

# A Study on the Current Situation and Strategies of Teachers' Guidance Behaviours of Language Games in Language Teaching Activities of Kindergarten Classes

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**Abstract:** Early childhood stage is an important stage of children's language development, language teaching is also an important part of kindergarten teaching, games are the basic form of kindergarten activities, language teaching in the form of games is in line with the characteristics of children's physical and mental development, and teachers' scientific guidance in children's language play activities is conducive to the development of children's social, emotional, cognitive, and linguistic abilities. This study took Kindergarten A in Chengdu City as the research object, and aimed to understand the current situation and existing problems of teachers' guidance behavior in language play in kindergarten class by observing and recording teachers' guidance behavior and interviewing teachers' knowledge of language play. The results showed that: in the language games of kindergarten children, the stimulation of teachers' language guidance is mostly for young children; teachers participate in the games mostly as educators and less as players; teachers pay more attention to the rules of the games in their guidance and lack attention to the plot and roles; and they mostly use commands and actions to give guidance. In this regard, the following educational suggestions were made: to increase teachers' awareness of the initiative of guidance, to enhance teachers' participation in the game as players; to strengthen teachers' focus on guidance; and to utilize scientific guidance methods.

**Keywords:** Large Children, Language Play, Teacher-Guided Behaviours

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## 1. Introduction

From the perspective of individual growth, the ability to master the mother tongue in early childhood not only affects the basic quality of the individual, but also has an important impact on the overall language ability of the nation. [1] As young children are in the critical period of language learning, language games should become an important content and form of language education in kindergartens, which is the need of the time for China's early childhood education to take games as the basic activity and the high-quality development of preschool education. [2] Language games are valuable in stimulating children's desire for language expression, enhancing communication and cooperation among children, enriching the content of children's daily language, improving

children's ability to use language, exercising children's reaction and thinking skills, and cultivating good moral qualities and sentiments in children. [3]

Since 2006, there has been a gradual increase in the number of research articles on teacher guidance or intervention in early childhood play. [4] In language play activities, the emphasis on teacher guidance and timely assistance is based on the basic characteristics of children's language and thinking development, which emphasize the need for teacher guidance in language play. [5] The "ontological value" of guidance is to fully assess the child's inherent developmental potential - the "growth needs" - and the teacher's actions are aimed at arousing the child's "desire" and confidence to grow and to promote the child's independent growth. This is the driving force behind the child's existence and development as a social

being. The "ontological value" of teacher guidance is the only way for children to have the motivation and capacity for sustainable development. [6]. However, there is a lack of professional competence in kindergartens, and teachers' guidance in language play is not ideal. In this study, we observed, interviewed, and analyzed the current situation of teachers' instructional behavior in language play at Kindergarten A in Chengdu and made recommendations based on this observation.

## 2. Study Approaches

### 2.1. Study Target

This study was conducted with the children and teachers of the kindergarten class in Chengdu Xingxinghe Kindergarten. The conclusions were drawn by observing and recording teachers' instructional behaviors in language play activities and interviewing teachers' perceptions of language play instruction.

A total of 71 older children and 7 teachers were surveyed in this study, with a total of 68 valid subjects, including 6 teachers and 68 children.

### 2.2. Study Tools

#### 2.2.1. Observation Record Sheet of Teachers' Instructional Behavior of Language Games for Older Children

In Chengdu Xingxinghe Kindergarten, the author takes turns to observe and record 2 large classes, each of which is observed 4 times, for about 20 minutes each time, and fills in a pre-designed observation record sheet according to the actual situation. The author's observation record sheet mainly refers to the observation record sheet in Zhao Xueli (2017)

"Problems and Countermeasures of Teaching Games in Kindergarten Language Games", and then prepares it according to its own actual situation and into [7]. The teachers' instructional behaviors were recorded on site, and the information was organized immediately after the observation. The analysis results were tallied in the form of percentages, retaining two decimal places.

