Chapter 19

#SLIPPAWORD: Improving Students’ Awareness and Understanding of English Parts of Speech

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Abstract

The process of teaching and learning English grammar is complex. It can be boring and demotivating to students, while grueling to English language teachers. For second language users, it is important to them to learn and acquire the language grammar through meaningful and purposive process. Unfortunately, traditional pen and paper method usually deter second language (L2) learners to motivationally understand this important element of the language. One way to provide meaningful and purposive learning experience is by using language games. Thus, #SLIPPAWORD: A Parts of Speech Game, a grammar game that focuses on parts of speech is developed to overcome this problem. By using cards, learners will have to understand the rules of grammar in order for them to answer the questions correctly. This game is beneficial to L2 users as it allows for the English parts of speech rule to be deductively attained by those that play this game. Although this game was developed especially for English language teachers and learners, its possible application could be widespread due to its adaptable and sustainable characteristics.

Introduction

The process of teaching and learning grammar is an arduous task. It is deemed boring, difficult and demotivating even though it is a crucial element in comprehending the language. Hence, the process of learning grammar poses great challenges to both educators and learners. According to Wright, Batteridge and Buckby (1984), L2 learners must have a purpose or meaning to learn a language, only then the process of language learning will be significant to them. In order to help the learners to make meaning of the learnt grammar, it is recommendable for them to practice the knowledge. However, using the traditional paper and pen practice usually hinder the learners to motivationally understand this important element of the language. Thus, language game is imperative as it allows the students to practice or utilize the knowledge that they acquired in a non-traditional and interesting way (Uberman, 1998). Therefore, #SLIPPAWORD: A Parts of Speech Game, a grammar game that focuses on parts of speech is developed to overcome this problem. Through the use of cards, learners will have to recognize the rules of grammar for them to answer the questions. In addition, this game also flex the learners’ vocabulary skills as it requires them to use the material given to them. For that reason, it is hoped that by having a grammar language game may help to assist the L2 learners in empowering their grammar skills and ultimately their proficiency of English language.

#Slippaword is an excellent game for students to practice their understanding of English parts of speech. Students have to creatively think of the answer of the question that follow the category mentioned in the question. This game can be played with the audience of the teacher or it can also be played only with the assistance of a more proficient player. The game is targeted for players with low intermediate to advanced level of English proficiency. The number of players recommended for this game is from two to four.

#Slippaword Design layout

Enclosed in a box, this game is made out of three sets of cards. Each set (henceforth ‘deck’) of cards represent different main components that are required to fulfil the objectives of the game. The three decks of cards are sentence cards, consonant cards, and vowel cards. The sentence card deck consists of the questions that will be used during each round of the game. The consonant and vowel card decks comprises of individual letters with numeric values that act as the mark that will be used to score word a player’s word formation.
Playing #SLIPPAWORD

The game starts by shuffling all three decks of cards. Each player then receives six (6) consonant cards and four (4) vowel cards. Each of these cards is labelled with a number that indicates its value. A blank card can be used as any letter as required but has no value. The remaining stacks of consonant and vowel cards are placed face-down along with the question cards. The player who begins the game opens the top question card and reads the sentence aloud. Players are required to complete the sentence with a suitable part of speech as specified in the question card. Players are to do this by using the combination of consonant and vowel cards given to form a word. Players are also allowed to form more than one word using the cards given. The score for each word is recorded by adding up the value of all consonant and vowel cards used. The game continues with replenishing the cards that each player has, maintaining the ratio of 6 consonants and 4 vowels. Then, another question card being flipped over. The number of rounds being played before all scores are totalled up depends on the decision made by the players (i.e. five rounds, ten rounds, twenty rounds etc). If a player is unable to form a word for three consecutive rounds, all player cards (consonants and vowels) will be collected and reshuffled. Each player will then receive new consonant and vowel cards, continue with the game. The player with the highest score wins the game.

What Makes #SLIPPAWORD Unique

Most of other language games available in the market appear to be big and has many components in order to be played. In addition, other language games has a fix answer for the questions posed and when a person, say a student, play the same game again, over time the answer can be memorized and the novelty of the game will disappear.

This #SLIPPAWORD card game does not pose any of that problems as it is compact for easy storage and portability. It is also uncomplicated as it does not have many and it can be played with/without the assistance of a teacher.

By not having any fixed answers, it focuses to encourage creativity on the part of the player. Hence, it can be played many times without losing the novelty of the game.

#SLIPPAWORD can break the monotony of learning English grammar especially English parts of speech. It will test the students’ understanding of parts of speech and at the same time expand their vocabulary while playing the game. It can be played from two to four persons in one session and it is suitable to be used inside and outside of an English class. I can also be used by parents, or just basically anyone looking to fill their time with playing a game that can challenge and at the same time improve their understanding of the English parts of speech.
Strengths of #SLIPPAWORD

A. Fun
Players, especially students learning the English language, will have fun in playing #SLIPPAWORD as it breaks the traditional method of learning grammar. As they play the game, they are able deductively grasp the grammar rule of the English parts of speech, both form and function.

B. Enhance vocabulary
Apart from solidifying the understanding parts of speech, students will enhance their vocabulary as they need to provide the grammatically correct and meaningful answer.

C. Motivating
#SLIPPAWORD is a highly motivational game as it is challenging and amusing as the players/students have to actively think of the correct answer to answer the questions.

D. Inculcate interests in learning grammar
This fun and challenging game will arouse the players'/students' interests in learning and practicing their grammar knowledge. With its portable size, it can be played either indoor or outdoor depending on their preference.

E. Highly marketable
#SLIPPAWORD is a card-base game which is suitable for low intermediate to advanced English users. The original target groups for this product are secondary school students, foundation and matriculation students, and language teachers or instructors who can use this game as part of their English lesson. However, parents can also have a fun and educational time with their children when playing this game. So, this game can actually be used by many. Furthermore, it can be played on its own or can be facilitated by a language expert. The game can also be developed to other languages such as Bahasa Malaysia and Mandarin. In addition, it can also be expanded to not only testing on parts of speech but also tenses.

The Development of #SLIPPAWORD
This product has gone through several phases of development. The prototype for this card game was produced in November 2015. It was then showcased at the Melaka International Intellectual Exposition (MIIE) 2015 and was awarded the Bronze Medal. This was then followed by conducting research to study the impact of this product to the target group, as well as the response from the specific public of interest. Intellectual property rights application was made in December 2015. As part of the development process, an improved prototype was presented at 25th MELTA International Conference 2016 and feedbacks from teachers, educators, and publishers were gathered. This was followed by the presentation of a research paper that focused on the application of the #SLIPPAWORD in the teaching and learning of English parts of speech at the National Conference on Research on Language Education (RoLE) 2016. Findings of the research paper highlights that with the aid of an input enhancement device such as the #SLIPPAWORD, their awareness of the rule and form of English parts of speech had increased.
The statistics of the research indicated that the subjects were able to deductively grasp the concept of the use and function of parts of speech in sentences and passages by playing the game. The full research paper is published in the conference proceedings.

**Conclusion**

Based on the improvements that have taken place, this product is now close to its final developmental stage. This game has proven itself to be reliable in usage and can help improve its users’ knowledge and understanding of the English parts of speech. The widespread application of #SLIPPAWORD, especially in the area of English teaching and learning, is a positive possibility and has now become the main foundation of the development of the product.

**References**

