Use 67). Nevertheless, the use of
the native language should mostly be avoided during games played in a language classroom.
This can be achieved in two ways: first, it is important to make sure that students are
linguistically capable of successfully playing the game. This means that the teacher has to make
sure that the students are able to easily produce the language necessary for the game and to
communicate the ideas the game requires them to express. As already mentioned, the teacher
can help out if necessary. Second, the teacher should make students stick to the target language
by monitoring them and reminding them that, as Rixon puts it, “the challenge is not so much to
succeed in the game itself, but to succeed by using the foreign language” (How To Use 68).
Very often even just the awareness that someone is watching them makes them very careful
about slipping into their native language.

A lack of time can also be an obstacle for implementing games in the classroom. A lot of
teachers claim that the restricted time in their teaching schedule does not allow them to use
games. Although it is impossible to specify the exact length of games, one can say that on
average a game takes up to 30 minutes. Depending on the complexity of the linguistic structure
that is to be practiced, several games might be necessary to guarantee a successful
proceduralization of declarative knowledge. Most language classes last 45 or 50 minutes. Such
circumstances render an application of games nearly impossible. First, teachers have to present
and explain the new grammar structure or the meaning of new vocabulary. Then, this
declarative knowledge should be proceduralized through the production practice of a game. Due
to a lack of time teachers tend to assign proceduralization as homework, in the form of written
exercises. As already pointed out in Chapter II, such exercises do not help students to develop
oral fluency. Macedonia argues that “It is [therefore] understandable why students often possess
metaknowledge (rules in the foreign language), yet cannot speak the language” (“Games” 140). Most schools neglect neurolinguistic findings in second-language learning when it comes to schedule planning. It is my hope that these findings will one day be applied toward the improvement of language instruction and teachers will be granted more flexibility so that they can adjust their teaching time according to decisive factors like memory functions.

The suitability of games

A lot of teachers think that games can only be used with specific students. Of course, factors like age, proficiency level, intellectual capabilities, social relationships, cultural context, class size, timing and classroom settings have to be taken into account when choosing a game. However, most language learning games can be used successfully with any group of students if the games are adapted accordingly.

Language learning games are reasonable and useful for all age groups, from kindergarten children to college students as well as senior learners. In fact, all game types work for all ages but the content of the games makes them age-specific. The content of the game has to be relevant to the students so that they feel playing it is of importance to them. By altering the learning topic of a game, it can be adapted to the learners’ interests and made relevant for them, and thus suitable for a specific age group.

Basically all games can be adjusted to a specific proficiency level by simplifying them or making them more challenging. Hadfield claims that easy games are not necessarily only limited to use by beginners. If a relatively easy game puts the focus on a specific structure and if it is used as review or for error correction, even advanced students can benefit from it. Vice versa, a more difficult game can be challenging for lower level students as it requires them to experiment
with the little knowledge of language that they have in order to perform a task effectively
*(*Intermediate v*)*. Games can also be tailored according to the intellectual aptitude of a group. As
Rixon puts it, “One can do complicated things in simple language or simple things in complex
language, and games can be found which allow students to do either of these things or anything
in between” (*How To Use 50*). However, games which cannot be solved by most students are
totally inappropriate. Likewise, games that are beyond the students’ intellectual capabilities are
not effective.

Furthermore it is also important to be sensitive to the social relationships in a group.
Some games require students to open up to their classmates or even reveal personal information.
Such games should only be used if the social relationships in a group are relaxed and the students
have the feeling that they can trust each other. In in-company language courses that are attended
by both bosses and subordinate employees, the choice of an inappropriate game can lead to
highly unpleasant situations for both the students and the teacher (Rixon, *How To Use 50*).

The country where the students come from and where the classes are taught, in other
words the cultural context, is also an important factor that has to be considered. Some cultures
are not familiar with a learner-centered approach to teaching. Students from such cultures expect
the teacher to be an authority and the main focus of the classroom. In this case games have to be
slowly and gradually introduced by the teacher. Another problem might concern the composition
of groups. Some cultures do not allow men and women to work together. This has to be taken
into account when matching students. As previously mentioned, another problem that might arise
in a culturally diverse classroom could be students’ unfamiliarity with the cultural conventions of
a specific form of game. In this case careful explanations and instructions are necessary. In
addition to this, teachers have to be aware that some games require a lot of shared knowledge and a common background culture in order to be successful.

As shown in the previous subchapter, the class size, the timing and classroom settings might cause potential problems but these factors are no reasons to renounce games. It is merely important to carefully consider these aspects when planning, creating or adapting a game.

Every time a teacher wants to incorporate a game he has to make sure that it is suitable for his group, so that it represents an effective and resourceful teaching tool. Rixon puts it this way: “It is the teacher’s responsibility to choose the activities and adjust his organization of them in order not only to cater for the students’ present needs, abilities and expectations, but also to lead them gradually into more adventurous linguistic and conceptual fields” (How To Use 50-52).

Variety is another important factor teachers should keep in mind when choosing a game. We should try to make lessons different from each other in some way to do justice to the full range of students’ learning styles. As previously mentioned, games are a welcome break from the usual routine of a foreign language class. In order to exploit this advantage we should also try to vary the games we use in class. Hadfield correctly asserts that “Variety is important in language teaching, and a succession of games based on the same principles, though exciting at first, would soon pall” (Intermediate v).

If a game does not work out to one’s expectations despite careful planning and preparation, a teacher should by no means be discouraged from using games in the future. We should always remember that different types of students with different personality characteristics often respond differently to the same activity. Nobody wants to experience difficulties and failures, and yet we will all face them sometime when trying something new in the classroom. In
general, teachers must choose not to give up on language-learning games but look at failure as a very effective lesson and try to figure out what exactly caused the problem and learn from it.

Creation and adaptation of games

Most exercises can easily be transformed into language learning games that allow students not only a more enjoyable but also more meaningful and motivating use of the foreign language. To illustrate this point, let us have a look at some practical examples.

Schweckendiek describes a very typical situation in a beginning German classroom. In order to have students use correct prepositions and the correct case of the article, the teacher puts some objects on his desk and asks the students questions like “Wo liegt der Bleistift?” or “Wo steht der Spitzer?” Hopefully the students will answer, “Der Bleistift liegt auf dem Buch.” or „Der Spitzer steht vor dem Locher.” A situation where someone redundantly asks for the location of an object, which everyone can see, might occur in individual cases but is not very realistic. As Schweckendiek argues, such a question is set at an intellectual level of a two-year-old (9). This boring and unchallenging exercise can easily be converted into a fun and challenging game. The teacher arranges some objects on his desk. One student is allowed to have a look at the objects for one minute and should try to memorize the location of the objects. Then he has to turn around and answer questions that other students ask “Wo liegt der Bleistift?” The transformation of the exercise into a game results in many advantages. First, the game is definitely more enjoyable and amusing than the exercise. Second, the students unconsciously apply the required grammatical structures because they focus on trying to remember where the objects are. Third, the game creates a meaningful, real-life context for using the foreign
language. And last, the competitive component and the outlook to score points for each correct sentence increases students’ attention and motivation.

Similarly, a boring fill-in-the-gap grammar exercise can easily be transformed into a fun game of dominoes.

### Fill in the blanks with the appropriate definite articles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentence</th>
<th>Definite Article</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Das Auto steht vor _____ Haus. (n.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Er stellt das Auto in _____ Garage (f.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Das Buch liegt auf _____ Boden. (m.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Er legt das Buch auf _____ Tisch (m.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the already above mentioned advantages, a game of dominoes increases the amount of student speaking time, promotes and increases cooperation among students in the groups, and allows students to learn using different senses.
CHAPTER IV. GAMES

The following represents a collection of games that have worked well in my foreign language classes and that I have found useful in the course of my teaching career. I have used these games when teaching different languages (EFL, French and German) to different age groups and audiences (middle and high school students, college students, in adult education, and in senior citizen education) at different proficiency levels (Elementary, Intermediate, Advanced) and in different cultural contexts (teaching a foreign language in my country, my language/my mother tongue to immigrants in my country, and to students abroad).

All the games listed in the following section can be made relevant and interesting to any target group in any classroom setting. They can be adjusted to any proficiency level, and can be tailored to different syllabi or particular textbooks. Most games can be adapted to practice many different areas of language.

Every teacher has a certain teaching style just like he has a specific dress style. Therefore, it is important that, like picking out clothes, teachers should pick games that best fit their style and that allow them to stay true to themselves.

I organized the games under the categories “Grammar Games,” “Vocabulary Games,” “Communication Games” and “Cultural Games.” Of course this classification is somewhat problematic, because the categories overlap. By confronting students with several language items at the same time, games can serve multiple purposes. We need both vocabulary and grammar so that we can communicate effectively. My categories, however, refer to the main language point that is focused on and practiced in the game.

The examples of language teaching games presented here are just a selection rather than a comprehensive collection of games. Not all of the suggested games are original; many of the
games that are now used in the foreign language classroom are based on well-known commercial board and card games played at family gatherings. They have been around for years, are constantly being modified, and are shared and passed on by teachers. That is why it is often hard to name the original creator of a game. I became familiar with these games when I observed other teachers, or the games were presented at various teaching workshops that I have attended. While doing research, I came across instructions for some of the games presented here. In those instances a reference to the respective sources has been made.

I hope that teachers reading this will get new inspirational ideas or rediscover old ideas that they had forgotten.

Grammar Games

Grammar / Sentence Auction

**Material:** For each pair or team of three students a handout of both correct sentences and sentences with grammatical mistakes in them; for the teacher a cut-up handout with one sentence on each strip of paper; and play money; **Object:** Reviewing and applying different grammar topics by bidding for and buying grammatically correct sentences.

