

PROGRESSIVES IN THE CLASSROOM

3.1. TEACHING PROGRESSIVES

Teaching grammar, although controversial, is inherent to the process of language teaching. With secondary school learners, teaching grammar is more difficult than with other categories of learners.

Firstly, they know little about grammar even in their own language. The syllabi regulating English language teaching and Romanian language teaching do not seem synchronised because in many cases secondary school learners apprehend certain grammatical categories in English before they learn them in Romanian, eg. Comparatives and superlatives, the passive voice, conditional clauses, result clauses. It is true that explicit grammar does not have to be taught at all times, but there are cases when rules and grammatical explanations help students understand and learn structure and the way it functions.

Secondly, secondary school learners find little motivation in studying English in general and grammar in particular. With them, all the activities in the classroom must be carefully planned in order to raise their interest and make them willing to fulfill the given tasks. Each time they are faced with any kind of difficulty during this process of language learning, students' interest diminishes and teachers must help them overcome the obstacle and reactivate them.

The progressive aspect along with the perfective are two of the biggest challenges for Romanian learners of English. With young learners especially, there is a tendency of matching the newly-learned structures of a foreign language to the ones existing in their own language. Since in the Romanian grammar such structures do not exist, the acquisition of their form and meaning is a difficult process.

The progressive and the perfective tenses are necessary for true proficiency. As remarked by Quirk (1985), there are six tenses past/present/future simple, present perfect and the progressive present and past that lead to accuracy.

These tenses may be approached as a series of individual forms, each with a set of rules, but it is essential for students to work on them in larger contexts where they can understand better the interaction between time and aspect, having the possibility to understand the function of tense in the English language and the meanings that it conveys.

Students should be provided with as much opportunity as possible to deal with the forms of the tenses, practise them and interpret the interaction of the tenses in conveying meaning.

One of the goals of this material is to illustrate several methods, techniques and activities to introduce these tenses to learners and to practise them. This subchapter contains some strategies that can be used to introduce the present and the past progressive and they also highlight the difficulties that may arise along the way.

3.1.1. TEACHING THE PRESENT PROGRESSIVE TENSE

Teachers can introduce the present progressive by performing actions and explaining to students what they are doing at that very moment or they can show students pictures or videos of people performing different actions and asking the following questions, as suggested by Rosemary Aitken in *Teaching Tenses* (1992, p. 11):

<i>What am I doing?</i>	⇒	<i>You`re fishing. (or short answer: Fishing)</i>
<i>What are you doing?</i>		
<i>What are you doing?</i>	⇒	<i>I`m reading. (Reading.)</i>
<i>Is he verb or verb?</i>		
<i>Is he reading or writing?</i>	⇒	<i>He`s reading. (Reading.)</i>
<i>Why has he got a noun?</i>		
<i>Why has he got a hammer?</i>	⇒	<i>He`s mending the fence.</i>
<i>Why is he/what`s he doing + place?</i>		
<i>Why is he/what`s he doing at the station?</i>	⇒	<i>He`s waiting for a train.</i>

Before getting used to the correct form, spelling and pronunciation, 5th and 6th-grade students will make the following spelling mistakes:

**danceing, *writeing;/ *studing, *plaing;/ *runing, *swiming;*

These mistakes can be avoided by choosing verbs carefully at early stages and by providing lots of examples and a lot of practice.

Another common mistake is the result of use of contracted forms. There are two different situations: students may either refuse to use the contracted forms because they have been taught that they are not the accepted norm in a conversation or they may misproduce or mishear these forms: *his* instead of *he`s*, *your* instead of *you`re*, *their* instead of *they`re*.

Learners of English at early stages may also omit the forms of be, producing sentences like: **You smiling at me.*

Students may also try and use verbs that are not normally used with the progressive like stative verbs or verbs of perception: **I am having a dog./ *I am seeing you.*

This situation may be isolated and students may be given supplementary information once this tense has been properly introduced and practised in point of form and meaning.

There are some other recurrent mistakes that students make in point of meaning and function due to the transfer of knowledge from their native language. The Romanian language has one form for the English present simple and present continuous, so Romanian learners will be tempted to use the present simple to describe actions that are taking place at the moment of speaking:

*Where are you now? / *I have lunch.*

Used literally the progressive may have unwanted functions of rejection or rudeness, as in:

Would you like to have dinner with me tomorrow? /I`m working on a research paper.

