

# LANGUAGE GAMES IN A MODERN LANGUAGE TEACHING FRAMEWORK

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Since the end of World War II language teaching has experienced repeated revolutions in both theory and methodology. Structuralism and its Audio-Lingual proponents gave way to transformationalists and those favoring a cognitive teaching approach. They have been in turn attacked by younger linguists and educators. The primal role of the teacher as the center of attention in the classroom has been seriously questioned as has virtually every variety of traditional and postwar language learning materials. Translation has been banished from a central role in the language learning process. Meanwhile dictation, cloze testing and other "integrated" language activities employing more than one language skill at a time have been resurrected or developed. Situational and communicative curricula have been prepared, and activities based upon right-hemisphere brain operations have received increasing emphasis.

For the moment it seems that all the turmoil and confusion of the last three decades have resulted in a happy eclecticism. The language teacher of the 1980's is no longer strait-jacketed by a monolithic theory or methodology. Instead there is a wide variety of teaching methods, materials and tools to choose from and to adapt to specific situations and problems.

One idea which has become increasingly prominent in the last five years is that stress is a major hindrance in the language learning process. Language learning is by its very nature a time-consuming and stress-provoking activity. Students are forced to repeatedly confront alien linguistic forms, and, as their mastery of the language advances, an alien culture. Individual psychological factors plus student-teacher chemistry may also raise the stress level to a point which reduces student attention and efficiency, and which undermines motivation.

Numerous attempts to remedy this problem abound today. One educator, a Bulgarian, has developed a method called Suggestopedia. During the opening minutes of class, teachers using this method play soft music, use exercise and meditation techniques, and even in some cases administer a carefully prescribed amount of alcohol

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to reduce student stress and inhibition.

An alternative method has been to develop activities to make the students forget that they are in class, i. e., to relax students by engaging them in stress-reducing language learning activities.

As a result, games, which have always held an honorable if minor role in language teaching, have risen to a new importance in the English teaching world today. Games present students with competitive or problem-solving situations which are enjoyable and relatively stress-free. These games contain extensive and varied opportunities for communicative language practice. They also produce a high degree of student involvement which results in longer-lasting retention of the language forms practiced.

Equally important, games create useful contexts permitting a density of language practice. In addition to employing meaningful language they also require gestures, handling of objects, touching and many other forms of non-verbal communication. In short, students stop thinking about language and begin using it in the most natural way possible within the classroom.

A great variety of game types exist. Games can be built around language skills such as structure, vocabulary, spelling, pronunciation or writing. They can be activity-centered, often in combination with a language skill. They can be played in large groups or pairs. Games can be built around miming, role play or drama, discussion games, or use pictures and other visual aids.

Below are original language games which I have co-developed with Matthew Schultz, a teacher at Seifu Gakuen. These games have been used successfully in Japan on the university and high school levels as well as in language schools. They provide a sample of some of the newer kinds of language games now in use.

### **KING OF THE MOUNTAIN**

Goals : Reinforcement of negation; antonyms  
Materials : None  
Levels : Introductory-Intermediate  
Ages : Teenage-Adult  
Group Size : 5 or more

Choose one student as "King of the Mountain." The other students begin to say

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sentences aloud. If the sentence is positive, the king must make it negative. If the sentence is negative, he must make it positive. However, in both of the above cases, he can change the sentence meaning to its opposite.

Ex. I'm happy tonight—Other player

I'm not happy tonight—King's response

I'm unhappy tonight

I'm sad tonight.

Any player lasting 5 minutes as king is said to be a winner. The student whose sentence the king cannot complete becomes the new king.

The teacher should encourage the students to fire sentences at the king as quickly as possible.

—V. Choose a king and fire a series of questions at him. Tell the students to shout 'wrong' if he makes a mistake. The first student to correctly identify a mistake is the new king.

—V. After selecting a king hand the other players sentences on pieces of paper. The students take turns reading their sentences to the king. Encourage the students to use their own questions when possible.

### MULLIGAN'S STEW

Goal : Sentence formation  
Materials : Box or bag, slips of paper  
Levels : Basic—Advanced  
Age : Teenage—Adult  
Group Size : 1 or more

Note: Preparations for an initial game of Mulligan's Stew will be extensive but will provide a base which can be used for all future games.

Before class select 15-20 sentences. Write the words on individual slips of paper and mix them in a bag or box.

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Have each student write one or two sentences and mix the words with those previously prepared.

Players initially draw seven words. Before each turn a player can discard two words and select two new ones. He should then attempt to make a sentence. When a player is able to make a sentence, he draws the same number of words as those he has used.

Place words used in sentences into a discard pile.

After each student has had a turn, players write one new sentence each and add it to the stew.

Students receive one point for each sentence they form and two extra points for a compound sentence. Students receive 3 extra points for a complex sentence.

- +V. Increase the number of words held by the students to allow for longer sentences
- Give double credit to sentences with more than seven words.

### NOBUNAGA

Goal : Question formation  
Materials : None  
Levels : High intermediate-Advanced  
Age : Adult  
Group Size : 1-15

Refresh student memories. Nobunaga was the 16th century general who began the process of reunification that ended in the establishment of the Tokugawa Shogunate and the Edo Period. Nobunaga was opposed by the monks on Mt. Hiei. He massacred them.

