



USING GAMES IN TEACHING VOCABULARY TO YOUNG LEARNERS

Sheykhazarova Durdana

A Master Student Of The Specialty "Foreign Language And Literature",
Nukus State Pedagogical Institute, Karakalpakstan, Nukus, Uzbekistan

ABSTRACT

Over the last few decades, teaching English become a phenomenon in Uzbekistan, especially to young learners. English is taught as a main subject in kindergarten and elementary schools. Like any other children, they accept new foreign languages easily, but they get bored very fast if the teacher is teaching them using the old conventional methods and techniques. Teachers are responsible for finding out interesting and attractive ways to teach and motivate their students. The aim of this paper is to prove that games are effective tools when devised to explain vocabularies and they make it easier to remember their meanings.

KEYWORDS: Young learners, games, vocabulary, practical challenges, practical implications.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching young learners is very difficult compared with teaching teenagers or adults because young learners get distracted very fast. Children love to have fun and play, so teachers should choose suitable teaching methods that cater to children's nature. Games are one of the methods that could be used in order to avoid boredom in the classroom. They have a special role in any foreign language teaching. Both students and teachers will benefit from including games during class time. Furthermore, teachers may achieve all the educational outcomes through applying the use of games especially when teaching vocabulary. According to Harmer (2008), teachers of young learners should spend plenty of time examining and understanding how their students operate and think.

Although language structure is considered "the skeleton of the language," it agreed that vocabulary is "the vital organs and flesh" (Harmer, 1991). Vocabulary is the basic part and a key element to learn any language. Teaching vocabulary through the use of games has become crucially important for English language learners because they sustain enjoyment and interest in learning and encourage using the language in a fearless and creative manner to young learners.

Who Are Young Learners?

Young learners are agreed to be children from five or six years old who are in the first year of elementary schooling to twelve years old of age. However, the age of children is not necessarily an indicator of how mature they are. Philips (1993) stated that there are several factors influencing the maturity of children. These factors include their culture, sex, environment (city or rural), and parents. Also, their development should be taken into consideration. Some children develop very fast, and others might need more time.

According to Halliwell (1992), young learners possess good meaning interpretation skills without understanding the actual meaning of individual words. They use the limited vocabulary they know creatively and learn indirectly, as opposed to directly. In addition, their imagination is always ready. They take great pleasure and delight creating fun in what they do and say. Yetenberg (1990) characterized young learners as having some problems distinguishing the real world from an imaginary one that could make it difficult for their teacher to understand their reality perception and cope with it.

Young learners do not like to work alone, but to be accompanied by others especially when playing or working. They use their language skills before they are aware of them. Also, they learn by using body movement, mimics, and gestures. Furthermore, children have a very short attention span, so teachers need to keep this in mind when designing and choosing activities for their young students to be engaged in. It is imperative to praise young learners because they become motivated when their teacher supports their enthusiasm. Phillips (1993) assumed that younger children are going to be holistic learners if they are taught in a very young age. They respond to the meaning that underlies the language used without worrying about individual words or sentences. When teaching young learners, Phillips stressed that teachers should simplify the activities for them to understand what the teacher expects from them. The tasks teachers choose must be amusing in a way that young learners could easily reach the goals set for them. Also, the tasks must be motivating and stimulating so that young learners could feel satisfied with what they have done. In order for children to acquire English, they have to experience and hear the language when they are small. English is taught to young learners at elementary (primary) level for several reasons. According to Brumfit, Moon and Tongue (1991), children need to be exposed to the language and its culture from an early age in order to grow up with tolerance and understanding for others. Cameron (2001) stated that there are four things teachers need to keep in mind while teaching English to young learners besides knowledge and skills. Teachers must be conscious of how their students learn and think. Also, they must be able to find out what children are interested in and utilize it for language teaching. In addition, teachers should be equipped to teach their young student literacy in English and deliver the whole lesson orally.

Last, but not least, teachers should identify problems and difficulties while teaching the language.

How Is Vocabulary Learned?

The linguist, David Wilkins, stated that "Without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed." Young learners usually use labeling when they first start to learn to speak then categorizing skills (Thornbury, 2002). Thornbury stated that young learners develop a network building in which they construct complex ideas. They realize that there are other words such as synonyms and antonyms and others during this process.

There are several approaches and methods that could be used to teach English vocabulary to young learners. Using real objects that children could visualize later is a good way to learn vocabularies of the language. They need to listen to their teaching using the word and repeat it as well. Another method is the direct method where there is no translation and using the mother tongue is prohibited. The complete sentences in the target language are the only thing used in the classroom. Another method is the Total Physical Response (TPR) which is used a lot by teachers because children are hyper, physically active and could not concentrate for a

long time. However, using this method that includes games and a variety of activities will allow young learners to learn vocabularies of the language very fast. In addition, teachers of young learners encourage their students to communicate by using Communicative Language Approach (CLT) where they stress language meaning in context.