The regrettable habit which is illustrated by the combination between the progressive and the adverbial of frequency *always* may be confusing to young learners and they may use the present simple, missing to express what they actually want to:

*My sister is very annoying. She always *takes my things without asking.*

Students may also try to misuse the present progressive with future meaning, creating future forms of verbs of sensation for example:

**She is enjoying reading her favourite novel.*

There is also a tendency that students misunderstand the use of the present progressive in *when*, *while* or *if sentences* when the action seems to be repeated:

You do crossword puzzles when you travel by train.

instead of *You do crossword puzzles when you`re traveling by train.*

Since the present progressive tense has been introduced since the 4th grade, with 5th grade students, teachers should introduce all the meanings of the present progressive and create context which favour real communication.

Focus on form being overcome at this point, students would have the opportunity to learn and practise all the different functions of this tense, such as temporary individual action, temporary course of action, temporary or regrettable habit, future meaning.

Another strategy that might help is the presentation of present progressive in contrast with the simple present. It may be beneficial for students because they may become conscious from the beginning regarding the possibility to render present activities in two different ways, unlike Romanian, and they may also become aware of the differences between the functions and meanings of the two tenses more rapidly.

I am reading an English novel. // I often read English novels.

or

She always interrupts me. // She is always interrupting me.

Practising the two tenses in contrast in different communicative situations will help learners of English to assume a more responsible way of using the two tenses.

3.1.2. TEACHING THE PAST PROGRESSIVE TENSE

The past progressive expresses an action which occupies a continuous time in the past. Teachers could introduce this tense to students making them perform certain actions and making them stop at some point and then asking questions which imply that the action was in progress at some point in the past or that it was interrupted and therefore it could not be completed as intended by the performer.

According to Aitken (1992, p.39), the most appropriate questions to draw the target are:

<i>What were you doing +time marker</i>	
<i>What was she doing when you called?</i>	 <i>She was writing a letter.</i>

<i>Why didn't you +implied time marker?</i>	
<i>Why didn't you answer the door (when I rang)?</i>	⇒ <i>I was having a shower.</i>
<i>Why did you +implied time marker?</i>	
<i>Why did you miss the party last night?</i>	⇒ <i>I was expecting a phone call.</i>
<i>Why were you +place+implied time marker?</i>	
<i>Why were you in the garage last night?</i>	⇒ <i>I was repairing the car.</i>
<i>Where were you +time marker?(where the activity suggests a place)</i>	
<i>Where was he when you arrived?</i>	⇒ <i>He was watering the flowers.</i>

Although familiarised with the present progressive at the moment they are presented the past progressive, learners may undertake the same stages as they did with the present progressive.

There may appear spelling mistakes of the following type:

**She was skateing (instead of skating) when I saw her.*

**She was cring (instead of crying) when I entered the room.*

**The child was runing (instead of running) when suddenly he stumbled and fell.*

**She was liing (instead of lying) in bed.*

Sometimes students forget to use the two components of the progressive producing sentences like:

**She carrying a big suitcase. or*

**She was carry a big suitcase.*

Learners may also use you was instead of you were due to transfer from Romanian using you in line with the other singular pronouns:

**You was going to the gym when the accident happened.*

There are also some problems that learners have with producing an unstressed *-ing*, especially before *in*:

**She was sing in a restaurant.*

Stative and dynamic verbs may be treated as one category and they can be equally used with the past progressive:

**The soup was tasting delicious.*

**I was being a student at the time.*

This type of sentences may appear as a result of not knowing which verbs can not be used with the progressive or because the transitory nature of the past progressive is used inappropriately.

In the same way the past progressive may be used as a direct equivalent of the imperfect, leading to sentences like:

**My grandma was giving me small presents all the time when I was little.*

This is an example of a repeated action in the past which is expressed by a past progressive form instead of the correct simple past form. The same may happen when expressing an action which lasted a long period:

**She was walking for hours every day.// She walked for hours every day.*

An effective way to avoid or to correct these tendencies would be to practise past simple and past progressive in contrast. This way students would become aware more easily of the differences between the two tenses in form, meaning and use.

Secondary school learners of English have difficulties with both present and past progressive because the Romanian language does not have equivalents for translating them. At very early stages learners use simple forms to convey progressive meanings and the other way round. They have problems with using both the *be* verb and the *-ing* ending to form the present or the past progressive.