Write "NOBUNAGA" on the board. Assign the students the role of the monks. Tell them they can save themselves and stop Nobunaga by asking questions requiring answers that begin with a letter in Nobunaga's name.

Ex. What's the name of a city between Osaka and Tokyo ?

Answer: Nagoya

Erase an "N" in Nobunaga's name.

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### OBUNAGA

The students have 15 tries to erase the letters. If they succeed, they defeat Nobunaga. If not, Nobunaga kills them.

If the students defeat Nobunaga, they may face Hideyoshi and attempt to defeat him in 12 questions. If they defeat Hideyoshi, they may face Tokugawa in 10 questions. Previous questions should not be repeated. If they stop Tokugawa, they survive.

V. If the students tire at the end of the first or second round, ask the questions for the remaining rounds yourself. Questions may also be drawn from mini-lectures for listening practice.

Ex. Topic: American cars

Length-6 or 7 sentences

-V. Have the students answer their own questions.

-V. For very low levels have the students use their own names.

Ex. What's my last name?

Answer: Nawa

-V. Before playing have the students list words beginning with the letters of the target name.

Ex. N-night

nickel

necklace

### BINGO PACHINKO

Goals : Word formation sentence formation; number practice; listening practice

Materials : Handouts, number slips, box

Levels : Intro-Advanced

Ages : Teenage-Adult

Group Size : 2 or more

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Write the numbers on slips of papers or cards. Put them in a box or container from which they can be readily drawn.

Give each student a "Bingo Pachinko" scorecard.

Draw a number. Call out the horizontal row number. Then call the vertical row number. Have the students circle the appropriate letter.

The first student to make a word yells "Bingo Pachinko." He receives 4 points. The game continues until 4 students have been able to produce a word with 3, 2 and 1 points awarded for each subsequent word.

Call the four students up to the front of the room. Then write the four words on the board. The student who can combine two or more of the words in a sentence most quickly receives 4 additional points.

+V. Use words instead of letters in the Bingo Pachinko charts. Award points to the first student to make a sentence.

+V. Number the columns in tens, hundreds, thousands, millions or any combination of the above.

-V. Omit the sentence formation portion of the game.

Note: The game is called Bingo Pachinko because students build words by observing the downward vector of the ball through a grid, much as the pachinko player observes the downward spiral of the steel ball.

**SAMPLE BINGO PACHINKO CARD 1**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	A	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	A
2	E	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	U
3	I	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	O
4	O	Y	Z	A	B	C	D	E	F	I
5	U	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	E
6	A	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	A
7	E	W	X	Y	Z	A	B	C	D	U
8	I	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	O

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**SAMPLE BINGO PACHINKO CARD 2**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	E	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	E
2	I	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	A
3	O	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	A	B	U
4	U	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	O
5	A	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	I
6	E	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	E
7	I	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	A
8	O	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	U

**ALLITERATION**

- Goals : Pronunciation practice; imaginative sentence construction  
 Materials : Sentences prepared by the teacher  
 Levels : Basic-Advanced  
 Age : High School-Adult  
 Group Size : 2-10

Write a few alliterative sentences on the board.

Ex. Five pink pigs played in the pig pen.

Write a set of words beginning with the same letter and have the students practice forming sentences.

Ex. Bob-biscuits-big-breakfast

Bob eats big biscuits for breakfast

Next write a letter and number on the board. The students, working individually or in pairs, construct sentences containing the prescribed number of words beginning with that letter. Allow the students to use their dictionaries if their level requires it.

Ex. S-5 Six slimy snakes slithered into the sea.

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When the students have had enough time, call on them to read their sentences. Each sentence should be written on the board. Correct mistakes or encourage peer correction. Rewrite the sentence and perhaps follow with choral repetition of all the sentences. Then begin a new round.

Finally turn this game into a tongue twister contest. Choose one of the more difficult sentences. Have the students stand up. Each student says the sentence quickly. If a student makes a mistake, he is out and sits down. The last person to remain standing is the winner.

V. Divide the students into teams. Write the words on the board. The teams produce the sentences. Points may be awarded for:

- 1) The fastest completion
- 2) Completed sentences
- 3) The sentence with the fewest mistakes
- 4) The most imaginative sentence

-V. The teacher alone assigns the word as in the above practice exercise. He/she writes a number of words beginning with the same letter on the board. The students put the words into sentences.

+V. Form two teams. Each player writes a word beginning with a given letter on a slip of paper. The teams exchange slips, and produce sentences, using as many of the words as possible. Award points as in [V] above.

Note: The teacher might wish to introduce English tongue twisters at the end of the exercise. Some possibilities:

How many chucks could a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood ?  
My father slits sheets. He's a sheet slitter.

### AS YOU LIKE IT

Goals : Sentence formation ; manipulation of related sentence elements ; imaginative use of language, etc.