1. The class is divided into pairs or teams of three.
2. The teacher explains the function and procedure of an auction.
3. The students get a handout with correct and incorrect sentences focusing on a specific grammar topic. They go over the sentences in their teams and decide whether they think the sentences are correct or have mistakes in them.
4. Each team gets $2000 dollars to spend (students are given some play money) and can bid on different sentences. Bids begin at $100 and increase by $50 each bid.
5. The teacher reads out a sentence aloud and the students bid for it. The highest bidding team gets the strip with the sentence and the teacher takes the money from the team.
6. When a sentence is sold, the teacher quickly tells all of the students if it was correct and if necessary how to correct it. Longer explanations should be saved for a review session after the game so that the game is not delayed and the competitive nature does not fade.
7. The teams’ goal is to buy as many correct sentences as possible. The team that owns the most correct sentences at the end of the auction is the winner.
Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ich komme aus den USA.</th>
<th>CORRECT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ich wohne mit meinen Eltern.</td>
<td>INCORRECT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Idea adapted from Rinvolucri 2001.)

Grammar Maze

**Material:** For each pair or individual, a handout with a maze and underneath it a number of correct sentences and sentences with grammatical mistakes in them;

**Object:** Reviewing and applying different grammar topics by deciding if a sentence is grammatically correct and finding a way out of a maze.

1. Students work individually or in pairs.
2. Every student or every pair of students gets a handout with a maze and correct and incorrect sentences focusing on a specific grammar topic. The maze consists of numbered circles, which correspond to the sentences and are joined by wide or thin arrows.
3. The students go over the sentences and decide whether they think the sentences are correct or have mistakes in them. If a sentence is correct, the students have to follow the thin arrow; if it is incorrect, they have to follow the wide arrow.
4. The students follow the arrows and make their way through the maze. If they identify all sentences correctly they will find their way out of the maze. If they cannot find their way out they have to check the sentences again because they made a mistake along the way.
5. The first student to find his way out of the maze wins.

Example:

![Grammar Maze Diagram](image)

**Variations:** For the Grammar Maze any grammar topic can be used. A teacher can also take students’ sentences out of their written homework.

(Idea adapted from Bartram 1991.)
Grammar Dominoes

**Material:** For each group of three to four students a set of thirty-six dominoes cards (each card has two halves);

**Object:** Reviewing and applying different grammar topics by matching cards.

1. The students work in groups of three or four.
2. All the dominoes are handed out to the students.
3. The student with the “start” domino places it face-up to start the game. The student to the left must try to put down the matching domino. The first half of his domino must match the second half of the other domino. If he does not have this domino he loses his turn.
4. The next student to the left goes next, following this pattern. The students take turns adding the matching dominoes.
5. The first player to get rid of all his dominoes is the winner.

Example:

- separable prefixes and verbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>START</th>
<th>AUS-</th>
<th>-gehen</th>
<th>AB-</th>
<th>-holen</th>
<th>MIT-</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Variations:** Different dominoes can be created depending on the grammar topic that is to be practiced, for example:

- personal pronouns and conjugated verb forms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>START</th>
<th>ich</th>
<th>helfe</th>
<th>er</th>
<th>kommt</th>
<th>wir</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- infinitives and past participles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>START</th>
<th>sehen</th>
<th>gesehen</th>
<th>kaufen</th>
<th>gekauft</th>
<th>nehmen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- adjectives and comparative forms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>START</th>
<th>schnell</th>
<th>schneller</th>
<th>groß</th>
<th>größer</th>
<th>dick</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Student Created Dominoes

Material: For each group of three to four students one worksheet and a pair of scissors; Object: Reviewing and applying subordinate clauses and matching them with main clauses.

1. The students work in groups of three or four.
2. They get a handout with domino cards. One half of the cards contains a main clause. The second half is blank.

(Idea adapted from Spier 1999.)
3. Students should complete the sentences by adding an appropriate subordinate clause on the second half of another domino card.
4. The teacher walks around in the classroom and makes sure that the sentences are all correct and offers help.
5. When the students have finished they cut out the dominoes, shuffle them and give them to another group.
6. The groups play a game of dominoes as described above under “Grammar Dominoes.”
7. Once all the students have finished a game, they can exchange their dominoes with another group and play again.

Example:

| START         | Wenn du abnehmen willst, | dann… | Wenn Ihnen kalt ist, | dann… | Wenn du Schmerzen hast, |

(Idea adapted from Kay 1999.)

Grammar Race

Material: A game board, two game pawns and a set of five different question cards for each group of four students;
Object: Reviewing and applying different grammar topics by answering grammatical questions.

1. The students work in groups of four and form two teams (A and B) in each group.
2. All groups get a game board made up of differently colored small hexagons.
3. One team places its game pawn at the top of the board, the other one at the bottom of the board. The students should try to get a line of connected hexagons either from the top of the board to the bottom or the other way around. The colors of the hexagons refer to the different categories of questions that the students have to answer.
4. If team A chooses to start on a blue hexagon, then a member of team B takes a blue card and asks a question. If team A can answer the question correctly, the hexagon “belongs” to the team A and it can put the letter ‘A’ inside the hexagon.
5. The teams can only choose hexagons that touch the side of a hexagon that has already been “conquered” by their team.
6. The team that first manages to get a line of connected hexagons from top to bottom or from bottom to top wins the game.
Example:
Blue cards = passive voice

Variations: A lot of different question cards can be created depending on the grammar topic that is to be reviewed and practiced.

(Idea adapted from Kay 1999.)

Grammar Pursuit

Material: For each group of four students a game board, a die, a set of six different question cards, and for each player a game pawn:

Object: Reviewing and applying grammar by answering grammatical questions.

1. The students work in groups of four.
2. All groups get a game board with different colored squares, a die and a set of six different question cards.
3. All players place their game pawns on the circle in the middle of the board.
4. One player starts by rolling the die and moving his game pawn around the board.
5. The color of the square the player lands on determines the category of question he has to answer. If he lands on a blue square, another player takes a blue card and asks a question. If the student can answer the question correctly, he can keep the card.
6. Then it is the next player’s turn.
7. After a player has collected cards of all 6 categories he must go on his next turn back to the center of the game board to answer a final question.
8. On the turn when the player is back at the center, the other players choose a category for his final question.
9. If the student can also answer the final question correctly, he wins. If not he has to wait for his next turn and is asked another final question.
Example:

Variations: A lot of different question cards can be created depending on the grammar topic that is to be reviewed and practiced.

Grammar Memory

Material: For each group of three to four students 20-30 pairs of cards (the content of the card pairs depends on the grammar topic to be practiced);
Object: Reviewing and applying different grammar topics by remembering the position of pairs of cards and matching them.

1. The class is divided into groups of three or four players.
2. Each group receives a set of cards. The students shuffle the cards and place them face-down on the table.
3. One student starts by choosing two cards. He flips them over for the other students to see. If the uncovered cards match, the student removes the pair from the game and gets another turn. The student’s turn is over when the two cards that he flips over do not match. He has to flip the two non-matching cards face-down again and another student can try to find pairs.
4. The students take turns in clockwise order.
5. The student with the most pairs of cards at the end of the game is the winner.

Example:

- infinitives and past participles

| gehen | gegangen | holen | geholt |

Variations: A lot of different Memory card pairs can be created, depending on the grammar topic that is to be practiced, for example:

- prefixes and verbs
- personal pronouns and conjugated verb forms
- adjectives and comparative forms
- two-way prepositions
• main clauses and subordinate clauses with conjunctions
• questions and answers
• positive and negative sentences
• active and passive sentences

(Idea adapted from Spier 1999.)

Verb Battleship

Material: For each student an identical worksheet with a grid (the subject pronouns are written down the left side of the grid and the infinitives of verbs are written across the top of the grid);
Object: Practicing the conjugation of verbs.

1. The students play in pairs against each other.
2. Both students draw three ships in their grid (one ship two boxes long, one ship three boxes long and one ship four boxes long). The ships can either be drawn horizontally, vertically or diagonally (indicated by crosses).
3. The teacher tells the students which tense they should use in the game.
4. The students should try to find and sink the boats of their opponent. Student A begins and chooses a square where he suspects a hidden ship of student B and he conjugates the verb accordingly, e.g. “Er singt.”
5. If there is a ship, student B answers by saying “Ja, er singt.” If there is no ship, student B answers, “Nein, er singt nicht.”
6. On his grid, student A marks down a tick or circle to keep track of student B’s ships.
7. Then it is student B’s turn to ask.
8. The first student to sink all the ships of his opponent wins.

Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>essen</th>
<th>gehen</th>
<th>singen</th>
<th>laufen</th>
<th>kommen</th>
<th>schwimmen</th>
<th>studieren</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ich</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>du</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>er/sie/es</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wir</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ihr</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sie/Sie</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Variations: The Verb Battleship can be used to practice the conjugation of verbs in all tenses.
Grammar Trimino and Grammar Square Puzzle

**Material:** For each pair of students a set of cut-out Trimino triangles (one big triangle is cut into smaller triangles);

**Object:** Reviewing and applying different grammar topics by matching triangles and building a big triangle.

1. The students work in pairs.
2. They first put the center triangle (with a dot) in the middle. Then they try to match all the other little triangles always on one of the three sides in order to reassemble the original big triangle.
3. The pair that finishes first is the winner.
4. In a Square Puzzle, several little squares have to be correctly matched on four sides to make up a big square.

Example:

Variations: A lot of different Triminos and Square Puzzles can be created depending on the grammar topic that is to be practiced, for example:

- prefixes and verbs
- personal pronouns and conjugated verb forms
- infinitives and past participles
- adjectives and comparative forms

(Idea adapted from Schweckendiek 2007.)
Past Tense Bingo Game

**Material:** For each student, one bingo card with a grid and a story with past tense forms for the teacher;  
**Object:** Reviewing and applying past tense verb forms.