Verbs that are not normally used with the progressive represent another area of difficulty for students and this may be also because the English language has this verb categorisation that does not mirror in the structures existing in the Romanian language.

Young learners of English relate the newly learned English tenses to the Romanian language system in order to communicate in different situations. They do not feel comfortable

when they have to distinguish between time and tense, between simple and progressive forms or between simple and perfective forms. They need to visualise the relationship between different situations and the grammar used to communicate so that teaching grammar in a context is a much better approach than teaching grammar in separate sentences. Dealing with grammar in situations which are not contextualised students learn forms and rules and then use them in drills of different types and so they become able to produce correct forms of language. By doing so, students do not develop the ability to use grammar in oral or written interactions.

With secondary school learners, teaching grammar can be successful when it is connected to aspects of life they are familiar with or when it is connected to the idea of playing. In such contexts, striving to achieve communication, learners become less tense and more focused on meaning. It takes time to achieve accuracy, but at this level it is important that they get used to the existing and the functioning of certain structures which will eventually be assimilated and therefore used correctly in task achievement.

3.2. ACTIVITIES TO PRACTISE THE PROGRESSIVES

Teaching grammar is a complex process which must be well planned and thought of in order to be successful.

Sometimes explicit grammar explanation is needed, but most of the time it may be more efficient to introduce grammar through examples and activities. This way learners' acquisition occurs and they manage to use the language in a natural flow in life-like situations.

Grammar can be introduced and practised through the use of several activities which imply a real type communication in the classroom. These activities involve students in creating or keeping up with a complex world which they can create or improve according to their imagination and creativity. In their attempt to do so, students will become more motivated to learn new language or just to practise the one they already know. A class where such activities are used is very dynamic, making students move, make gestures, interact and speak in the target language a large amount of time.

There are a lot of such activities which can be used to practise the present and past progressive first in a controlled background and as students become familiar with the structures they can practise them in free activities which allow for self-expression. They are dialogues, role-plays, information-gap activities.

With 5th and 6th grade students, these activities are an important part in their development especially the make-believe games which consist in acting out stories involving the playful manipulation of ideas and emotions. It is a way of developing their ability to solve problems.

In this subchapter, I will describe some games that make students understand and practise the progressives. According to their relation to the four skills involved in language teaching: listening, reading, speaking and writing, games will be grouped into four categories. They have been taken from the following sites:

http://busyteacher.org/classroom_activities-grammar/tense/present_continuous-worksheets/,
<http://edition.tefl.net/ideas/games/continuous-aspect-activities/>,<http://english-4kids.com/games.html>,
<http://www.usingenglish.com/articles/35-fun-classroom-practice-activities-for-present-continuous-present-progressive.html>.

3.2.1. LISTENING ACTIVITIES TO PRACTISE THE PRESENT AND PAST PROGRESSIVE

Listening is active hearing in order to fulfill a certain task. As J. Harmer (1998) says "exposure to language is a fundamental requirement for anyone wanting to learn" a language (p. 69).

Listening activities are not the actual aim of a lesson they are just a means to fulfill certain tasks, training students to get information not only about grammar or vocabulary but also about pronunciation, rhythm, intonation, pitch and stress.

Although listening is just a receptive skill and thus viewed as a passive sequence of the lesson, it requires a lot of attention on the part of the students. In order to raise their interest and make sure students will be able to involve in post-listening activities, teachers should choose the listening material very carefully, adapting its content to the students' interest or just thinking the activity in an attractive way for students, tailoring it in the shape of a game.

Here are some listening activities which can be used to practise the progressives:

- **Present and past progressive songs/presentations/conversations**

Students listen to a song or a presentation or a conversation. They can be asked to perform different tasks while listening such as, listen and tick the correct answer/picture or listen and fill in the missing information or they may be asked to perform after-listening tasks such as answer the question or make a summary of what you have heard or describe the people that you have listened to.

Students may also be asked to perform pre-listening activities: they may be given to guess the content of the listening material from some pictures or they may be asked to arrange or to fill in the missing words in some sentences and then listen to see if they were right.

- **Shooting Blind**

This is a game based on a common use of the Present Progressive in films: someone who is a secret agent or who works for the police describes what is going on into a microphone. A version of this game that can be used in the classroom is to blindfold a student and to give him something like a pencil to pretend it is a gun. One person walks around the room and the other members of the class describe what they are doing, using a present progressive sentence each time, eg. He is standing in front of the blackboard. When the person with "gun" feels he is able to shoot the right person, they aim and make a shooting noise. The rest of the class have to judge how successful their shot was.