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Materials : Sentences with interchangeable parts prepared by the teacher  
Levels : Basic-Advanced  
Ages : Children-Adults  
Group Size : Any number

This game can be played as a team competition or with the whole group. Write an easily varied sentence on the board and show or elicit a number of possible variations.

Ex. Silly Sally and crazy Jack told a story.

Variations: 1) Silly and crazy Sally told Jack a story.  
2) Crazy and silly Jack told Sally a story.  
3) Jack told Sally a crazy and silly story.  
4) Silly and crazy Jack Sally told a story.

Next write another variable sentence and have the students work to change it in as many ways as possible. A point should be given for each correct variation. A correct variation is here defined as a grammatical, complete sentence differing from the original. When you feel the students have had enough time, stop them, and check the variations. Then begin another round with a new sentence.

The teacher may construct the sentences so as to focus on a particular grammar point or part of speech. Or he/she may construct more open-ended sentences. Simple sentences with one or two variations may be assigned to very basic students. Sentences for advanced students should lend themselves to multiple variations.

Beginning students: The girl likes the boy.

Advanced students: The woman who was sick with a horrible cold was taken to the doctor in the warm hospital office.

Following are additional sample sentences in descending order of difficulty.

We play baseball and football everyday.

We play soccer every morning and they play hockey every evening.

Do you hunt birds, tigers, or giant elephants?

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The bad woman drove the friendly man to the haunted house.

Tim's toy train is next to the pencil and Frank's case.

Fearless battallion men are attacking the angry enemy air force.

The quiet dog is kept in the little garden where the pretty flower grows.

Tell mother that Jack the butcher will call to ask whether to bring the meat Saturday or Sunday night as planned.

+V. Any of the following options may be used to increase the number of variations.

A. Compound words can be separated.

Jenny bought sushi at the *supermarket*.

Jenny bought *super* sushi at the *market*.

B. Subject-verb agreement can be changed.

Jack and Mamie *sell* Mrs. Johnson oysters.

Mrs. Johnson *sells* Jack and Mamie oysters.

C. A word in the sentence can be replaced by a homonym.

He straightened the room and made the bed.

He and the *maid* straightened the bedroom.

D. A word can be changed to another part of speech.

The boys and the girls live in *separate* rooms, don't they?

They don't *separate* the rooms the boys and girls live in.

+V. For classwork or homework, give the students a story with interchangeable words and have them write variations of the original story. Give one point for each sentence variation.

Silly Sally and crazy Jack told a story. It was a story about a sad woman who took a madman into her home. The 50-year-old woman had a Siamese cat and the strange man had a Bolivian parrot. The cat ate fish and the parrot ate sandwiches. When the fish were all gone, the cat ate the parrot. The angry man was so sad and mad that he kicked the woman out of the great, big lonely house.

+V. The same as in the above, but allow the students to go one step further. In addition to changing words within the sentences, let them shift words from one

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sentence to another, anywhere in the story. Several versions of the above story are made possible by shifting words like '50-year-old' and 'Bolivian'. Give one point for each sentence variation.

### BOARDING HOUSE REACH

Goals : Listening practice; vocabulary reinforcement  
Materials : Pictures of food  
Levels : Intro-Intermediate  
Ages : Children-Adults  
Group Size : 2-15

In an American boarding house dinner has traditionally been provided for the tenants. Tenants eat at a common dinner table. The tenant with the quickest and longest reach usually gets the best food.

Place pictures of food or cards with names of food on a table. The names of food pictures should begin with differing initial sounds including some minimal pairs.

Position the students around the table. Read the list of initial sounds. As each sound is read, students should try to grab the food whose name begins with the initial sound. The first student to grab it can put the food in his/her lunch bag.

Ex. Teacher says br ... br ... br ...

A student grabs the picture of bread.

Ex. The teacher says

p ... p ... p ...

A student grabs the picture of potatoes.

At the end of the game ask the students to tell what they're having for lunch or dinner. To those students who fail to grab any cards, ask what they would like to eat.

V. Have the students listen for sounds in non-initial positions.

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Ex. Teacher says or... or... or...

A student grabs the picture of corn.

V. Use objects which might be on sale in a department store in place of food names.  
Call the game "Department Store Sale."

-V. Use sentences including the name of the food instead of reading the initial sounds of food names.

### DIGIT DERBY

Goals : To practice and review large numbers

Materials : None

Levels : Basic-Advanced

Ages : Teenagers-Adults

Group Size : Any number

Prior to playing this game, students must have some familiarity with large numbers. With the use of the simple system described below it should be possible to familiarize them with numbers up to a trillion or more within a few minutes. (American number system)

Seven hundred Fifty-four 754 trillion	Four hundred thirty-two 432 billion	Six hundred fifty-two 652 million	Four hundred seventy-nine 479 thousand	Nine hundred twenty-two 922 hundred
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After drilling the numbers, call a student to the front of the room to act as "digit man/woman." Divide the class into 2 teams and draw spaces on the blackboard. Have the digit man/woman fill in 4 of the spaces with any 4 numbers from 0 to 9, and have the students read the number.

Ex.           6                   1                   8                   9  
          .....  
          six thousand one hundred eighty-nine

Next have the digit man/woman write a number in any unused space.