1. The students play individually.  
2. The teacher writes infinitives of different verbs on the board.  
3. The students choose the infinitives they would like to play with and fill them into their bingo grid.  
4. The teacher starts reading out a story with past tense forms of the verbs that were written on the board.  
5. When students hear a verb of which they have the respective infinitive in their grid they can put a cross across the appropriate box.  
6. The first student who gets four crosses in a vertical, horizontal or diagonal row calls out “Bingo!” and is the winner.

**Example:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>gehen</th>
<th>singen</th>
<th>laufen</th>
<th>essen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>weinen</td>
<td>lachen</td>
<td>schlafen</td>
<td>nehmen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>denken</td>
<td>haben</td>
<td>sein</td>
<td>kommen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sitzen</td>
<td>fliegen</td>
<td>schließen</td>
<td>wissen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Variations:** The Past Tense Bingo Game can be made more demanding if the students have to get a “full-house,” which means they need crosses across all boxes on their bingo card in order to win.

(Idea adapted from Kay 1994.)
Comparative Game

**Material:** For each group of four students a game board, a game pawn for each player, a die, and plastic chips;

**Object:** Reviewing and applying comparative forms of adjectives.

1. The class is divided into groups of four.
2. Each group gets a board with a circle of squares. The squares have to contain two items that can be compared with a comparative adjective.
3. The students agree on one square where they place all their game pawns.
4. One student starts by rolling the die. He compares the two items on the square where he lands.
5. If his answer is grammatically correct and the other players accept it as logically correct he gets a plastic chip.
6. Then it is the turn of the next student.
7. The student who has collected the most plastic chips at the end of the game is the winner.

**Example:**

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fahrrad</th>
<th>Frauen</th>
<th>Apfel</th>
<th>lesen</th>
<th>Deutschland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Auto</td>
<td>Männer</td>
<td>Bonbons</td>
<td>fernsehen</td>
<td>Österreich</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```

(Idea adapted from Prange 2001.)

“I Packed My Suitcase”-Game

**Material:** none;

**Object:** Reviewing and applying the declination of nouns (accusative) and corresponding adjective endings.

1. The students work in groups of 8-10 students.
2. The first student thinks of a piece of clothing and an adjective and says for example, “Ich packe meinen Koffer und nehme einen roten Rock mit.” / “Ich packe einen roten Rock in meinen Koffer.”
3. The next student repeats the sentence and adds something, for example, “Ich packe meinen Koffer und nehme einen roten Rock und eine blaue Bluse mit.”
4. When a student cannot remember the list he gets disqualified.
5. The game continues until one student is left.

Variations: The “I packed my suitcase”-Game allows practicing different grammar structures, for example:

- past tense: e.g. “Gestern ist Tim ins Kino gegangen. Tom hat Fußball gespielt. Wir haben ein Lied gesungen.”

(Idea adapted from Rixon 1981.)

Happy Families Game - Grammar

Material: For each group of four to five players a set of 8-10 families (four cards within a similar category make up one family);
Object: Reviewing and applying different grammar topics by asking other students whether they have certain cards in order to collect whole Families.

1. The class is divided into groups of four or five players.
2. Each group gets a set of 8-10 families. The cards are shuffled and dealt to the group of players.
3. The players check if any cards in their hands make up complete Families. If they already have a complete Family they place the four cards together in front of them.
4. The first player asks another student in the group for a card that he needs to complete a Family. If the student has the requested card, he gives it to the questioner and the questioner continues to ask for cards until he does not receive a card he has asked for.
5. The turn goes to the student who could not produce the requested card. Every time a Family is collected the student places the four cards together in front of him.
6. The student who has the most Families is the winner.

Example:

- possessive adjectives and negation: „Hast du meine Schuhe?” „Nein, ich habe meine Schuhe nicht.“
Variations: The Happy Families Game allows practicing different grammar structures, for example:

- prepositions and negation: „Ist der Mann im Auto?“ Nein, der Mann ist nicht im Auto.“

- objects and adjectives in the accusative case and negation: „Hast du die blauen Schuhe?“ „Nein, ich habe die blauen Schuhe nicht.“
past tense and negation: „Hast du am Freitag ferngesehen?“ „Nein, ich habe am Freitag nicht ferngesehen.“

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Freitag</th>
<th>Freitag</th>
<th>Freitag</th>
<th>Freitag</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fernsehen&lt;br&gt;einen Freund treffen&lt;br&gt;Musik hören&lt;br&gt;mit dem Zug fahren</td>
<td>fernsehen&lt;br&gt;einen Freund treffen&lt;br&gt;Musik hören&lt;br&gt;mit dem Zug fahren</td>
<td>fernsehen&lt;br&gt;einen Freund treffen&lt;br&gt;Musik hören&lt;br&gt;mit dem Zug fahren</td>
<td>fernsehen&lt;br&gt;einen Freund treffen&lt;br&gt;Musik hören&lt;br&gt;mit dem Zug fahren</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

modal verbs and negation: „Musst du arbeiten?“ „Nein, ich muss nicht arbeiten.“

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>müssen</th>
<th>müssen</th>
<th>müssen</th>
<th>müssen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hausaufgaben&lt;br&gt;machen&lt;br&gt;lesen&lt;br&gt;putzen&lt;br&gt;arbeiten</td>
<td>Hausaufgaben&lt;br&gt;machen&lt;br&gt;lesen&lt;br&gt;putzen&lt;br&gt;arbeiten</td>
<td>Hausaufgaben&lt;br&gt;machen&lt;br&gt;lesen&lt;br&gt;putzen&lt;br&gt;arbeiten</td>
<td>Hausaufgaben&lt;br&gt;machen&lt;br&gt;lesen&lt;br&gt;putzen&lt;br&gt;arbeiten</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Idea adapted from Westenfelder 2009.)

Verb Race I

Material: For each pair of students a game board, a die and a key with all correct verb forms, for each student six game pawns of the same color in each case;
Object: Practicing the conjugation of verbs.

1. The class is divided into pairs.
2. Each pair gets a game board with a grid. The personal pronouns are written in the top and bottom row of the grid, the infinitives of verbs are written in the left and right column of the grid.
3. The teacher tells the students which tense they should use in the game.
4. Student A places his game pawns on the squares with the personal pronouns in the top row. Student B places his game pawns on the squares with the personal pronouns in the bottom row.

5. Both students should try to get all their game pawns to the personal pronoun squares on the other side of the board by conjugating verbs correctly.

6. Student A starts and rolls the die. He moves one game pawn and conjugates the verb written in the row of the square where he lands, e.g. “Er singt.”

7. If the answer is correct he can stay on this square. If it is wrong he has to return to his previous position.

8. Then it is student B’s turn.

9. The first student to have all his game pawns on the other side of the board wins. (The students do not need to land on the last square exactly to reach the other side).

Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>ich</th>
<th>du</th>
<th>er/sie/es</th>
<th>wir</th>
<th>ihr</th>
<th>sie/Sie</th>
<th>A</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gehen</td>
<td>gehen</td>
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<td>holen</td>
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<td>essen</td>
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<td>singen</td>
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<td>wohnen</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>kommen</td>
<td>kommen</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>haben</td>
<td>haben</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(B) ich du er/sie/es wir ihr sie/Sie (B)

(Idea adapted from Pfau 2008.)

Verb Race II

Material: A stack of cards with infinitives of verbs and pronouns on them;
Object: Practicing the conjugation of verbs.

1. The class is divided into teams of three or four players.
2. The teacher draws a numbered race track on the board. He puts the stack of cards face-down on a table in front of the board.
3. The teacher tells the students which tense to form.
4. Team A sends a player to the board. He takes a card with an infinitive and a pronoun and conjugates the verb according to the tense previously stated by the teacher.
5. The student has 15 seconds to take as many cards and conjugate as many verbs as possible. The team scores a point for each correct form and can advance that number of squares on the race track.
6. Then team B sends out a student to conjugate as many verbs as possible within 15 seconds.
7. The group that reaches the goal first wins.

Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>gehen (ich)</th>
<th>essen (wir)</th>
<th>anfangen (du)</th>
<th>aufstehen (ihr)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
A  | x | x | x |   |   |   |   |   |    |     |     |     |     |    |    |    |    |    |
B  | x | x | x | x | x | x |   |   |   |    |     |     |     |    |    |    |    |    |
C  | x | x | x |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |     |     |     |    |    |    |    |    |

Verb Tennis

**Material:** A stack of cards with verb infinitives and pronouns on them;

**Object:** Practicing the conjugation of verbs in different tenses.

1. The class is divided into two teams.
2. The teams stand at one end of the classroom. The students count off, or are numbered by the teacher so that each student on the team has a corresponding opponent on the other team with the same number.
3. The teacher calls out a number corresponding to the students. The two students stand at the opposite side of the room facing each other. Between the students there is a desk with the deck of verb cards face-down.
4. The teacher tells the students which tenses to form, for example present tense, past tense and present perfect tense.
5. The student from team A takes a card and conjugates the verb on the card in the first tense. Then the student from team B conjugates the same verb in the next tense. The student of team A then has to return the “ball” by saying the third tense of the verb.
   For each correct conjugation those teams get a point.
6. Then the team B student “serves.”
7. After two “serves” for each student the teacher calls out a new pair of students.
8. The team having the most points at the end of the game wins.