#### 2.2.2. Interview Form of Teachers' Instructional Behavior in Language Games for Older Children

This study used a structured interview method to obtain detailed insights from teachers about language play and instruction based on pre-determined questions, and the outline of the interview was tailored to the context. Each teacher was interviewed and the entire interview was recorded with the consent of the interviewee.

## 3. Study Results and Analysis

### 3.1. Distribution of Subjects Initiating Instructional Behavior in the Use of Language Games

This paper draws on Li, Heung (2013) who mentioned in his paper that there are two main subjects that inspire teachers to initiate mentoring behaviors: one is teachers and the other is young children [8]. From the statistical results in Table 1, it can be seen that the number of teacher-initiated teacher-directed behaviors initiated by teachers was 32 times, accounting for 35.96% of the total, and the number of teacher-directed behaviors initiated by young children was 57 times, accounting for 64.04% of the total. It can be seen that in most cases it was the children who caused the teachers to instruct, while the teachers were in a passive state in most cases.

Table 1. About motivating teachers to guide the subject of the act (unit: times).

Motivating teachers to guide the subject of the act	Teachers	Toddlers
Number of times	32	57
Percentage (%)	35.96	64.04

### 3.2. The Role of Teacher Guidance in the Use of Language Games

In language game instruction, the author draws on Chen Ying's (2012) classification of three teacher identities as gamer, educator, and director [9]. The gamer is the person who participates in the game and plays it for the purpose of participation. The educator is the person who directly influences the quality development of the gamer. The director is the person who organizes and operates the whole game. The author's observations and statistics of the teacher's directing status during a month-long observation period are detailed in Table.

Table 2. Faculty mentoring status (unit: times).

Faculty mentoring status	players	Educators	Director
Number of times	14	52	23
Percentage (%)	15.73	58.43	25.84

From the statistical results in Table 2, it can be seen that the teacher acted as the director of the game 14 times, accounting for 15.73% of the total, the teacher acted as the educator of the game 52 times, accounting for 58.43% of the total, and the teacher acted as the director 23 times, accounting for 25.84% of the total. This shows that teachers mostly played the role of educators in language games, followed by directors and players.

### 3.3. Teachers' Instructional Concerns in the Use of Language Games Focused Distribution

In language games, the rules of the game, the roles of the game, the plot of the game, and the materials of the game constitute a complete system, which is also the main concern of the teachers' language game instruction. Through the author's record and organization of the instructional behaviors of the kindergarten's older class teachers, which can be seen in Table.

*Table 3. Focus of teachers' instructional attention (unit: times).*

Teacher guidance focus	Game Rules	Game Characters	Game Plot	Game materials
Number of times	41	14	18	16
Percentage (%)	46.07	15.73	20.22	17.98

From the statistical results in Table 3, it can be seen that in the language games of this kindergarten class, the focus of teachers' guidance was on the game rules 41 times, accounting for 46.07% of the total, the focus of teachers' guidance was on the game roles 14 times, accounting for 15.73% of the total, the focus of teachers' guidance was on the game plot 18 times, accounting for 20.22% of the total, and the focus of teachers' guidance was on the game materials 16 times, accounting for 17.98% of the total. This shows that teachers focused more on the game plot 18 times, accounting for 20.22% of the total. It can be seen that teachers' guidance focused more on whether the children were concerned about the rules of the game, and less on the children's interests and their language development ability.

**3.4. Distribution of Teachers' Guidance in the Use of Language Games**

**3.4.1. Distribution of Teachers' Language Instruction Styles**

There are various kinds of instructional languages, but according to the information collected from the author's observation in this kindergarten, there are several kinds of teacher language instructional methods: questioning language means that teachers communicate with children through a questioning tone; command language means that teachers communicate with children in a commanding tone; role language means that teachers integrate into the game and act

as a player to propose content related to the game; suggestion language is when the teacher communicates with the children in a tone of offering suggestions. This can be seen in Table.