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Ex.                    6                    1                    8                    0                    9  
                          -----  
                          sixty one            thousand eight      hundred nine

Team members should raise their hands when they can read the new number. Recognize the team whose member raises his/her hand first. If the player reads the number correctly, his/her team gets one point. If the player makes a mistake while reading, stop him/her and give the other team a chance. Once the number has been read correctly, the digit man/woman writes another number in any empty space. Continue adding numbers in this manner until all the spaces have been filled.

Now have the digit man/woman erase a number from any space. Continue erasing numbers until no more remain on the board. As the numbers are reduced, players will raise their hands more quickly. Therefore, some rounds will have to be decided by such methods as flipping a coin.

V. During the game, record each new number combination. When play is completed, conduct choral practice of the entire set of numbers.

-V. Reduce the number of spaces to be filled in.

Follow up: You may wish to contextualize large numbers by reading the students financial statistics, population figures, etc. Tell the students to take notes, and afterwards question them to find out whether they have comprehended the numbers.

### GUNFIGHTER

Goals            : Listening practice; question-answer practice; word practice  
Materials       : Cue sentences prepared by the teacher  
Levels           : Basic-Advanced  
Ages            : Children-Adults  
Group Size     : 2 or more

Have the students take out sheets of paper and pencils. Call two students to the front of the room and have them stand apart and face each other, as if for a gun

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duel. Demonstrate the action of drawing a pistol from a holster and shooting, and have the players practice. Tell them that they are gunfighters. They must try to “defeat” their opponent by responding more quickly to what the teacher says. However, they must also simulate drawing and shooting when responding. The response itself is the verbal “bullet.”

Next fire a verbal cue. The first player to respond correctly wins the gunfight.

Ex. Teacher: He set the all-time homerun record for the Tokyo Giants.

Gunfighter (drawing and shooting): Sadaharu Oh.

(defeats opponent)

A gunfighter who responds incorrectly misses the target and the opponent gets a free shot. Likewise, if a gunfighter fails to perform the physical action of drawing and shooting, he/she misses, regardless of whether the response was correct or not. Repeat the cue and let the opponent shoot.

When a player defeats the opponent, he/she “carves a notch” on the “gunbelt” by putting a checkmark on the sheet of paper. A new challenger replaces the defeated opponent.

If neither gunfighter can respond to the initial cue, continue to give more verbal cues on the same subject until one of the fighters can answer. If neither fighter answers after several cues, call out “ambush.” At this point, anyone in the class can challenge. Recognize the first student who raises his/her hand. If that student draws, shoots and answers correctly, he/she has “ambushed” and beaten both fighters. The student receives two notches and becomes the new gunfighter. Choose another student to face him/her. An ambushing student who answers incorrectly or fails to perform the physical action loses, and the two gunfighters each receive one notch. Declare the fight a draw and give, or call on another student to give the answer. Then either give a new verbal cue to the same gunfighters, or have new fighters replace them. At the end of the game, the gunfighter with the most notches is the winner. Entitle him/her the fastest gun in the West—the best since Billy the Kid. In the event that two or more players tie for the championship, have them face each other in play-off gunfights to decide the winner.

V. Give question cues. Require that the gunfighters respond with short answers.

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- V. Announce the topic for the verbal cues in advance, e.g., sports, movies, music, etc.
- V. Play the game with antonyms and/or synonyms.
- V. For low level students, give a series of short one-word cues to elicit a one-word response.  
  
Ex. Teacher : bee-flower-eat-sweet  
Gunfighter : honey
- +V. Have students give the verbal cues.
- +V. Have the students listen for phonetic cues, ex, tell students to listen for a word beginning with an initial p or a cl-cluster.

### HANDS IN YOUR POCKET

- Goals : Following instructions; learning two-word verbs; idioms; imperatives
- Materials : Slips of paper, bag
- Levels : Basic-Intermediate
- Ages : Teenage-Adult
- Group Size : 2 or more

Divide the class into two teams. Members of 2 teams alternately draw slips of paper from a bag. The student drawing the paper reads it aloud and then follows the instruction, e.g. clap your hands. If he cannot, he must pass the paper to a member of the opposite team who again reads the instruction aloud and attempts to perform it. If he cannot, he passes the paper to the teacher who again reads the instruction. The teacher then performs the action and puts the slip of paper back in the bag.

The game continues until time or slips of paper run out.

- +V. Include difficult idiomatic or slang expressions.

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+V. In the preceding class assign teams and have students write instructions for each other.

Note: As a follow-up, dictate the instructions or present them in a completion format.

Ex. He picked—— a book in his right hand.