(Idea adapted from Scher 1987.)
Toto

**Material:** For each group of three to four players an example card and a stack of cards with pictures of nouns;

**Object:** Reviewing and applying different grammar topics by solving fill in the blank tasks and collecting cards.

1. The class is divided into groups of three or four players.
2. Each group receives a stack of cards. The stack of cards is placed face-down in the middle of the table in front of them. An example card shows them how to solve the task.
3. One student starts by taking a card and completing the task. If the student completes the task correctly, he can keep the card. If he makes a mistake he puts the card back under the stack and it’s the next student’s turn.
4. The students take turns in clockwise order.
5. The student with most cards at the end of the game is the winner.

Example:

- possessive pronouns
- declension of nouns and corresponding articles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>_______ Brille</th>
<th>WO? Tisch (der)</th>
<th>die Puppe das Mädchen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>die Brille</td>
<td>auf _______ Tisch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Idea adapted from Macedonia 2000.)
Front – Adjective endings

**Material:** For each group of three to four players a stack of cards with pictures of nouns and a set of cards with adjectives;

**Object:** Reviewing and applying adjective endings by combining noun and adjective picture cards.

1. The class is divided into groups of three or four players.
2. Each group receives a stack of noun cards placed face-down in front of them in the middle of the table. The adjective cards are dealt to the group of players.
3. One student starts by taking a noun card off the deck and flipping it over for the other students to see. He has to try and match one of his adjective cards with the noun card and form a meaningful and grammatically correct adjective-noun combination. If the student completes the task correctly he can keep the card. If he makes a mistake or has no matching adjective card, it’s the next student’s turn.
4. After a student correctly matches the noun card with one of his adjective cards, the next student flips a new noun card.
5. The students take turns in clockwise order.
6. The student who gets rid off all his adjective cards first is the winner.

Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ein Stuhl</th>
<th>das Hemd</th>
<th>Wein</th>
<th>gut</th>
<th>blau</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

(Idea adapted from Macedonia 2000.)

Verb Action Game

**Material:** For each group of three to four players a stack of cards with pictures of verbs (either the infinitive in the foreign language or in the native language can accompany the picture), one die for each group and an answer sheet;

**Object:** Practicing the conjugation of verbs.

1. The class is divided into groups of three or four players.
2. Each group receives a stack of cards and a die. The students place the cards face-down in front of them in the middle of the table.
3. The teacher tells the students which tense to use for the game and explains that the dots on the die indicate the pronouns that should be used for conjugating the verbs (• = ich, •• = du, ::= = sie/Sie, etc.).
4. One student starts by taking a verb card off the deck and flipping it over for the other students to see. He then rolls the die and has to conjugate the verb according to the number of dots.
5. If the student conjugates the verb correctly he gets a point. He then puts the card back under the stack and it’s the next student’s turn.
6. The students take turns in clockwise order.
7. The student who has most points at the end of the game is the winner.

(Idea adapted from Macedonia 2000.)

Verb Circle

Material: For each group of three to four players a set of cards with pictures depicting the meaning of verbs on one side and the written infinitive of the verbs on the other side, one die, an answer sheet and one game pawn for each player;
Object: Practicing the conjugation of verbs.

1. The class is divided into groups of three or four players.
2. Each group receives a stack of cards, a die and a game pawn for each player.
3. The students place the cards in front of them in the shape of a circle; some cards are put down picture side up, some are written infinitive side up;
4. The teacher tells the students which tense to use for the game and explains that the dots on the die indicate the pronouns that should be used for conjugating the verbs (• = ich, ••= du, •••= sie/Sie, etc.).
5. The students agree on one card where they place all their game pawns.
6. One student starts by rolling the die. He moves his game pawn the full amount rolled.
7. If he lands on a card with a picture, he first has to name the infinitive of the verb and then conjugate the verb according to the dots on the die.
8. If he lands on a card with an infinitive, he first has to translate the verb into his native language and then conjugate the verb according to the dots on the die.
9. If the student conjugates the verb correctly, he is allowed to take the card. If not, he has to return to his previous position.
10. The students take turns in clockwise order.
11. Students jump over the empty squares in the circle.
12. The student who has most cards at the end of the game is the winner.

(Idea adapted from Macedonia 2000.)
Grammar Dice Game I

Material: For each group of three to four players a stack of cards with pictures depicting the meaning of verbs or written infinitives of verbs, for each group one die with personal pronouns and one die with tenses and an answer sheet;  
Object: Practicing the conjugation of verbs in different tenses.

1. The class is divided into groups of three or four players.  
2. Each group receives a stack of cards, a pronoun die and a tense die.  
3. The students place the cards in front of them in the middle of the table face-down.  
4. One student starts by taking a verb card off the deck and flipping it over for the other students to see. He then rolls the pronoun die and the tense die and has to conjugate the verb accordingly.  
5. If the student conjugates the verb correctly he gets a point. He then puts the card back under the stack and it’s the next student’s turn.  
6. The students take turns in clockwise order.  
7. The student who has most points at the end of the game is the winner.

Example:

![Image of dice and card]

Variations: Different cards and dice can be created, for example:
- die: possessive pronouns and cards: nouns
- die: prepositions and cards: locations, places
- die: two-way prepositions and cards: locations, places

(Idea adapted from Macedonia 2000.)

Grammar Dice Game II

Material: For each group of three to four players a set of cards with verbs, one die with prefixes and an answer sheet;  
Object: Reviewing and applying prefixes of separable verbs.

1. The class is divided into groups of three or four players.  
2. Each group receives a set of cards and a prefix die.  
3. The students shuffle the cards and place them face-up on the table.  
4. One student rolls the die. He then has to look for a verb that matches the prefix on the die.  
5. If the student matches the prefix on the die and the verb on the card correctly he gets the card. If not he has to leave it on the table. Then it’s the next student’s turn.
6. The students take turns in clockwise order.
7. The student who has most cards at the end of the game is the winner.

Example:

- die: personal pronouns and cards: conjugated verb forms

(Idea adapted from Macedonia 2000.)

Vocabulary Games

Communicative Crossword Puzzle

Material: Worksheets A for half of the students and B for the other half;
Object: Reviewing and reinforcing new vocabulary by describing and giving definitions of vocabulary words.

1. The students work in pairs.
2. One student in each pair has worksheet A, the other one has worksheet B. The students have the same crossword but different answers are revealed in each version.
3. The students’ task is to give their partner clues for the words missing in the crossword and to find out the words missing from their own. They must not show their crossword to their partner.
4. The students sit facing one another and take turns asking their partner for clues to the missing words on their own crossword, e.g. “Ich brauche vier waagrecht/senkrecht,” “Was ist vier waagrecht?” “Vier waagrecht ist ein weißes Getränk, das man am Morgen trinkt.”
5. The pair that has first finished completing their crossword is the winner.

Variations: The Communicative Crossword allows reviewing any semantic field.

(Idea adapted from Kay 1994.)
Word Search Puzzle

**Material:** A handout with a word search puzzle for each student;  
**Object:** Reviewing and reinforcing new vocabulary by trying to find hidden vocabulary words.

1. The students work individually.  
2. Each student gets a handout with a grid full of letters. In this grid, words are hidden horizontally, vertically and diagonally. Underneath the grid is a list of the hidden words.  
3. Each student should search for the hidden words letter by letter.  
4. Once he has found them he can mark them with a highlighter pen.  
5. The first student to find all the hidden words is the winner.

**Variations:** To make the Word Search Puzzle more challenging, the teacher can just tell the students the theme to which all the hidden words are related and the number of words that they should look for. To make the puzzle even more demanding, the hidden words can also be presented backwards.

Vocabulary Trio

**Material:** Worksheets A, B and C for each group of three students, each worksheets has two columns with vocabulary words or phrases in the target language and the native language;  
**Object:** Reviewing and reinforcing new vocabulary by matching target language and native language vocabulary words and phrases.

1. The students work in groups of three and sit facing one another.  
2. One student in each group has worksheet A, another one has worksheet B and the third student has worksheet C. Each worksheet contains two columns, the left column contains vocabulary words or phrases in the target language and the right column words or phrases in the native language. The vocabulary words or phrases in the two columns next to each other do not correspond.  
3. The student with the “start” word or phrase starts the game. He reads out the word or phrase in the native language.  
4. Another student has to find the equivalent word for “start” in the target language on his list. Once he has read out the equivalent, the same student reads out the next word or phrase in the native language that is in the opposite column.  
5. The students have to match all words and phrases correctly. If they do so the last word or phrase will be the one opposite the start word.  
6. The group that finishes the vocabulary trio first is the winner.
Variations: The Vocabulary Trio allows reviewing any semantic field.

Taboo Game

**Material:** A set of cards, each with a keyword written in large bold font on the top of the card and four related words written in small regular font underneath, a buzzer, and a timer;

**Object:** Reviewing and reinforcing new vocabulary by guessing vocabulary words that are described or defined by other students.

1. The class is divided into teams of four.
2. A member of one team comes to the front of the classroom, picks a card and describes the word in large bold font on the top of the card without using it or any of the other “taboo” words below.
3. Two members of other teams verify this as they are standing behind the clue giver and sound the buzzer if he uses one of the words on the card. If this happens the clue giver has to take another card.
4. There is one minute given for each clue giver to describe and his team to guess the word. If his team guesses the word fast he can take another card and give clues until one minute is up. The team gets a point for each correct guess.
5. After one minute another team chooses a clue giver to come up and describe a word for them.
6. Every time a new round begins the team members switch roles (clue giver and guessers).
7. The team with most points at the end of the games wins.
Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FERIEN</th>
<th>LEHRER</th>
<th>FUSSBALL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urlaub</td>
<td>Schule</td>
<td>Ball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sommer</td>
<td>Note</td>
<td>Sport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ostern</td>
<td>unterrichten</td>
<td>Schiedsrichter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>frei</td>
<td>korrigieren</td>
<td>Mannschaft</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Variations: The Taboo Game allows reviewing any semantic field.

