

# **The Impact of using Games in improving Speaking Skills of students Learning Chinese as a Foreign Language**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The tendency to learn foreign languages has risen among undergraduates in recent years. Although English remains to be a basic language need for almost everyone in the society, there is a clear rise in the interest in students opting to learn foreign languages including Chinese, Japanese, Korean and French. The interest in learning Chinese language in Sri Lanka has gained more significance during the last decade. Learning a foreign language has never been an easy task, and the students have to master four competencies i.e. reading, writing, speaking and listening. Teachers of Foreign Languages use different techniques that are somewhat unique to them in improving the student performance Use of games in the classroom is one of the basic yet effective tools.

## **PURPOSE**

This study is an attempt to investigate the impact of using games in improving the speaking skills of students who learn Chinese as a Foreign Language. The research is based on the argument that these games can significantly improve the proficiency of the language among the students by identifying routine patterns in communication, simplifying the language, making the learning experience more memorable and enjoyable.

## **METHODOLOGY**

There will be two sample bases used for this research in order to do a comparison with two groups where one would have games integrated into their lessons and the other without any games targeting the improvement of speaking skills. One would be a classroom observation carried out while

using games when teaching Chinese language at a basic level course at the Confucius Institute at the University of Kelaniya.

*The situations that will be used for the games will be as follows:*

a) Introducing oneself

Firstly, the teacher will teach all the new words needed to describe one's self. Afterwards the teacher will get the students to stand in a circle. A ball will be thrown at students randomly. The student who catches the ball needs to introduce him or herself to the rest of the class. At this point students can be very nervous to speak in front of the class. Nevertheless, the enjoyable nature of the game might help them get out of this. During the game, the teacher must go through the sentence patterns and tone very carefully.

b) Describing the directions in a city correctly

Firstly, the teacher will teach all the new words and expressions needed to give directions to a new comer into the city. Afterwards the teacher will start the game. Different prompts will be made inside the class and one student will be blind folded. The rest of the class will need to give the blind folded student directions to get to a particular destination point. During this game the teacher can evaluate the collective spirit among the students, tone of words used and successful usage of new words added to the vocabulary.

The other sample will be of the same level, at the same institute. The only difference would be that the session will not have any techniques using games and role play. The reason for using additional teaching material from the Confucius Institute is that they have a variety of teaching tools. Furthermore, the introduction of games is most effective at the basic level because the dialogues are standardized and follow similar patterns.

### **ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES**

It is expected that this study will bring to light the suitability of using games in improving the speaking skills of Chinese Language in terms of building

the required motivation to speak in the classroom, improving the personal investigating capabilities and making the sessions more active and enjoyable. It also suggests that a competitive setting is present in the classroom which supports to enhance the active learning atmosphere. Therefore, it is expected that this study helps to confirm the hypothesis that the introduction of games will lead to overall improvement of speaking skills of the students.

## **CONCLUSION**

Since the speaking aspect of a foreign language is to be developed within the classroom as there is no opportunity to be exposed to a natural setting, use of games could provide a good opportunity to improve listening and speaking. Therefore, we believe that this technique is useful in developing the level of interest and practicality in teaching the spoken skills of students of a foreign language at elementary level.

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## **KEYWORDS**

classroom observation, games in the language classroom, speaking skills, Chinese as a Foreign Language

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