*Suggested instructions*

1. Raise your right hand.
2. Laugh loudly
3. Turn to the left.
4. Pick up a book.
5. Open your mouth.
6. Sing a song.
7. Hum a tune.
8. Touch the floor.
9. Count to 6.
10. Name the Tokyo Giant infield.
11. Close your eyes and take 4 steps.
12. Write a word on the blackboard.
13. Light a match or a lighter.
14. Whistle.
15. Tell how old you are.
16. Run around the room.
17. Shake hands with the teacher.
18. Stand on your toes.
19. Stand on one foot.
20. Touch your head with your right hand.
21. Clap your hands.
22. Say "Come here."
23. Tell a lie.
24. Count to 30 in fives.
25. Spell Japan backwards.
26. Guess the first name of your neighbor's father.
27. Crack your knuckles.
28. Drop a pen on the floor.
29. Put your hands in your pocket.
30. Put your hand in your pockets.
31. Touch the wall with your nose.
32. Throw an imaginary baseball.
33. Close your hand.
34. Ask a student if he's Swedish.
35. Drive an imaginary car.
36. Shake your head.
37. Snap your fingers.
38. Name a city in Hokkaido.
39. Stare at your hand.
40. Look out the window.
41. Write a word in English and in Japanese.
42. Point north.
43. Whisper goodbye.
44. Knock on the table.
45. Nod your head.
46. Do nothing.



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47. Applaud your neighbor.
48. Brush away a tear.
49. Scratch your right shoulder.
50. Touch your toes.

**WHAT'S IN THE CLOSET ?**

Goal : Situational vocabulary practice  
Materials : None  
Levels : Introductory-Intermediate  
Ages : Teenage-Adult  
Group Size : 2 or more

Divide the class into two teams.

Put the following sentence on the board.

There's <sup>a</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ in the closet.  
an\_\_\_\_\_

Have one player call out a letter. Have a player from the opposite team complete the sentence with a word suitable to the context of the sentence. Award a point for a correct answer. Do not allow the students to repeat letters.

Ex. "h"

There's a hairdryer in the closet-correct

There's a horse in the closet-incorrect

If a player cannot complete the sentence correctly, have a member of the opposite team try. Award half a point for a correct answer.

If neither team can answer, provide a correct answer for the students.

Continue the game until either letters or time runs out.

+V. Permit students to repeat letters, thereby forcing students to think of new words beginning with those letters.

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+V. Assign higher point values to letters of limited word frequency, ex Q, X, or Z.

V. Additional context sentences could include

Bring me a/an                    from the kitchen.

Buy me a/an                    at the department store.

I'd like                    for dinner.

I saw a                    house today.

### JIGSAW PUZZLE

Goals            : Listening practice, making inferences

Materials       : Key sentences

Levels           : Basic-Advanced

Ages            : High School-Adult

Group Size     : 2-10

The object of the game is to put verbal clues together to solve a "puzzle." Basically there are 4 key sentences per puzzle. Each sentence describes one aspect of a person, place or thing. Two teams compete to solve each other's puzzles. The team that solves the puzzle first wins the round. However, since some puzzles will be more difficult than others, the teacher may elect to give both teams a point for correct solutions.

Begin by having the students solve several jigsaw puzzles as a group.

- Ex. 1) It's yellow on the inside and white on the outside.  
2) You can break it sideways, but you can't break it longways.  
3) People eat its mother.  
4) Bacon is its best fried.

Answer: an egg

Next divide the class into teams and have them make their own jigsaw puzzles. Clues should generally be stated in the order of the most difficult to the easiest.

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Puzzles should not be too difficult to answer. Rather the four clues should suggest the answer logically. The teacher should therefore check (and alter if necessary) each team's puzzle before play begins.

-V The teacher makes the puzzle as in the above. A puzzle may be given to each team or a single puzzle solved by both teams. The game can also be played by the class as a whole.

+V At the end of the game, the teacher might also wish to read a longer descriptive passage for listening practice.

Ex. It has many teeth though it cannot bite. It's sometimes greasy and sometimes clean. A lot of people carry it on their bodies when they go out. It is used more in the morning than any other time of day. If you don't use it, your boss may get angry with you. Most people use it when they stand in front of the mirror. What is it?

Answer: a comb

## SOCCER

Goal : Asking and answering information question

Materials : None

Levels : Basic-Advanced

Ages : Teenage-Adult

Group Size : 3 to 7

Divide the class into two teams. Select two players as goalies. The goalie stands behind the forwards who face the forwards of the opposing team.

Ex. Offense

Goalie

Forward 1 Forward 2 Forward 3

Defense Forward 1 Forward 2 Forward 3

Goalie

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The first offensive forward “kicks” at (asks an information question to) the forward directly opposite him. If the defensive forward cannot answer the question correctly, the offensive forward “has gotten by him,” and he is out until the next round. If the defensive forward answers correctly, the offensive forward is out.

Repeat the process until each of the offensive forwards has had a turn.

Ex.		Goalie	
	Forward 1	Forward 2	Forward 3
Offense	Q: What’s the capital of Indonesia ?	How many Beatles were there ?	Where was the 1st Shogunate established
Defense	Forward 1 A: Bali (wrong)	Forward 2 4 (right)	Forward 3 Tokyo (wrong)

At this point the configuration of players would be as follows:

Offense		Goalie
	Forward 1	Forward 3
Defense	Forward 2	Goalie

The offense continues to ask questions until the last defensive forward is retired or until the defense retires the offense. If all defensive forwards are retired, offensive forwards may kick at the goalie. If the goalie answers correctly, the offensive forward is out. If the goalie cannot answer, the offensive team scores a goal. Only one goal may be scored per round. At the end of each round the defensive team goes on the offense.