Outburst Game

Material: A set of cards each with a topic heading and a list of 10 items that fall under the topic and a timer;
Object: Reviewing and reinforcing new vocabulary by guessing vocabulary words connected to different semantic categories.

1. The class is divided into teams of three or four students.
2. A member of one team comes to the front of the classroom, picks a card and reads out only the topic heading.
3. The members of an opposing team have to guess all the topic related words on the card.
4. Each team has one minute to guess all the words on the card and gets a point for each correct word. However, the team only gets points for the items that are actually listed on the card.
5. The team that has most points at the end wins.

Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPORTARTEN</th>
<th>VERKEHRSMITTEL</th>
<th>FAMILIE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Fußball</td>
<td>1. der Bus</td>
<td>1. der Vater</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Tennis</td>
<td>2. der Zug</td>
<td>2. die Mutter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Laufen</td>
<td>3. das Schiff</td>
<td>3. der Bruder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Volleyball</td>
<td>4. das Auto</td>
<td>4. die Schwester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Basketball</td>
<td>5. das Fahrrad</td>
<td>5. der Großvater</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Schifahren</td>
<td>6. das Moped</td>
<td>6. die Großmutter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Schwimmen</td>
<td>7. das Flugzeug</td>
<td>7. der Onkel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Turnen</td>
<td>8. die U-Bahn</td>
<td>8. die Tante</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Eislaufen</td>
<td>10. zu Fuß</td>
<td>10. die Cousine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Variations: The Outburst Game allows reviewing any semantic field.
Categories Game

**Material:** For each student a grid with different semantic categories written in the top row of the grid;  
**Object:** Reviewing and reinforcing new vocabulary by finding vocabulary words of different semantic categories.

1. The students play individually or in pairs.  
2. The students all get an empty grid.  
3. The teacher says a letter of the alphabet and the students have to think of words that begin with this specific letter and belong to the semantic categories in the top row of the grid.  
4. The students try to fill in the grid as quickly as possible.  
5. A student scores 20 points if he is the only one who found a word for the category, 10 points if no one else has the same word as him and 5 points if other students found the same word.  
6. The student or pair of students that has most points at the end wins.

**Example:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BUCHSTABE</th>
<th>Land</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Essen</th>
<th>Kleidung</th>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>PUNKTE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Belgien</td>
<td>backen</td>
<td>Banane</td>
<td>Bluse</td>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Tunesien</td>
<td>trinken</td>
<td>Tomate</td>
<td>T-Shirt</td>
<td>Tennis</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Variations:** The Categories Game allows reviewing any semantic field.

Vocabulary Dominoes

**Material:** For each group of three to four students a set of 36 dominoes cards (each card has two halves, one half with a noun and the second half with the plural form of that noun);  
**Object:** Reviewing and reinforcing new vocabulary by matching nouns with the corresponding plural forms.

1. The students work in groups of three or four.  
2. All the dominoes are handed out to the students.  
3. The student with the “start” domino places it face-up to start the game. The student to the left must try to put down the matching domino. The plural form on his domino must match the noun on the other domino. If he does not have this domino he loses his turn.  
4. The next student to the left goes next, following this pattern. The students take turns and add the matching dominoes.  
5. The first player to get rid of all his dominoes is the winner.
Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>START</th>
<th>der Mann</th>
<th>die Männer</th>
<th>der Berg</th>
<th>die Berge</th>
<th>die Frau</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Variations:** A lot of different Dominoes cards can be created depending on what the focus of the vocabulary review is, for example:

- **nouns and pictures**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>START</th>
<th>die Banane</th>
<th>die Milch</th>
<th>die Wurst</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- **nouns and descriptions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>START</th>
<th>die Banane</th>
<th>eine gelbe Frucht</th>
<th>die Milch</th>
<th>ein weißes Getränk</th>
<th>die Wurst</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- **nouns in the native language and in the foreign language**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>START</th>
<th>banana</th>
<th>die Banane</th>
<th>milk</th>
<th>die Milch</th>
<th>sausage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- **hyperonyms and hyponyms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>START</th>
<th>das Auto</th>
<th>das Lenkrad</th>
<th>die Schule</th>
<th>der Lehrer</th>
<th>der Garten</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- **compound nouns**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>START</th>
<th>HAUS-</th>
<th>-TÜR</th>
<th>FENSTER-</th>
<th>-BRETT</th>
<th>TISCH-</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- **nouns and noun endings (-heit, -keit, -nis, -schaft, -ung)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>START</th>
<th>Heiter-</th>
<th>-KEIT</th>
<th>Verständ-</th>
<th>-NIS</th>
<th>Einsam-</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
- opposites of adjectives

| groß  | klein  | dick  | dünn  | gut   |

- adjectives and adjective endings (-lich, haft, -los, -bar, -sam, -voll)

| sinn- | -LOS   | verständ- | -LICH  | ein- |

- proverbs

| Zu viele Köche | verderben den Brei. | Auch ein blindes Huhn | findet mal ein Korn. | Besser spät |

(Idea adapted from Spier 1999.)

Vocabulary Memory

**Material:** For each group of three to four students 20-30 pairs of cards (the content of the pair cards depends on the focus of the vocabulary review);

**Object:** Reviewing and reinforcing new vocabulary by matching nouns with the corresponding article words.

1. The class is divided into groups of three or four players.
2. Each group receives a set of cards. The students shuffle the cards and place them face-down on the table.
3. One student starts by choosing two cards. He flips them over for the other students to see. If the uncovered cards match, the student removes the pair from the game and gets another turn. The student’s turn is over when the two cards that he flips over do not match. He has to flip the two non-matching cards face-down again and another student can try to find pairs.
4. The students take turns in clockwise order.
5. The student with the most pairs of cards is the winner.

**Example:**

| eine  | BRILLE  | der  | HUT   |
Variations: A lot of different Memory card pairs can be created depending on what the focus of the vocabulary review is, for example:

- pictures and nouns
- nouns in the native language and foreign language
- singular and plural nouns
- hyperonyms and hyponyms
- compound nouns
- nouns and noun endings (-heit, -keit, -nis, -schaft, -ung)
- opposites of adjectives
- adjectives and adjective endings (-lich, haft, -los, -bar, -sam, -voll)

(Idea adapted from Spier 1999.)

Vocabulary Trimino and Vocabulary Square Puzzle

Material: For each pair of students a set of cut-out Trimino triangles (one big triangle is cut into smaller triangles);
Object: Reviewing and reinforcing new vocabulary by matching triangles and building a big triangle.

1. The students work in pairs.
2. They first put the center triangle (with a dot) in the middle. Then they try to match all the other little triangles always on one of the three sides in order to reassemble the original big triangle.
3. The pair that finishes first is the winner.
4. In a Square Puzzle, several little squares have to be correctly matched on four sides to make up a big square.

Variations: A lot of different Triminos and Square Puzzles can be created depending on what the focus of the vocabulary review is, for example:

- pictures and nouns
- nouns in the native language and foreign language
- singular and plural nouns
- hyperonyms and hyponyms
- compound nouns
- nouns and noun endings (-heit, -keit, -nis, -schaft, -ung)
- opposites of adjectives
- adjectives and adjective endings (-lich, haft, -los, -bar, -sam, -voll)

(Idea adapted from Schweckendiek 2007.)
“I Packed My Suitcase” -Game

Material: none;
Object: Reviewing and reinforcing new vocabulary by repeating vocabulary words.

1. The students work in groups of 8-10 students.
2. The first student thinks of a piece of clothing and says for example, “Ich packe meinen Koffer und nehme eine Hose mit.” / “Ich packe eine Hose in meinen Koffer.”
3. The next student repeats the sentence and adds something, for example, “Ich packe meinen Koffer und nehme eine Hose und einen Hut mit.”
4. When a student cannot remember the list he gets disqualified.
5. The game continues until one student is left.

Variations: The “I Packed My Suitcase” -Game allows reviewing a lot of different semantic fields, for example:

- pieces of furniture: “Für mein Zimmer kaufe ich einen großen Schreibtisch, einen weißen Schrank, eine grüne Lampe, etc.”
- food: “Im Supermarkt kaufe ich ein Kilo Tomaten, eine Gurke, drei Bananen, etc.”
- plural of nouns: “Ich nehme zwei Röcke, drei Hosen,….. mit.”

(Idea adapted from Rixon 1981.)

Happy Families Game - Vocabulary

Material: For each group of four to five players a set of 8-10 families (four cards within a similar category make up one family);
Object: Reviewing and reinforcing new vocabulary by asking other students whether they have certain cards in order to collect whole Families.

1. The class is divided into groups of four or five players.
2. The cards are shuffled and dealt to the group of players.
3. The players check if any cards in their hands make up complete Families. If they already have a complete Family they place the four cards together in front of them.
4. The first player asks another student in the group if he has a particular card. The questioner asks for a card that he needs to complete a Family. If the student has the requested card, he gives it to the questioner and the questioner continues to ask for cards until he does not receive a card he has asked for.
5. The turn goes to the student who could not produce the requested card. Every time a Family is collected the student places the four cards together in front of him.
6. The student who has the most Families is the winner.
Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHLAFZIMMER</th>
<th>SCHLAFZIMMER</th>
<th>SCHLAFZIMMER</th>
<th>SCHLAFZIMMER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>der Nachttisch</td>
<td>der Nachttisch</td>
<td>der Nachttisch</td>
<td>der Nachttisch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>die Kommode</td>
<td>die Kommode</td>
<td>die Kommode</td>
<td>die Kommode</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>das Bett</td>
<td>das Bett</td>
<td>das Bett</td>
<td>das Bett</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>die Lampe</td>
<td>die Lampe</td>
<td>die Lampe</td>
<td>die Lampe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Variations: The Happy Families Game allows reviewing a lot of different semantic fields, for example:

- food
- body parts
- means of transport
- animals

(Idea adapted from Krull 2008.)