Another version of this game can be done with a video with the person facing away from the screen deciding when to shoot or arrest someone based on the description made by those who can see what is going on.

- **Picture Perfect**

Using an action-packed magazine photo, one student describes the picture to a partner, using the present progressive The partner draws what he is being told and when the drawing is ready the two students compare pictures. Then students change roles with a different picture.

- **Picture Search**

Students receive many books, magazines that have a lot of pictures which show people doing different things. Different students can have the same books or different ones. The teacher or

one of the students make sentences about the pictures using the present progressive. Students look for the picture that corresponds to the description, as quickly as possible.

- **Time Zones Guessing Game**

Using a map, a globe or list of time zones, a student chooses a country and describes what is probably happening there now without saying its name, eg. *They are eating sushi and wearing a kimono*. Students continue giving hints until their partner guesses which country they are thinking of.

- **Guessing From Hints**

Students guess the action or the person doing it from spoken clues. Students can guess the person from sentences like *He is probably sitting in front of a computer now*. The people described can be someone who the person speaking knows or someone doing a certain job. They can guess actions from clues like *Many people all over the world are doing it, My father is doing it and I guess your father is doing it too*.

3.2.2. READING ACTIVITIES TO PRACTISE THE PRESENT AND PAST PROGRESSIVE

Reading provides exposure to the language and just as with listening, students get better with it "the more they do it".

Reading is also a receptive skill but it is not seen as passive as listening. Students have to make a greater effort to get the information comprised in a text. Students can re-read a paragraph that they did not understand properly or they can stop and think for a while before continuing, so they achieve their goal more easily and less stressfully than with listening.

Reading, just as listening is generally an activity with a purpose: to extract information, to verify already existing knowledge, etc. In order for students to fully benefit from it, teachers must choose the text very carefully so that students can understand all the words or at least be able to deduce the meaning from the context.

Ensuring that the text is also interesting and engaging, teachers make reading part of the process of language acquisition. The easiest way to do so is for teachers to use games which are the most enjoyable classroom activities.

Some activities to practise the progressive using this skill are:

- **Present and past progressive texts/conversations**

Students are asked to read texts/dialogues and then they are asked to perform a range of post-reading activities such as *fill in the missing words*, *answer the questions*, *match the action with the name of the person doing it*, etc. Or just as with listening, students may be asked to do pre-reading activities of the same type and then they may be asked to read the text and see if they were right.

- **Make Them Doing It**

Students are given slips of paper with words written on them and they are asked to arrange the words in order to make correct sentences and then read out their completed sentences, eg. *She + is + wearing + a + pink + dress.*

They can make sentences about real things happening in the classroom or things that they want people to act out or just things that are true. The teacher decides if they eliminate the slips of paper already used in sentences or if they put it back in the game.

For students who have problems with reading or grammar, the words in this game could be written on slips of paper of different size or colour according to the classes they belong to.

- **Miming Games**

The teacher may give students a list of actions or complex processes and ask them to mime so that their classmates guess the action on the list. With complex processes, such as You are cooking fish, students will mime single actions that form the process one by one while the other students try to guess both the actions and the larger process.

As a variation of this miming game, both the students who are asked to mime and the students who have to guess the actions can be given a list of sentences they can use in their game.

- **Accusations**

Students ask questions using the Present Progressive about bad things that they imagine their partner is doing. Their partner must give a reason, they cannot say that they are not doing it. Because students need to be at least pre-intermediate to be able to explain their reasons in English, the teacher should give younger students a worksheet to choose from before they start making up their accusations.

- **This Is What I Am Saying**

Students are given a list of functional language which is used in particular situations, eg. *I am sorry for the inconvenience*. The teacher or another student reads one or more phrases from the list that describe a situation and the other students guess the situation with a present continuous sentence, eg. *You are apologizing*.

- **Bad Habits Sentence Completion Bluff**

Students are given worksheets with sentences they have to fill in, making true or made-up complaints about their classmates, their neighbours, eg. *My father is always asking me* Students read out their sentences. After questions about details, during which they can continue lying if the sentence was made up, their partners guess if the sentence is true or false.