The goalie’s role is solely defensive, and he/she cannot ask questions. Therefore, rotate positions after every round.

All questions should be based on general information. If a defender claims that a question is not based on general information, let the students decide on the matter. If a question is rejected, a new question must be asked. Two rejected questions in

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a row result in a free kick at the goalie.

Players must be able to answer their own questions if their opponents cannot. If a player cannot supply the answer to his own question, he is out, and his opponent remains in the game.

–V. Players give words and require that their opponents give antonyms or synonyms.

Ex. Offensive forward: talkative–antonym

Defensive forward: quiet (correct)

### SPIN THE BOTTLE

Goals : Speaking practice; generation of conversation  
Materials : Two or three cola bottles (optional); index cards  
Levels : Basic–Advanced  
Ages : Teenagers–Adults  
Group Size : 3 or more

“Spin the bottle” is a game played by American teenagers in which the players sit in a circle on the floor with a bottle placed on its side in the center. The players take turns spinning the bottle. When the bottle comes to a stop, the neck will be pointing in the direction of one of the players in the circle. The person who spun the bottle has the right to request that player to perform a task or action.

Prepare for the game by writing a series of linguistic tasks on index cards or slips of paper. If desired, tasks may be structured so as to focus on specific grammar points.

Divide the class into groups of from 3 to 6 players and have the groups sit in circles around tables or desks. Place a bottle and a stack of index cards face down in the center of each group. Pencils may be used in lieu of bottles, with the player in whose direction the tip of the spun pencil points designated to perform the task.

Have the players take turns spinning the bottle. When the bottle stops, the spinner should draw a card from the top of the stack and read the contents to the designated player, who must respond accordingly. However, if the neck of the bottle

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points to the spinner, the player to the left draws the card and the spinner must perform the task. Tasks have been divided here into three basic categories: (1) questions to be answered, (2) verbal descriptions, and (3) role play situations.

Role play task cards are "wish cards." Draw asterisks at the top of these cards, and specify that whenever an asterisk appears, all players must perform in pairs or groups of three.

Once a player has answered a question or given a description, the others should comment and ask follow-up questions.

### SPIN THE BOTTLE

Sample tasks — basic level

1. What did you do today ?
2. What did you do yesterday ?
3. What are you going to do tonight ?
4. What are you going to do tomorrow ?
5. Which country would you like to go to most ? Why ?
6. Do you like pets ? Why or why not ?
7. Who is your favorite sports star ?
8. What do you enjoy most in life ?
9. What did you do on your last vacation ?
10. What will you do on your next vacation ?
11. What movie did you like ? Why ?
12. What sport do you like to play or watch ?
13. What kind of house would you like to live in ?
14. How many children would you like to have ?
15. Which TV program do you like ? Why do you like it ?
16. Tell us about your best friend.
17. Tell us about your family.
18. Tell us about your hobby and why you like it.
19. Tell us about your job or school.
- 20\* Order some food in a restaurant.
- 21\* Invite a friend to a movie.
- 22\* Ask someone in the class for a date.
- 23\* Buy 2 train tickets from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.

24\* Ask your friend to lend you some money.

25\* Telephone a dentist's or doctor's office and make an appointment.

### **HIGH CARD DRAW**

Goals : Practise in giving commands and following instructions

Materials : A deck of playing cards

Levels : Intro-Advanced

Ages : Teenage-Adult

Group Size : 2-10

Demonstrate high card draw to the students by dealing a card to one student and one to yourself. Turn the cards over and explain that the person with the higher card is the winner.

Give the loser a command which he/she must perform.

Next have the players sit in a circle. Select one student as dealer. Have him/her deal one card clockwise to each player. The dealer then plays each player separately, drawing a new card each time. If the dealer wins, he gives a command or instruction to the other player; if he loses he must carry out his opponent's command or instruction.

Commands should not be of an unreasonable or impossible nature.

At the end of each round the deal passes clockwise to the next player.

- V. For larger classes divide the students into small groups, providing each group with a deck of cards.
- V. Have the winning player ask the losing player a question. If the losing player is the dealer he must surrender the deal to the winner.
- V. Have the winning player ask the losing player a question. If the losing player cannot answer he is eliminated. Continue the game until only one player is left.

### **QUESTION HUNT**

Goals : Physical activity; speaking practice

Materials : Questions provided by the teacher

Levels : Introductory-Advanced

## LANGUAGE GAMES IN A MODERN LANGUAGE TEACHING FRAMEWORK

Age : Teenage–Young Adults

Group Size : 6 or more

Divide the students into two-member search teams.

As the hunt begins, one teacher serving as coordinator remains at base center with the students while the other teachers or teacher-assistants go to their assigned hiding places.

When the teachers have had time to reach their hiding places, the coordinator sends the search teams to find them. As the students locate each teacher, the teacher asks them a question. The students write down the question and answer it. Then they return to base and report the question and answer to the coordinator.