Toto

Material: For each group of three to four players an example card and a stack of cards with pictures of nouns;
Object: Reviewing and reinforcing new vocabulary by solving fill in the blank tasks and collecting cards.

1. The class is divided into groups of three or four players.
2. Each group receives a stack of cards. The stack of cards is placed face-down in the middle of the table in front of them. An example card shows them how to solve the task.
3. One student starts by taking a card and completing the task, for example forming the plural of a noun. If the student completes the task correctly, he can keep the card. If he makes a mistake, he puts the card back under the stack and it’s the next student’s turn.
4. The students take turns in clockwise order.
5. The student with most cards at the end of the game is the winner.
Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ein Apfel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>zwei</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Variations**: A lot of different task cards can be created depending on what the focus of the vocabulary review is, for example:

- articles of nouns

(Idea adapted from Macedonia 2000.)

**Article Dice Game**

**Material**: For each group of three to four players a set of cards with pictures of nouns, one die with article words (definite and indefinite) and an answer sheet;

**Object**: Reviewing and applying articles of nouns by matching them correctly.

1. The class is divided into groups of three or four players.
2. Each group receives a set of cards and an article die.
3. The students shuffle the cards and place them face-up on the table.
4. One student rolls the die. He then has to look for a noun that matches the article on the die.
5. If the student matches the article word on the die and the noun on the card correctly he gets the card. Then it’s the next student’s turn.
6. The students take turns in clockwise order.
7. The student who has most cards at the end of the game is the winner.

Example:

| Wasser |
Variations: Different cards and dice can be created, for example:

- die: adjective endings (-lich, haft, -los, -bar, -sam, -voll) and cards: adjectives
- die: noun endings (-heit, -keit, -nis, -schaft, -ung) and cards: nouns

(Idea adapted from Macedonia 2000.)

Dictionary

Material: A monolingual dictionary for the teacher;
Object: Making up definitions for words and recognizing true definitions.

1. The students work in pairs or teams of three.
2. The teacher tries to find a word in the dictionary that is unfamiliar to the students.
3. He reads out the word to the class and asks the students to come up with a convincing definition of the word.
4. The students write their definitions on little strips of paper and hand them to the teacher.
5. The teacher then reads out all definitions (the false ones from the students and the true one from the dictionary.)
6. Each group has to vote for one definition that they think is the correct one.
7. If they find the correct one, they score a point. A group gets an additional point for each group that believed them and voted for their false definition.
8. The team that has most points at the end of the game is the winner.

(Idea adapted from Klippel 2008.)

Article Gymnastics

Material: A list of nouns for the teacher;
Object: Reviewing and reinforcing new vocabulary by matching articles and nouns correctly.

1. The class is divided into three teams according to the German articles: one DER-team, one DIE-team, one DAS-team.
2. The teacher reads out nouns. The teams have to listen and stand up if the noun requires their article.
3. If the all team members stand up correctly the team scores a point. If not all students of the team stand up the group does not get a point. If a student of another team stands up by mistake this team loses a point.
4. The team that has most points at the end of the game is the winner.

(Idea adapted from Funk 2002.)
Hot Seat I

**Material:** A list of vocabulary words and matching definitions;  
**Object:** Reviewing and reinforcing new vocabulary by eliciting words from a definition.

1. The class is divided into teams of five students. The students count off, or they are numbered by the teacher so that each student on the team has a corresponding opponent on the other teams with the same number.  
2. Each team sits in a small circle and there is one “hot seat” in each circle.  
3. The teacher calls out a number corresponding to the students. Those students are sitting on the “hot seat.” The teacher then reads out a description of a vocabulary word or gives the native language translation.  
4. The students who are called have to stand up as fast as they can if they think they know the answer.  
5. The team whose player first stands up and gives the correct answer wins a point. The team having the most points at the end of the game wins.

Hot Seat II

**Material:** A list of vocabulary words;  
**Object:** Reviewing and reinforcing new vocabulary by eliciting words from clues.

1. The class is divided into two teams. The students count off, or they are numbered by the teacher so that each student on the team has a corresponding opponent on the other team with the same number.  
2. The teams stand at one end of the classroom facing the board.  
3. Two chairs side-by-side are facing the teams at the opposite side of the room. They are the so-called “hot seats.”  
4. The teacher calls out a number corresponding to the students and two players from each team sit in the “hot seats” with their backs to the board facing their teams.  
5. The teacher writes a word on the board that the students on the “hot seats” cannot see. Their team members try to elicit this word from them by giving them clues.  
6. The team whose “hot seat” student says the word first wins a point.  
7. Two new members of both teams then sit on the “hot seat” and the teacher writes another word on the board.  
8. The team having the most points at the end of the game wins.
“Something Bigger, Something Smaller” - Game

**Material:** A handout for each student;  
**Object:** Reviewing and reinforcing vocabulary.

1. The students play individually.  
2. Each student gets a handout with the following clues:

| Something bigger: __________________________ |
| Something smaller: __________________________ |
| A verb that goes with it: __________________________ |
| A word that comes earlier in the dictionary: __________________________ |
| A longer word beginning with the same letter: __________________________ |
| A shorter word beginning with the same letter: __________________________ |
| An adjective to describe it: __________________________ |
| The opposite of that adjective: __________________________ |
| Another word the adjective goes with: __________________________ |

3. The teacher writes a word on the board. The students then have to complete their handout as quickly as possible, finding words according to the clues.  
4. The first student who has found correct words for all clues is the winner.

Vocabulary Circle

**Material:** For each group of three to four players a set of cards with pictures of nouns on one side and the written word on the other side, one die and one game pawn for each player in the group;  
**Object:** Reviewing and reinforcing vocabulary by naming a picture or giving a native language translation of a target language expression.

1. The class is divided into groups of three or four players.  
2. Each group receives a stack of cards, a die and a game pawn for each player.  
3. The students place the cards in front of them in the shape of a circle; some cards are picture side up, some are written target language word up.  
4. The students agree on one card where they place all their game pawns.  
5. One student starts by rolling the die. He moves his game pawn the full amount rolled.  
6. If he lands on a card with a picture, he has to name the word in the target language. If he lands on a card with a written word, he has to translate the word into his native language.  
7. If the student names or translates the word correctly, he is allowed to take the card. If not, he has to return to his previous position.  
8. The students take turns in clockwise order.  
9. Students jump over the empty squares in the circle.  
10. The student who has most cards at the end of the game is the winner.

(Idea adapted from Macedonia 2000.)
Vocabulary Race

**Material:** Two sets of cards with nouns and pictures of nouns;  
**Object:** Reviewing and reinforcing vocabulary by matching pictures with nouns.

1. The class is divided into two teams. The teams stand at one end of the classroom in two rows so that each student on one team has a corresponding opponent on the other team.  
2. Two desks are placed on opposite sides of the room. The noun cards are spread face-up with one set of cards on each desk.  
3. The teacher gives each of the first two students in the row a picture card.  
4. The students race to their desks and try to find the matching noun card. They race back and show it to the teacher.  
5. If they matched the cards correctly, the next student in the row gets a picture card from the teacher. If they picked a wrong card, they have to race back and try to find the appropriate card.  
6. The team who has first matched all cards correctly wins.

Zero

**Material:** For each group of three to four players a stack of cards with pictures of nouns and a set of cards with written nouns;  
**Object:** Reviewing and reinforcing vocabulary by matching pictures with nouns.

1. The class is divided into groups of three or four players.  
2. All the picture cards and noun cards are dealt to the players.  
3. One student starts by putting down a picture card in the middle of the desk. If he does have the matching noun card, he can put it on top of the picture card. If not, it is the next player’s turn to put down the matching noun card.  
4. If the next player also does not have the matching noun, he can put down a second picture card next to the first one. Then it’s the next student’s turn.  
5. During a player’s turn he is allowed to put down as many of his noun cards that match the picture cards on the desk. However, only one picture card can be put down during a player’s turn.  
6. The students take turns in clockwise order.  
7. The student who gets rid off all his picture and noun cards first is the winner.

(Idea adapted from Macedonia 2000.)
Communication games

Find Someone Who

Material: For each student a handout with three columns: a column with sentences displaying certain characteristics that people have or activities that people do, one for marking down additional information concerning this characteristic or activity, and one for marking down the names of students;
Object: Reviewing and reinforcing the formation of questions by interviewing and talking to as many students as possible and finding classmates who have a certain characteristic or do a certain activity.

1. The students all receive a handout with a list of characteristics or activities.
2. The teacher writes one of the characteristics or activities on the board and asks the students how they would form a correct question.
3. The students walk around in the classroom and ask their classmates questions about the characteristics or activities listed on the handout.
4. If they find someone who can answer the question with “yes,” they mark down the name of that person. Then they ask this person for some additional information concerning this characteristic or activity.
5. Then the students move on to another person to find out if he meets another characteristic or activity on the handout.
6. The students are not allowed to put down a name twice, so the students should talk to as many classmates as possible.
7. When all the students have filled out their grids they sit down again.
8. As a follow-up each student chooses one characteristic or activity of a classmate he has found out about. He presents what he has found out to the whole class.
9. The first person to finish could get a prize. However, if the activity is timed some students might just focus on getting names quickly and not properly carry out the activity.

Example:

Finde jemanden, der………..

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aktivität</th>
<th>Zusätzliche Info</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>regelmäßig Sport macht.</td>
<td>Was?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gerne ins Kino geht.</td>
<td>Wie oft?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Variations: The Find Someone Who Activity allows students to review and recycle vocabulary words from any semantic field as well as different tenses, for example:

- Family relations

Finde jemanden, der ……..