- **Past Progressive Board Game (using when/while)**

This game can be played in pairs or groups testing the students' understanding in the past progressive tense. Students roll the dice and count according to the spaces on the board and read the half of the sentence given and create the other half, eg. *When the phone rang,* The winner is the student who get to the end or the one who has more points when the teacher stops the game.

- **Video Activities For Present Progressive**

Students can guess what is happening from the sounds on a video and check as many true sentences as they can about a paused scene, shout out Present Progressive sentences from their worksheet when they think they are true as the video is playing (they get no points if the action ends before they finish reading the sentence, as that would make the tense incorrect).

- **Celebrities Now**

Students search social media and read about what famous people are doing now, getting points for actions that are probably still happening when they are announcing them to the class, with extra points for interesting information. All reports to the class should be in the Present Progressive.

3.2.3. SPEAKING ACTIVITIES TO PRACTISE THE PRESENT AND PAST PROGRESSIVE

Speaking is a skill which can be viewed in two different ways: it can be controlled language practice of a certain grammar structure or vocabulary or it may be the use of language in general to perform an oral task.

As with listening and reading, teachers should make sure the topic they choose is close to the students, their environment, and their interests. It should offer students the opportunity to relate back to their life experience so that they actually communicate meaning and content and release themselves from the stress of not knowing what to say.

Speaking activities involve interaction between students and they provide feedback for both teachers and students letting them know what language problems students have and what they need to improve. At this point error correction should be made at the end of the activity because otherwise it would interfere with students` desire to actually speak.

Speaking could be the most beneficial skill for students and the shape of the activity is very important because if it is very well – thought, students will be so eager to speak that they will not even notice the effort they are making to speak in a foreign language, concentrating more on content and less on form. By doing so, students achieve communication, which is ultimately the goal of language teaching and learning.

The progressives can be introduced or revised in the classroom using activities such as:

- **Charade Call Out**

Students are asked to act out activities, eg. *brushing teeth*, *watering plants* and the rest of the class has to guess what they are doing using the present progressive.

As another version of this game, students are asked to act out different actions at the same time, looking around to see what their classmates are miming and at some point the teacher freezes them and asks them for eg. *What was Sarah doing when I stopped you?* Students then ask and answer using the past progressive.

For each version of this game, it would be easier with young students if the teacher provided lists of activities.

- **What Are You Doing?**

The teacher asks students to make a list of different places they visit throughout the week. Then students work in pairs using this list: the first student tells the other where he is, choosing a place from the list, eg. *You are at school*. The second student says what he is doing there, eg. *I am playing with my deskmate*.

- **The Luck Of The Draw**

The teacher writes several times on small slips of paper and put them in a bag. Students are asked to draw a time from the bag and tell what they were doing at that time using the past progressive.

- **Bad And Worse Actions**

Students take turns complaining about how annoying their family members or friends are. They can make up imaginary friends to complain about, eg. *My sister is always playing with my things*. When students run out of ideas they discuss which person sounds the most annoying and guess how much of what has been said about that person is true.

- **Picture Similarities And Differences**

The teacher gives the students pictures of two busy locations. Without showing their pictures to each other, students must find out what the similarities and the differences between the two pictures are. It may be easier for them to find the differences rather than the similarities.

- **What Are You Hearing?**

Students guess what is happening from what they can hear: things that happen naturally in the classroom, eg. *The children are sitting down.*, sounds that the teacher or the other students make deliberately, eg. *Someone is clapping.* or things happening on a video or in a recording. The students guessing are asked to close their eyes or their view is blocked.

Students can guess what action they are hearing or who is doing it.

- **Memory Game**

The teacher asks one of the students to close their eyes and asks them questions about the people or things in the classroom. Students have to describe what is happening now from memory.

The same thing can be done with a picture or a scene from a video that the students can only look at for a short time.

A version of this game is to ask students to look around and memorise what they see, then ask them to close their eyes or step out of the classroom. Meanwhile, things are changed. When opening their eyes or coming back into the classroom, students have to describe the differences using the present progressive, eg. *Andy is wearing a red coat.* or they can use the present and the past progressive in sentences like *Andy was wearing a green coat. Now he is wearing a red one.*

- **Strange Explanations**

One student acts out as an accuser and asks the other why they were doing strange activities and the students must give explanations. Each question should start with *When I saw you,*, eg. *When I saw you, you were crawling on the floor.* The student asked might answer: *I was looking for the bubblegum that fell off your mouth.* Students should be encouraged to be as creative as possible.