From the statistical results in Table 4, it can be seen that the teachers' language instruction was mainly in the interrogative language 22 times, accounting for 24.72% of the total, the imperative language 40 times, accounting for 44.94% of the total, the role language 12 times, accounting for 13.48% of the total, and the suggestion language 15 times, accounting for 16.86 of the totals. The teachers' language instruction was mainly in the imperative language, followed by the interrogative language, the suggestion language, and the role language. From the author's interviews with teachers, I learned that "No.....", "No.....", and "No....." were frequently used in teachers' language instruction. "Get in line or we won't start the game." "Go back to your station right now or....." are command language instructions. The children dare not easily disobey the orders because of the teacher's educational authority status, so the children can only accept the teacher's orders. In fact, it is worthwhile for our teachers to reflect on whether we are "teachers" or "friends" of our children. The questioning style of language instruction, such as "What are you doing?" "What role are you playing?" "What are you going to do next?" Such interrogative language is basically meaningless, which not only interrupts children's thinking but also may interfere with the direction of play.

*Table 4. Teachers' language instruction methods (unit: times).*

Teacher Language Guidance method	Interrogative language	Command Language	Role-based language	Suggested Language
Number of times	22	40	12	15
Percentage (%)	24.72	44.94	13.48	16.86

**3.4.2. Teacher Movement Instruction Situation**

During the author's observation period, a total of 37 direct stopping actions were collected, which is a relatively large number. Direct stopping action is when children appear to be in conflict with their peers, or when they seriously violate the rules of the game, or when they do not conform to the actual routine, the teacher will directly stop the action in their hands and make them stop what they are doing. This is because teachers do not usually give instructions during normal play, but when problems arise, such as conflicts between children, teachers will directly stop their actions.

**3.4.3. Teacher Guidance Attitude Distribution**

The positive attitude means that the teacher actively pays attention to the game and gives guidance at the right time; the negative attitude means that the teacher shows great impatience to the game development and basically does not give guidance; the neutral attitude means that the teacher does not pay attention to the game progress and does not give guidance, but only pays attention to the safety of the children. The results of positive, negative, and neutral attitudes in the process of teacher guidance are shown in Table.

*Table 5. About teachers' mentoring attitude (unit: times).*

Teacher guidance on emotional attitude	Positive Attitude	Negative attitude	Neutral attitude
Number of times	19	28	42
Percentage (%)	21.35	31.46	47.19

From the statistical results in Table 5, it can be seen that teachers instructed emotionally positive attitudes 19 times,

accounting for 21.35% of the total, negative attitudes 28 times, accounting for 31.46% of the total, and neutral attitudes 42 times, accounting for 47.19% of the total. Teachers have a greater proportion of neutral attitudes in the guidance process, followed by negative and positive attitudes.

## 4. Discussions and Analysis

### 4.1. Analytical Discussion on the Initiative of Teacher Guidance

In language play activities, children are more interested in learning only when the teacher is actively involved. In teaching, the main character is the child, and the teacher is an aid to complete it, but the teacher should be involved and should play an accompanying and supporting role. [10] In the language games for older children, in most cases it is the children who cause the teacher to guide them, while the teacher is in a passive state in most cases. According to the author's observation records, the teacher's instructional behavior is mostly motivated by the children's difficulties in language play or by conflicts, and the teacher will only instruct them on purpose. When children occur in the process of play such as stagnation in the game, difficulty in getting involved in the current game situation, difficulty in communicating and interacting with others, and conflicts with peers over materials or other issues, teachers should pay attention to them in a timely manner and provide scientific and effective guidance, when necessary, which is convenient to be improved.