After 20 minutes the teachers move to new hiding places. Students must again locate them and report new questions and answers. The teachers continue to change locations until the time for the hunt elapses.

Each team receives a point for finding the teacher and a point for correctly reporting an answer to his question. The team with the highest score receives the grand prize. All other teams receive secondary prizes.

–V. If students have difficulty locating the teachers, give hints as to their whereabouts.

### QUESTIONS FOR QUESTION HUNT

Team 1:

- Position 1. What does your father do ?
2. Where are you from ?
3. What can you do in the summer ?

Team 2:

- Position 1. What's your mother's name ?
2. What is small and heavy. Name one thing.
3. (Point to your hand.) What's this.

Team 3:

- Position 1. How many chairs are there in your home ?



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2. Are there any windows in your living room ?
3. Is there a restaurant near Soai University ?

Team 4:

- Position
1. Are there any oranges in your room ?
  2. What does your father like to drink ?
  3. What color are the walls of your kitchen ?

Team 5:

- Position
1. Whose room is room 355 at Soai university ?
  2. How much does a coca cola cost in yen ?
  3. What kind of steak would you like: rare, medium or well-done.

Team 6:

- Position
1. Are there 3 bedrooms in your house ?
  2. Can your mother drive a car ?
  3. What would you like for breakfast ?

Team 7:

- Position
1. When do you come to school on Monday ?
  2. Do you have any brothers or sisters ?
  3. Does Soai University have a tennis court ?

Team 8:

- Position
1. How many textbooks do you have ?
  2. Which city is bigger: Tokyo or Osaka ?
  3. Which one do you like better: dancing or singing ?

Team 9:

- Position
1. How many trains do you take to Soai University ?
  2. How many textbooks do you have ?
  3. Where do you live ?

**DISCUSSION FORMAT-*WHICH ONE?***

- Goal : To practice giving short answers  
Materials : Handout  
Levels : Introductory-Basic  
Age : Teenage-Adult  
Group Size : 2 or more

Divide the class into pairs. Have each pair alternate in asking and answering the question.

After the first round has been completed, have a member of each pair turn their paper over and answer questions read by their partner. Have students in each pair switch roles.

V+. With an intermediate and advanced class have the students expand the questioning and answering to allow for free discussion.

Ex. Which city is bigger: Tokyo or Osaka?  
answer: Tokyo

Ex. Which food do you like more: sushi or soba?  
answer sushi.

Which color do you like better: red or green?

Which country is bigger: Japan or China?

Which music do you like best: rock and roll or folk music?

Which sport do you like best: swimming or skiing?

Which month is first: January or February?

Which city is American: New York or London?

Which train is more crowded: the Yotsubashi or the Midosuji?

Which language do South Americans speak: French or Spanish?

Which baseball team plays in Tokyo: the Giants or the Tigers?

Which country is in Asia: India or Brazil?

## LANGUAGE GAMES IN A MODERN LANGUAGE TEACHING FRAMEWORK

Which one is newer: TV or the movies?

Which number is smaller: 170 or 12?

Which one do you like best: the beach or the mountains?

Which word is longer: walk or run?

Which actor is older: Ken Takakura or Toshiro Mifune?

Which do you like to do better: sing or dance?

Which food is more expensive: hamburger or steak?

Which color is darker: grey or yellow?

### FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Goals : Brainstorming; question practice

Materials : Pictures, tape, questionnaire

Levels : High Intermediate-Advanced

Age : Adult

Group size : 1-20

Present the class with photos, a taped voice sample, and a handwriting sample of a person with whom you are acquainted

Divide the students into either pairs or small groups. Have them discuss a list of questions concerning the person, instructing them to guess at the answers. Remind them to use their knowledge of foreign customs and characteristics in selecting their answers, e. g., American or British preferences concerning sports, food, etc.

Discuss the guesses with the entire class. Then play a tape recording of the answers made by the person. Have the students comment on answers they found surprising.

Follow-up: Have the students discuss national and racial stereotypes their pervasiveness, uses, dangers, etc.

+V. In a company class, have the students listen to evaluate whether the person could be an effective member of their company.

## LANGUAGE GAMES IN A MODERN LANGUAGE TEACHING FRAMEWORK

- +V. Record the answers out of sequence and have the students match the questions and answers.

### SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE - FIRST IMPRESSIONS

1. Where was he born ?
2. How old is he ?
3. What kind of work does he do ?
4. How long has he been in Japan ?
5. How long will he stay in Japan ?
6. What did he study at the university ?
7. What are his hobbies ?
8. What are his favorite sports ?
9. Where does he live in Japan ?
10. What's his favorite American food ?
11. What's his favorite Japanese food ?
12. Does he smoke ? If so which brand ?
13. Does he drink ? If so what ?
14. Is he married ?
15. Does he have any children ?
16. Does he like *natto* ?

### WHERE IN THE WORLD

- Goals : Question formation practice; vocabulary acquisition  
Materials : A world map; question cards  
Level : Introductory  
Age : Adult  
Group Size : 1-20

Spread a world map out on a large table or elevated surface. Tell the students they have 20 questions to discover which country you have selected. Distribute the question cards, and begin. The student who guesses which country you have thought of chooses the next country.