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aktivität</th>
<th>Zusätzliche Info</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>einen Bruder hat.</td>
<td>Wie alt?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Einzelkind ist.</td>
<td>Wie ist das?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Past tense

Finde jemanden, der in den Weihnachtsferien

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aktivität</th>
<th>Zusätzliche Info</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deutsch gelernt hat.</td>
<td>Wie oft?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>einen Film im Kino gesehen hat.</td>
<td>Welchen Film?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schi fahren gegangen ist.</td>
<td>Wo?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Modal verbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aktivität</th>
<th>Zusätzliche Info</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>das Auto seiner Eltern benutzen darf.</td>
<td>Wann?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sein Zimmer selbst putzen muss.</td>
<td>Wie oft?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ein Musikinstrument spielen kann.</td>
<td>Welches?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Idea adapted from Klippel 2008.)

Picture Egg

Material: For each group of four to five students one picture egg (an egg-shaped piece of paper with a collage of pictures on it);
Object: Practicing oral fluency by making up a story of an imaginary person, repeating and memorizing vocabulary words and sentences.

1. The students work in groups of four or five. Each group gets a picture egg.
2. One student starts by introducing the person in the middle of the picture collage, by saying for example: “Das ist Herr Huber.”
3. The next student repeats the sentence and adds another sentence describing a second picture of the collage, for example, “Das ist Herr Huber. Herr Huber hat einen Hund.”
4. When the students have integrated all the pictures of their collage in their story, they present their picture egg to the whole class and tell their story.

5. As a follow up the students can write down their story and put it up on a classroom wall next to the picture eggs.

Example:

Where is…. / Where are….?

Material: Copies of picture A of a room for half of the students and copies of picture B of a room for the other half;
Object: Reviewing and reinforcing expressing the location of objects by asking questions.

1. The students work in pairs.
2. One student in each pair has a worksheet with picture A of a room; the other one has a worksheet with picture B of a room. Both students have the same basic room with some objects in the room different in the two pictures.
3. Underneath the picture there is a list of objects that the students cannot find in their picture and that they are looking for.
4. The students’ task is to ask their partner where these objects are in the room and to draw them in the correct position in their picture.
5. The students are not allowed to show each other their pictures.
6. When the students have positioned and drawn all the objects they were looking for they compare their pictures.

Variations: For this activity any picture of a scene can be used.

(Idea adapted from Hadfield, Elementary 1996.)
Tell me something about….

**Material**: For each student a little strip of paper that says “Erzähl mir etwas von …,” music that encourages rhythmic movement;

**Object**: Practicing oral fluency by asking classmates for personal information.

1. The students work individually.
2. Each student gets a strip of paper. He thinks of something he would like his classmates to tell him about themselves, e.g. their best friend, their worst vacation, their first kiss, and writes it down on his strip of paper.
3. When everyone has finished the teacher turns on the music.
4. The students walk around in the classroom while the music is playing.
5. As soon as the music stops students pair up with the person closest to them.
6. The students ask each other their questions and take turns talking about it.
7. After about three minutes, the teacher turns on the music again and all the students separate.
8. The procedure is repeated with a new partner every time the music stops. Each student should talk to five different partners.
9. As a follow-up each student presents his findings about one person to the whole class.

**Example**:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Erzähle mir von …</th>
<th>Erzähle mir von …</th>
<th>Erzähle mir von …</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>deinem besten Freund</td>
<td>deinem schönsten Urlaub</td>
<td>deiner ersten Verabredung</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Complete the Sentences**

**Material**: For the teacher several posters with sentence beginnings, music that encourages rhythmic movement;

**Object**: Practicing oral fluency by using sentences beginnings as prompts for personal conversations with classmates.

1. The teacher turns on the music.
2. The students walk around in the classroom while the music is playing.
3. As soon as the music is stopped, the teacher holds a poster with the beginning of a sentence up in the air.
4. The students pair up with the person closest to them and talk to each other using the beginning sentence as a prompt for their conversation.
5. After about three minutes the teacher turns on the music again and all the students separate.
6. The procedure is repeated with a new partner every time the music stops. Each student should talk to five different partners.
7. As a follow-up each student presents his findings about one person to the whole class.
Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wenn ich Stress habe, …</th>
<th>An einem regnerischen Sonntag,…</th>
<th>Als ich fünf Jahre alt war,…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bevor ich ins Bett gehe, …</td>
<td>Ich fühle mich gut, wenn …</td>
<td>In zehn Jahren …</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conversation Wheel

**Material:** For each student a handout with sentence beginnings;  
**Object:** Practicing oral fluency by using sentences beginnings as prompts for personal conversations with classmates.

1. The students are divided into two groups (student As and Bs).
2. The students sit in a double circle. Students of group A form an outer circle facing inwards. Students of group B form an inner circle facing outwards. Each student of group A in the outer circle faces a student of group B in the inner circle.
3. Each student receives a handout with sentence beginnings.
4. At the teacher’s signal student A reads out the first unfinished sentence to his partner B and completes the sentence. B does the same with the second sentence ending.
5. When the teacher gives a signal, all B’s move taking the chair on their right.
6. Facing a new partner, student A will now complete the third sentence and student B the fourth one.
7. Every time the teacher gives a signal, the inner circle students move one chair to their right. The procedure continues until all sentences have been discussed.

Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wenn ich Stress habe, …</th>
<th>An einem regnerischen Sonntag,…</th>
<th>Als ich fünf Jahre alt war,…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bevor ich ins Bett gehe, …</td>
<td>Ich fühle mich gut, wenn …</td>
<td>In zehn Jahren …</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Idea adapted from Klippel 2008.)
Jumbled pictures

**Material:** For each group of 6 to 8 students a picture story or cartoon cut apart (the number of pictures must correspond to the number of students in that group);

**Object:** Practicing oral fluency by describing pictures and trying to rearrange the pictures in chronological order.

1. Each group of 6 to 8 students receives an envelope with pictures that were cut apart and jumbled.
2. Each student takes a picture without showing it to his classmates.
3. Each student describes his picture to the group.
4. The students try to come up with a plot of the story and decide on a sequence of pictures.
5. Each group puts their rearranged story on one of the classroom walls; as a group, they tell their story to the whole class.
6. The class votes for the best story and the winning group gets a prize.

(Idea adapted from Klippel 2008.)

Truth or Lie

**Material:** none

**Object:** Practicing oral fluency by talking about past events and by integrating a lie in the personal account;

1. The students get together in groups of five or six people and sit in a circle.
2. One student starts and talks about a past event (e.g. his last weekend, Spring Break,...)
3. Each thing he tells is true except for one piece of information is false/a lie.
4. The other students can ask questions about the details before deciding what the lie is. They also have to justify their decision.
5. The student then tells them if they guessed the lie correctly.

(Idea adapted from Ur 1992.)

Event String

**Material:** For each student a sheet of paper, a clothespin, some permanent markers and 13 inches of white cotton string.

**Object:** Practicing oral fluency by talking about past events.

1. Each student receives a sheet of paper.
2. The students write a year in big numbers on their sheet of paper in which an event happened in their life that was extraordinary, sad, great, surprising, or exciting.
3. The teacher collects all the sheets and attaches them to the string in chronological order.
4. All the students form a circle and hold on to the string at any spot other than their sheet.
5. One student starts and asks what happened in the earliest year listed.
6. The person that wrote down this date shares with the group why he wrote down this year and tells what happened. He then asks about the next date in the order.

Talk, Talk, Talk

Material: For each group of four students a game board, a die, and for each player a game pawn; 
Object: Practicing oral fluency by talking about one’s opinion, personal events or hypothetical situations.

1. The students work in groups of four.
2. All groups get a game board with one personal question on each square.
3. All players place their game pawns on the square marked "Start.”
4. One player starts by rolling the die and advancing his game pawn the number of squares indicated on the die.
5. The student has to thoroughly answer the question from the square he lands in.
6. There is not a right or wrong answer. The other students can ask additional questions if they want. Students should try to give thoughtful and complete answers.
7. After the first student responds, it is the next player’s turn.
8. The first student to reach the square marked "Finish/Ziel" is the winner.

Example:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Was war das exotischste Essen, das du jemals gegessen hast?</td>
<td>Was war die schönste Reise, die du bisher gemacht hast?</td>
<td>Wer ist die interessanteste Person, die du kennst?</td>
<td>Was ist die langweiligste Aktivität, die du dir vorstellen kannst?</td>
<td>Was ist das spannendste Buch, das du bisher gelesen hast?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Variations: Different questions can be used on the game board depending on the grammar or conversation topic and semantic field being reviewed and practiced.

(Idea adapted from Klippel 2008.)

Who Am I

Material: For each student a little strip of paper, scotch tape;
Object: Reviewing and applying asking yes/no questions by guessing one’s identity.

1. Each student gets a little strip of paper.
2. The students write on their strip of paper the name of a famous person with whom the other students should be familiar.
3. The teacher collects all the strips and sticks one celebrity strip on each student’s forehead without the student knowing their new identity.
4. The whole class sits in a circle. The teacher writes some model questions on the board to give the students an idea of what kind of questions they could ask.
5. One student starts by asking a yes/no question in order to find out his new identity of a celebrity. His classmates are only allowed to answer with “yes” or “no.”
6. If a student’s question is answered by “yes” he can ask another question. He can go on asking questions until the answer he receives is “no.” Then it is the next student’s turn.
7. The students take turns and ask questions.
8. The student who first guesses his identity is the winner.

Example:

Bin ich ein Mann?
Bin ich Schauspieler?
Habe ich lange Haare?

Johnny Depp

(Idea adapted from Ur 1992.)

Priorities

Material: For each student a handout with a list of items to rank;

Object: Practicing oral fluency first by talking about one’s opinions and values, then giving reasons, contradicting others’ opinions, defending one’s own and finally making suggestions.