- **Eyewitness**

Students are arranged into groups of five or so for an investigation role play. One student plays the detective and has to find out who committed the crime/ robbery. The other students are given cards which say what they were doing at the time of the crime. The detective asks questions and the suspects say where they were and what they were doing at the time. When the detective finds out who did it, he announces the name.

- **What You Didn't Do**

Students work in pairs and have to make a list of things they did not do yesterday. Then one student asks the other why he did not do a particular action the day before. The second student answers using the past progressive, eg. *Why didn't you answer the phone yesterday? I was watching TV.*

3.2.4. WRITING ACTIVITIES TO PRACTISE THE PRESENT AND PAST PROGRESSIVE

Writing is one of the greatest challenges teachers and students are faced with. It is considered difficult and boring at the same time so the activities involving this skill should be chosen carefully.

According to J. Harmer (1998), writing can be used in the classroom for many purposes and its efficiency depends on the following concepts.

Reinforcement: students may be asked to write sentences using the new grammar or vocabulary they have learned.

Language development: the process of writing help students learn because of the mental activity which they have to go through when writing sentences or texts.

Learning style: depending on students` learning style, any of the four skills may be used for a more efficient learning. Writing can be "a quite reflective activity instead of the rush and bother of interpersonal face-to-face communication"(p. 79).

Writing as a skill involves the use of writing for achieving tasks such as writing a postcard, a letter, an e-mail, a report, etc., knowing how to use punctuation, paragraph construction, and other writing conventions.

When choosing the type of activities involving the writing skill, teachers should do it according to students` age, interests, and level. Language games can be fun and students may find writing more pleasant in such a context. Students do not get immediate feedback so they may feel a little insecure when using writing but games may help them overcome this difficulty as well.

Some activities which can be used in the classroom to practise the progressives using this skill are:

- **Sorry, I Can`t**

Each student writes five statements about what they cannot do because they are doing something else at the moment, eg. *I cannot eat now because I am writing.* Students need to revise present simple and present progressive for this activity.

- **Look Around**

Students are asked to look around them and write sentences about things that are going on at that moment. Students may look around the classroom or they may look out the window and describe what people are doing.

- **A Letter Home**

Students are asked to write a letter to someone at home describing their life as EFL students: what they are doing in class as they pursue their English studies.

- **People Watching**

Students visit a public area for this, preferably an area with a lot of people. They have to take notes and then, the next day report to the class, using the past progressive.

- **Things In Common**

Students are asked to work in pairs. They must find present progressive sentences which are true about both of them, eg. *We are both sitting down*. To make it a challenge, students may be given one point for each sentence that none of the other groups thought of.

- **Present Progressive Projects**

Students are asked to draw a scene with as many pictures as they can showing people performing different actions. They can use pictures taken from magazines or found online or they can just draw them. They must label each person with what they are doing.

The project can be given context by making it advertising or instructional, eg. a poster showing all the things that are good or bad for the environment that people are doing in a town now.

- **Progressives Spelling Code Game**

The teacher gives students a list of numbers associated with each letter of the alphabet, eg. *A=2, B=5, etc.* Then the teacher reads out a sentence containing a progressive form. Students write down what they hear, add up the numbers associated with the letters and shout out the total. The first students to do this wins the round. This game is very useful with recognising contractions and different spelling in the progressive with verbs as swim, take, lie.

- **Drawing Competitions**

Students are asked to draw a sentence until the other students guess it, eg. *She is playing with a doll*. Another version of this game would be to ask students to draw and write as many sentences as they can using the present progressive in a given time.

- **The More Things Change**

Students are asked to write as many sentences as they can in a given time about things in common or differences between two different times, eg. *things people are doing now but they were not doing fifty years ago*.

As a conclusion, games are both enjoyable and useful. Students achieve different language tasks almost without realising, practising and improving their English.

Games can be used to develop all four skills and not only that. I have practised using them with students of different levels at different stages of the lesson and they have always helped me attain my goals. It is true that they are time-consuming and they need to be carefully planned because the class becomes more difficult to manage but the benefits are more important and greater than the inconveniences.

By integrating games in the classroom, teachers can make the acquisition of the four skills more enjoyable, more challenging and more realistic, preserving the surprise element that may arise in real communication.

They can be used to present new language, to practice or revise already introduced language structures or even to assess the degree of language acquisition. All these are achieved in a relaxed familiar environment which reinforces students' confidence and desire to use the English language.

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