### 4.2. Analysis of Teachers' Guiding Roles in the Use of Language Games

The parallel "partner-role" and bottom-up "learner-role" instruction of language play takes full care of children's playful experiences. [11] When the teacher intervenes as a "player," the children tend to see the teacher as a player in the game, and they give more behavioral responses based on the game situation, with the highest number of "positive responses. [12] Teachers should intervene more as a player and integrate into the children's games to guide them, so as not to destroy the game situation, but also to increase the emotions between teachers and children, and to promote the development of children. In the older children's language games teacher's language game guidance role is more as educators to guide the game, although it can play a good educational role, but purely educator identity guidance, will destroy the game scenario set by the children themselves, is not conducive to the development of the game. During the game, the teacher's authoritative guidance tends to cause children's tension and oppression, which is not conducive to children's free play, and the effect of guiding the game also needs to be improved.

### 4.3. Analysis on the Focus of Teachers' Guidance Concerns

Teachers go to great lengths to set up the "perfect" play environment for children, depriving them of the right to create their own play environment. [13] Teachers focus on the

placement of play materials. In the interviews, teachers also talked about how children placed materials randomly during play, causing confusion and increasing the teachers' burden.

### 4.4. Analysis on the Way of Teacher Guidance

#### 4.4.1. Analyze the Language Guidance in an Imperative Manner

In my interviews with teachers, I learned that in the teachers' verbal instructions, there are often "No....." "No....." "Get in line or we won't start the game." "Go back to your station right now or....." are command language instructions. The children dare not disobey the orders easily because of the teacher's educational authority status, so the children can only accept the teacher's orders. It is worthwhile for our teachers to reflect on whether we are "teachers" or "friends" of our children. The questioning style of language instruction, such as "What are you doing?" "What role are you playing?" "What are you going to do next?" Such interrogative language is basically meaningless, which not only interrupts children's thinking but also may interfere with the direction of play.

#### 4.4.2. Analysis of Movement Guidance

From what the author learned, the teachers in this kindergarten work intensely, the teachers' professional education varies, and there are many non-professionals early childhood teachers who cannot do constant attention when the children are playing and do not know how to instruct, when to instruct, and how to instruct scientifically, so they mostly present a neutral attitude. In the cases that the author interviewed, teachers have a very heavy workload and tedious work, and often tend to bring negative emotions into their work, so they tend to have negative emotions.

In the data collected by the author, direct command language accounted for 44.94% of the teachers' language instruction, which shows that teachers instructed children's play in the tone of commanding things to complete the corresponding instructions. For example, "What are you doing? Stop quickly," "Oh, you are so noisy, keep your voice down!" "It's your turn, why are you dumbfounded?" "Well, you won't have a chance to play this game later." Children generally do not dare to disobey the teacher's instructions, and this kind of command language instruction accounts for a large proportion, and the teacher obviously becomes the manipulator in the game, ignoring the children's autonomy and initiative. Teachers who issue these commands appear to be instructing, but in fact they are hindering children's ability to think and discover for themselves. Teachers should reduce such command language guidance in their usual instruction and convert it into more role-based and advice-based language. Teachers should change their attitudes. Although ECE work is stressful and teachers have a heavy workload, when we are in such a position, we should respect and love it, actively engage in our work, and not let our emotions affect our work too much. After all, emotions are outwardly visible things that infect those around us, so when instructing, teachers need to be positive and go out of their way to infect children's emotions.

## 5. Proposals for Education

### 5.1. Enhanced Initiative of Teacher Guidance

Early childhood teachers are only spectators of the game when the children are playing, because they cannot read the children's play and cannot intervene in children's play, but can only watch and not act. They only come out to intervene when children are in conflict or danger, making many times children's play playful but not exploratory. [14] After giving children basic play attention, teachers should identify problems in a timely manner and help children who need guidance. Choose scientific and effective ways of guidance to help and carry out play, and actively guide the children, rather than the children taking the initiative to stimulate the teacher's guidance behavior and playing the role of a passive guide. This requires teachers to have even stronger observation skills and to have their own ways and means of accumulating them on a daily basis, forming their own systematic instructional theories for different problems, and improving their own ability to instruct language games.