1. Each student receives a handout with a list of items.
2. Each student should decide how important each of the items is for him and rank them in order of importance.
3. When everyone has finished their own ranking the students share their results with a partner. They share why they decided on such a ranking.
4. Then the students get together in groups of four and try to find a common ranking for the three top items. Students present their own rankings and defend their opinion against the others’ arguments.
5. If students cannot agree on a common ranking, they should at least choose the three most important items.
6. One speaker of each group presents the final rankings to the whole class and the reasons for them.

Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity / thing</th>
<th>Stress level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>relationships with family</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relationships with friends</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christmas shopping</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>getting ready to go on vacation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>using public transport at rush hour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>looking after very young people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>schoolwork</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peer pressure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Variations: The ranking lists can feature a lot of different items, depending on the conversation topic that should be discussed, for example:

- stress factors
- qualities of good friends
- qualities of good teachers
- job qualities
- bare necessities in life
- vacation dislikes

(Idea adapted from Klippel 2008.)

Cultural Games

Cultural Jeopardy

**Material:** A Jeopardy worksheet with questions for the teacher and play money;  
**Object:** Reviewing and applying cultural knowledge by answering questions from different categories correctly.

1. The class is divided into teams of three or four players.  
2. The teacher draws a grid on the board displaying different question categories in the top row and euro values in the columns increasing from top to bottom.  
3. The first team selects a category and euro value. The higher the value, the greater the degree of difficulty.  
4. The teacher crosses out that euro value and reads the question and answer choices aloud. If the team’s answer is correct it receives the amount of money they placed in Jeopardy. If the answer is incorrect, they lose that amount of money put in Jeopardy.  
5. The team that has accumulated most money at the end wins. If play money is used, the amount won by the teams can be changed into candies at the end of the game.
Example:

Teacher’s worksheet:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>€</th>
<th>Geografie</th>
<th>Geschichte und Politik</th>
<th>Essen</th>
<th>Kunst und Kultur</th>
<th>Sprache</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100€</td>
<td>Wie heißt die Bundeshauptstadt Österreichs?</td>
<td>Welche Regierungsform hat Österreich?</td>
<td>Welche Speise gehört nicht zur typisch österreichischen Küche?</td>
<td>Wer ist kein österreichischer Komponist?</td>
<td>Wie heißt die österreichische Version von „Hallo“?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Salzburg</td>
<td>Monarchie</td>
<td>Wiener Schnitzel</td>
<td>W.A. Mozart</td>
<td>Gruezi!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Innsbruck</td>
<td>Diktatur</td>
<td>Eisbein</td>
<td>Richard Strauss</td>
<td>Ciao!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graz</td>
<td>Demokratie</td>
<td>Gulasch</td>
<td>Ludwig van Beethoven</td>
<td>Griaß di /</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wien</td>
<td>Kommunismus</td>
<td>Frankfurter Würstel</td>
<td>Joseph Haydn</td>
<td>Servus!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Baba!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grid on the board:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geografie</th>
<th>Geschichte und Politik</th>
<th>Essen</th>
<th>Kunst und Kultur</th>
<th>Sprache</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 €</td>
<td>10 €</td>
<td>10 €</td>
<td>10 €</td>
<td>10 €</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 €</td>
<td>10 €</td>
<td>10 €</td>
<td>20 €</td>
<td>20 €</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20 €</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 €</td>
<td>100 €</td>
<td>100 €</td>
<td></td>
<td>100 €</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Happy Families Game - Festivals

Material: For each group of four to five players a set of 8-10 families (four cards within a similar category make up one family);
Object: Reviewing and applying cultural knowledge by asking other students whether they have certain cards in order to collect whole Families.

1. The class is divided into groups of four or five players.
2. The cards are shuffled and dealt to the group of players.
3. The players check if any cards in their hands make up complete Families. If they already have a complete Family they place the four cards together in front of them.
4. The first player asks another student in the group if he has a particular card. The questioner asks for a card that he needs to complete a Family. If the student has the requested card, he gives it to the questioner and the questioner continues to ask for cards until he does not receive a card he has asked for.
5. The turn goes to the student who could not produce the requested card. Every time a Family is collected the student places the four cards together in front of him.
6. The student who has the most Families is the winner.
Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ostern</th>
<th>Ostern</th>
<th>Ostern</th>
<th>Ostern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ostern</td>
<td>Ostern</td>
<td>Ostern</td>
<td>Ostern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>der Osterstrauch</td>
<td>das Osterfeuer</td>
<td>der Osterhase</td>
<td>die Ostereier (pl.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>der Osterstrauch</td>
<td>das Osterfeuer</td>
<td>der Osterhase</td>
<td>die Ostereier (pl.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>der Osterstrauch</td>
<td>das Osterfeuer</td>
<td>der Osterhase</td>
<td>die Ostereier (pl.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>der Osterstrauch</td>
<td>das Osterfeuer</td>
<td>der Osterhase</td>
<td>die Ostereier (pl.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Variations: A lot of different families can be created, for example:

- four typical food items/specialities of a country
- four famous people
- four famous sights of a city
- four important cities in a country
- four states/provinces in a country

Dominoes Game - Sights

**Material:** For each group of three to four students a set of 36 domino cards (each card has two halves, one half showing a picture of a sight and the second half a name of a different sight);

**Object:** Reviewing and applying cultural knowledge by matching names of famous sights and their corresponding pictures on dominoes.

1. The students work in groups of three or four.
2. All the dominoes are handed out to the students.
3. The student with the “start” domino places it face-up to start the game. The student to the left must try to put down the matching domino. The name of the sight on his domino must correspond to the picture on the other domino. If he does not have this domino he loses his turn.
4. The next student to the left goes next following this pattern. The students take turns and add the matching dominoes.
5. The first player to get rid of all his dominoes is the winner.
Variations: A lot of different Dominoes cards can be created, for example:

- pictures of typical food items/specialties and the name
- pictures of famous people and their name
- pictures of cities and their names

Memory Game - Sights

Material: For each group of three to four students a set of 20-30 pairs of cards (one card showing a picture of a sight and the matching card has the name of the sight);
Object: Reviewing and applying cultural knowledge by remembering the position of pairs of cards and matching them.

1. The class is divided into groups of three or four players.
2. Each group receives a set of pairs of cards. The students shuffle the cards and place them face-down on the table.
3. One student starts by choosing two cards. He flips them over for the other students to see. If the uncovered cards match, the student removes the pair from the game and gets another turn. The student’s turn is over when the two cards that he flips over do not match. He has to flip the two non-matching cards face-down again and another student can try to find pairs.
4. The students take turns in clockwise order.
5. The student with the most pairs of cards is the winner.
**Variations:** A lot of different Memory card pairs can be created, for example:

- pictures of typical food items/specialties and the name
- pictures of famous people and their name
- pictures of cities and their names

**Cultural “True/False” Game**

**Material:** A list of cultural statements or sentences that are true or false for the teacher;  
**Object:** Reviewing and applying cultural knowledge by identifying correct and wrong statements.

1. The class is divided into two teams. The teams stand at one end of the classroom. The students count off, or they are numbered by the teacher so that each student on the team has a corresponding opponent on the other team with the same number.
2. Two chairs side-by-side are facing the teams at the opposite side of the room. One chair is the “True”-chair, the other one is the “False”-chair.
3. The teacher calls out a number corresponding to the students and then reads out a cultural statement that is either true or false (e.g. Munich is the capital of Germany).
4. The students who are called race to sit in the chair which they think is the right one. For example they run to the “False”-chair because Berlin is the capital of Germany.
5. The team whose player first sits on the correct chair wins a point. The team having the most points at the end of the game wins.

**Example:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRUE</th>
<th>In Deutschland, Österreich und in der Schweiz gibt man sich zum Gruß und Abschied die Hand.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FALSE</td>
<td>In Österreich ist es unhöflich, sich in der Öffentlichkeit zu schnäuzen.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Idea adapted from Lipczyńska 1997.)
CONCLUSION

This thesis illustrates that language learning games are valuable tools in the foreign language classroom if they are selected carefully and used appropriately. Language learning games motivate students to work while keeping them engaged and interested. They also create a relaxed, fun filled and anxiety-free atmosphere that facilitates and enhances learning. Most importantly, language learning games help students to achieve the major goal of foreign language acquisition, mastery of spontaneous use of the foreign language. Whether games are adapted to emphasize accuracy or fluency, they provide a context in which language is used in a meaningful way and they help students develop communicative competence in the foreign language. The motivational and enjoyable purpose for games mentioned above is commonly accepted. What is still missing and what this thesis strongly advocates is research that backs up the instructional effectiveness of language learning games.

A number of language learning games that have been used successfully in the classroom are presented here as well. For teachers who have not yet taken advantage of language learning games, here are some final words of encouragement and suggestion. Integrating games in our classroom is a process and not an event that takes place once. If you have never used games in your classroom, introduce them slowly without overusing them. Games are ideally combined with other teaching methods and varied over time so that the students do not lose interest in them. Do not be concerned about stepping back and out of the focus in the classroom and taking on the role of an advisor and facilitator. The students will accept and certainly profit from their new active role in the classroom. When planning and developing games, keep your instructional objectives clearly in mind and always take your students’ ability and backgrounds into account when selecting them. Whenever possible have the students participate in the creation of a game,
which will increase their interest and engagement in the game. Consider possible problems that might occur and how you could deal with them. When things go wrong, as they sometimes will, do not give up and renounce games entirely. Instead, reflect on what caused the problem and try to learn from it. Integrating games in our classroom certainly requires flexibility, time and engagement on the teachers’ part. However, it is worth it to face that challenge bearing in mind that language learning games will help students acquire active spoken mastery of a foreign language.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