## LANGUAGE GAMES IN A MODERN LANGUAGE TEACHING FRAMEWORK

As in all 20-question games, only yes-no questions can be used. If a student is asked a question which he cannot answer, he should say "I don't know." The student who asked the question should then ask a different question.

Note: The U.S.S.R. and Turkey are in both Europe and Asia. Mexico is usually considered a North American country.

At times, the teacher may be forced to make arbitrary decisions. For example he may decide to lump the Carribean and Central America into one region, or to count Greenland as part of Europe.

+V. Beginning with basic level have the students produce their own questions without prompting.

### Questions for "Where in the World"

1. Is it north of the equator ?
2. Is it in Africa ?
3. Is it in Central America ?
4. Is it an old country ?
5. Is it in South America ?
6. Is it a big country ?
7. Is it in the Pacific ?
8. Is it west of the International Dateline ?
9. Is it in North America ?
10. Is it in Europe ?
11. Is it green (or other color words) on the map ?
12. Does it have a seacoast ?
13. Is it in Asia ?
14. Is it between  $0^{\circ}$  and  $45^{\circ}$  longitude ?
15. Is it between  $45^{\circ}$  and  $75^{\circ}$  latitude ?
16. Is it a hot country ?
17. Is it a famous country ?
18. Is it in Northern Europe ?

## LANGUAGE GAMES IN A MODERN LANGUAGE TEACHING FRAMEWORK

19. Is it in the Pacific?
20. Does it begin with a letter from "a" to "m"?

### TELEPHONE TALKS

- Goals : Listening practice; speech-making; free conversation  
Materials : Slips of paper  
Level : High Basic-Advanced  
Age : Teenage-Adult  
Group Size : 2 or more

Divide the students into pairs. Have each pair sit as far as possible from other pairs. Have the students sit back-to-back so that they cannot see each other's faces.

Give one student in each pair a slip of paper with a general topic, e. g., "My family," "A good place to take a vacation," "My work," etc. The student with the slip gives a minute-long speech on the topic. When he finishes, the other student asks him as many questions as possible. Together, the students should generate as much topic-centered conversation as possible.

Students should request new topics when ready.

- V. Have the students exchange partners and relate their previous partner's speech.
- +V. Have the student repeat what he can remember of his partner's speech.

### WORD SUMO

- Goals : Vocabulary building; focus on morphology  
Materials : Slips of paper  
Levels : High introductory-Low advanced  
Ages : Teenage-Adult  
Group Size : 2-3

Point out that weight is often the deciding factor in a sumo match. Tell the students that length decides the outcome.

Write the letters of the alphabet on separate sheets or cards. Have a student

## LANGUAGE GAMES IN A MODERN LANGUAGE TEACHING FRAMEWORK

draw a letter from the bag.

In each group have the first student give a word beginning with the letter. The student who provides the longest word is the winner.

Ex. 1st student: ant  
2nd student: aunt  
1st student: artist  
2nd student: artistically  
1st student: authoritatively

If a student produces a word of identical length to the word immediately preceding his, a "sudden death" is declared. The student who gave the preceding word must provide a longer word or lose.

Ex. 1st student: welfare-7 letters  
2nd student: washing-7 letters  
1st student: woebegone-9 letters  
He wins.  
wastrel-7 letters  
He loses.

V. List the words on the board. At the end of the activity, have the students choose any of the words listed and make the longest sentence possible. Give extra points to the student with the longest sentence. If the sentences are of the same length, declare a "sudden death," and have the students choose another word and try to make the longest sentence.

### WEIGHT LIFTING

Goals : Lengthening sentences  
Materials : None  
Levels : Basic-Advanced  
Age : Adult  
Group Size : 1 or more

## LANGUAGE GAMES IN A MODERN LANGUAGE TEACHING FRAMEWORK

Write a simple sentence on the board. Ask the students working individually to lengthen the sentence by adding as many words as possible.

Ex. The man ate at a restaurant. – 6 words

The young man ate spaghetti at the new restaurant. – 9 words

The tall, balding but not altogether unattractive man ate ravenously and with little regard for his appearance at the very restaurant when the Archduke Ferdinand was assassinated, precipitating the catastrophe known to the world as World War I. – 38 words

Have the students read their sentences to the class. Record the number of words correctly added and encourage the students to produce longer and longer sentences.

Remind the students that they are not competing with each other but rather with themselves.

With each increase of 10 words in a sentence tell the students they have moved up to another weight lifting rank.

–V. Assign words to the students to use in increasing sentence length.

Ex. Write on the board: next, quickly, big, young The man ran to the store.

Students write: The big young man ran quickly to the next store.

+V. In a mixed class assign more advanced students to work in pairs with lower level students and help them to expand their sentences.

## CONCLUSION

Games at the moment retain a secondary role in language teaching. They are used primarily to provide extended practice for previously introduced material, for review or as a substitute for dull or unsatisfactory material. But interest in games is constantly growing. In the future games may play an increasingly prominent role in language teaching. No language teacher can afford to ignore games and the great variety of language practice which they can offer students.