### 5.2. Enhancing Teachers' Participation in Games as Players

In early childhood language play instruction, teachers mostly play the role of authoritative educators, giving direct authoritative instruction to children, often being manipulators of children's play, and rarely truly integrating into children's play situations and communicating with them. By participating in children's play as a player, teachers can naturally enrich and enhance the themes and plots of play, and implicitly promote the development of play and children's abilities. [15] Teachers can give authoritative guidance to young children in play as participants and players, not just as educators who play. They should also allow themselves to be truly integrated into the children's games and give them a good demonstration and communicate with them, so that they are more receptive to the instructional identity and behavior.

In kindergarten, teachers need to be aware of their roles and change their identities at the right time. In the language game instruction, teachers should recognize their roles and give guidance to children in time. It is easier for teachers to give the right guidance behavior and help the game to develop and carry out.

### 5.3. Raising Faculty Focus on Mentoring

The kind of guidance teachers choose will not only affect the emotions of children, but will also be directly related to the process and effect of the whole game. In instruction, teachers should carefully choose to use imperative language to guide them. A direct commanding tone can make children nervous, fearful, and submissive to the teacher's authoritative guidance. Behind this simple obedience is a harm to the children's psychology and a hindrance to the game. Therefore, teachers should carefully choose such language instruction, analyze the actual situation and choose the most appropriate language instruction, but they should still control the use of such

language.

Direct stopping actions interfere with the play process and are more likely to have an indelible impact on children. It may discourage children's play, directly affect their participation in the game, and reduce the pleasure brought by the game, so this kind of action instruction should be reduced. It is important to instruct children in a way that is easy for them to accept, so that not only can they be instructed, but they are also more receptive.

In terms of emotions, teachers should manage their own emotions and use a positive emotional attitude to guide children so that they can feel your positive emotions and he can happily accept your guidance in a relaxed atmosphere.

The guidance method is scientific and effective, and teachers should consider the children's own physical and mental development rules while guiding the children's games, combine the language game guidance principles, implement games based on children's real development level.

### 5.4. Enhancement of Teachers' Use of Instructional Methods

On the premise of respecting children's willingness to play independently, teachers consciously look for the generative points of children's experiences and the growth points of play, find the right time, seize the key points, and give children the most needed support and promotion. [16] Teachers should respect the children's own willingness to play and give them the space to play freely. Older children already have some experience in language development, but they may still have some one-sided perceptions, but this also becomes a prerequisite for children to play freely and inspire them to continue exploring, and teachers need to be receptive to these exploratory and challenging behaviors of children. Therefore, in language play teachers should not only respect children's own willingness to play, but also pay attention to them, find the right moment, give them timely guidance, and give them the support and heaps of movement they need most. But without impeding their free, spontaneous play.

In addition, when children play, teachers should understand that children are the masters of the game, the process of the game children to grasp and arrange themselves, teachers should not ignore this point, should let go of the children to play. Teachers should only play a guiding and supporting role, helping them to solve the difficulties in the game and helping the game to continue, rather than becoming the main character and controller of the game. It is important to give children the space to play freely, so that they can not only open their own brains to think, and constantly stimulate their interest to continue the game, but also help to grow their sense of "ownership" of the game.

## 6. Conclusion

The results of the study showed that in the sample kindergartens, teachers presented many common characteristics in language play instruction for older children. They are mainly reflected in teachers' lack of awareness of

actively guiding young children's language play; teachers mainly guide language play as educators; teachers pay more attention to game rules and game materials in guiding language play; and teachers mainly guide language play in a command and action way. In order to analyze the above characteristics and put forward corresponding strategies, it is necessary to improve teachers' awareness of active guidance in children's language games, to improve teachers' participation in children's games as gamers, to pay more attention to children's game plots and children's game roles, and to adopt a teacher guidance method that is more adapted to the characteristics of children's physical and mental development.

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