

## **Impact of Language Games in Promoting Additive Bilingualism to Address Learner Heterogeneity**

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Learner heterogeneity in the Sri Lankan English language learning context seems less addressed. Given this situation, the English language teacher and the students experience challenges in learning English as a Second Language when there are lower, average, and high learners in the same classroom. Despite scholarly attempts to address this concern, less attention is paid to the impact of using language games, which may promote Additive Bilingualism in the classroom to address learner heterogeneity. This study (a part of a PhD study) evaluated the impact of using Task-Based language games in a heterogeneous classroom in developing the students' motivation in English language learning, within the realms of the Inter-dependence Hypothesis and Socio-Cultural theory. It was evaluated with 5 teacher perspectives who taught seven English lessons through language games for 250 Grade 6 students, in an educational zone in Colombo District, over seven weeks. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed qualitatively through an inductive approach for recurring themes: [1]. Use of L1 as peer instruction.[2]. Use of the target language for classroom instruction.[3]. Use of L1 to introduce unfamiliar language. Based on the first theme, the use of L1 in the classroom when learning English through language games seems to promote Additive Bilingualism as the learners are spontaneously conversing with their peers in L1 during the task-based game as part of peer instruction. And the students feel a sense of belonging to their zone of Proximal development. More importantly, through the use of L1 as part of Additive Bilingualism in a heterogeneous classroom through language games, the learners are extrinsically and intrinsically motivated. Then they are not intimidated by making errors in the classroom. Especially, the lower-level learners are intrinsically motivated. Further, the higher-level learners feel more empowered as they are engaged in the learning process with an enhanced learner identity as peer instructors, using L1 during the language game. The second theme providing a new perspective of Additive Bilingualism, reveals that the teachers may use only L1 when giving common classroom instructions in a game-based approach in a heterogeneous setting. As a result, the learners from all levels feel inclusive. And there is no room for discrimination based on language proficiency, for lower and average-level learners.

Hence, during the language game, they feel connected with their higher-level peers. The third thematic implication further validates the Additive Bilingualism. When the unknown language components are introduced during a language game, use of L1 to explain the unfamiliar language structures seems essential, as otherwise, it may hinder the interest of game-based learning, especially for lower- and average-level learners. Hence, Additive Bilingualism could implicitly enhance learner motivation in a heterogeneous English classroom through language games. It is suggested to design game-based English lessons incorporating Additive Bilingualism, especially in a heterogeneous setting, as it motivates learners intrinsically and extrinsically. The game-material design with short explanations in L2 makes English learning more effective with a game-based approach, for lower and average level learners. However, the findings have limited generalizability in a smaller sample.

**Keywords:** Additive bilingualism, Language games, Learner heterogeneity, English, Sri Lanka