

LET'S PLAY - Games in the Language Classroom

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Introduction:

Games play a major role in creating a joyful learning environment. They can be classified as indoor or outdoor games and structured or free play games. Teachers incorporate a wide variety of games while teaching their students. While most games have their own rules, there are many others in which the students are required to make their own rules. This creation of rules helps students develop their language skills, since they become involved in deliberations and negotiations to frame rules for their games. Language development also takes place when children come up with new games as they have to verbalize and explain how it is to be played to the participants.

Games:

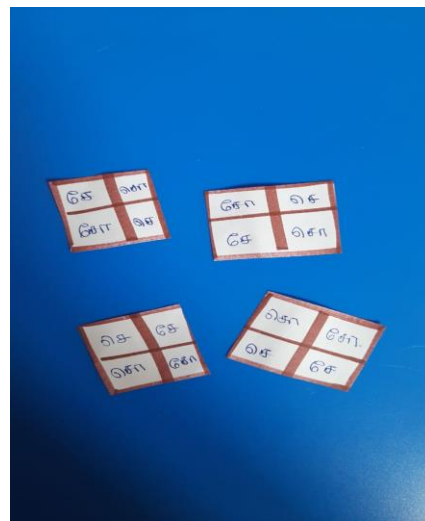
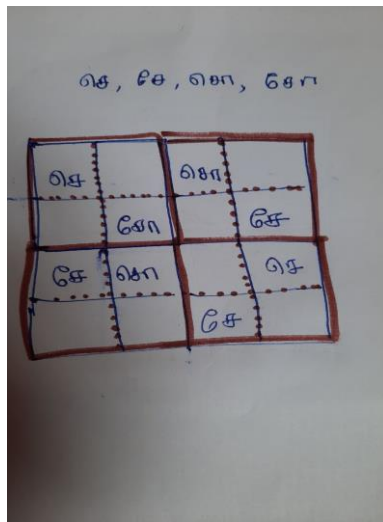
1. **Riddles:** Short riddles are very popular tools used in language classrooms. There is a fun element in this activity as the students are required to understand the meaning involved. Not much of language development happens in this case, but it makes the students think to come up with the answers.
2. **Snakes and ladders (also known as *Paramapadam* in Tamil) and Ludo (*Thayam*):** Both these games involve conversing among the players. Children learn by taking part in such conversations. They also learn by hearing such conversations when adults join them to play. A child gets to hear phrases of appreciation, teasing, and other such things during the course of these games. These rich interactions help a child acquire language orally in a sub-conscious manner.



3. **Descriptions of nouns with 3 words:** In this game, a child is asked to say a naming word or a noun, and the other students are required to say three words/adjectives that describe the noun. As for example, in case a student says “ant”, three words that describe the noun could be “busy”, “line”, and “colony”. This game can also be played by giving 3 describing words and asking a child to identify the noun. As for example, if the three

given words are “round”, “playground”, and “sport”, the object could be “ball”.

4. Grocery store: Each child brings one grocery item in a small transparent container for this game. These containers are then labelled in English and in Tamil. A market can be simulated. Playing this game will help the students to make conversations and, thereby, develop their oral language skills.
5. Sudoku: A 4 x 4 grid as shown below can be used for *Kuril* and *Nedil*, i.e., long and short sounds. The teacher can fill any one box, and student will be required to fill the remaining. This game helps students to familiarize themselves with the script and enable them to make the connection between symbol and their corresponding sound.



6. Identifying letters: The names of all the students in class can be written on chits of paper, and each student can be called up to identify their name. Another version of this game can also be played in which the students can be asked to identify the letters in each name. The teacher can also ask the students to write the letters on sand or on the board with wet fingers. Through these activities, the child gains confidence in reading and writing the script.
7. Framing a new word: Here, a simple phrase can be written on the board by the teacher, and the students can make a new word/name using the first letter of each word. As for example, if the phrase is “*Maala laddu thindral*”, the students have to come up with the name “Malathi” (Ma + la + thi).

Apart from the above-mentioned games, dumb charades, jumbled sentences, unscrambling of words, word search, and crosswords can also be played in the classrooms. Further, incorporating songs, stories, and drama in classroom lessons also makes language learning fun for students.