Teaching Vocabulary Using Games

Halliwell (1991) argued that due to the creative language skill young learners bring into the classroom, teachers have to provide them with a communicative atmosphere where they could express themselves. Also, because the language used in any activity is unpredictable, teachers have to encourage them to actively construct language for themselves. That is why games are important and useful. Not only they are fun, but also they create the desire to communicate and create predictability. Using games when teaching vocabulary to young learners require trained teachers who involve children in playing and mastered the linguistic part of the language. Rixon (1981) stated that understanding games will help teachers in finding and creating games that make their students learn while they play.

The importance of games in teaching vocabulary to young learners

Lewis (1999) argued that games are popular among children because they like to play. Through games, young learners could interact, discover, and experiment with their surroundings. Using games not only enhances students' motivation, but also provide an incentive and stimulus to use the language. Harmer (2008) stated that in order to have the ability to speak English fluently, young learners need to have the ability to know the language features and to process information immediately. Therefore, young learners must practice through variety and appropriate techniques that aid their information process and simultaneous operations of the language.

According to Allen (1983), games are important in teaching vocabulary because they highlight the necessary and important words to achieve the objectives of the game. Huyen Ang Nga, (2003) and Uberman, (1998) agreed that games create a fun and relaxed atmosphere where young learners could learn fast and retain words better. Vernon (2009) argued that games are an effective tool to teach vocabulary to young learners. Children participate and pay more attention because they enjoy themselves and the classroom and feel and do better during and after the game. Repetition will be less boring and fun for children to which consolidates their learning of new words.

CONCLUSION

When teaching young learners vocabulary using games, teachers must be patient in finding new and interesting ways so that students enjoy learning. Games can help young learners to learn their vocabulary effectively. Teacher should consider time and materials when designing or choosing the game. Although games have advantages and disadvantages when used to teach vocabularies, using them will enable young learners to acquire the lesson with fun where they can remember all

the vocabulary easily. Though games are very popular among young learners, they should not be overused. They should be chosen appropriately to students' level, interest, and context. Furthermore, it must be concerned with the presented topic

and vocabularies. Any game can be effective when it is used suitably to the topic and is controlled by wise and skilled teacher.

REFERENCES

1. Bransford, J. D., Brown, A. L., & Cocking, R. R. (Eds.). (2000). *How people learn: Brain, mind, experience, and school*. Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education.
2. Brown, H. D. (2001). *Teaching by Principle: an Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy*. New York: Longman.
3. Cameron, L. (2001). *Teaching Language to Young Learners*. UK: Cambridge University Press.
4. Gardner, H. (1999). *Intelligence reframed: Multiple intelligences for the 21st century*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
5. Graham, C. (2007). *Creating Chants and Songs*. Oxford University Press.
6. Harmer, J. (2007). *How to Teach English*. Pearson Education Limited.
7. Hancock, M. (1995). *Pronunciation Games*. Cambridge University Press.
8. Jacobs, G. M., & Kline, L. K. (1996). Integrating language functions and collaborative skills in the second language classroom. *TESL Reporter*, 29, 21-33.
9. Krashen, S. D. (1985). *The input hypothesis: Issues and implications*. New York: Longman.
10. Lee, S. K. (1995). Creative games for the language class. *Forum*, 33(1), 35.
11. Lewis, M., & Hill, J. (1992). *Practical Techniques*. Language Teachin Publications
12. Linse, C. (2005). *Practical English Language Teaching: Young Learners*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
13. McCallum, G. (1980). *101 Word Games*. Oxford University Press: Oxford.
14. Moon, J. (2000). *Children Learning English*. Macmillan Publishers Limited.
15. Orlick, T. (2006). *Cooperative games and sports: Joyful activities for everyone*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
16. Phillips, S. (1993). *Young learners*. Oxford University Press: Oxford.
17. Phillips, S. (1999). *Drama with Children*. Oxford University Press.
18. Richard-Amato, P. A. (1988). *Making it happen: Interaction in the second language classroom: From theory to practice*. New York: Longman.
19. Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CB09780511667305>
20. Rixon, S. (1996). *How to Use Games in Language Teaching*. Phoenix ELT: Hertfordshire.
21. Swain, M. (1993). The output hypothesis: Just speaking and writing aren't enough. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, 50, 158-164.
22. Ur, P., & Wright, A. (1992). *Five-Minute Activities*. Cambridge University Press.
23. Vale, D. (1990). *Early Bird 1*. Cambridge University Press.
24. Vernon, S. 2009. *The benefits of using Games*. Retrieved June 20th, 2014, <http://www.englishgames.com>
25. Ytreberg, L., & Scott, W. (1990). *Teaching English to Children*. Longman: New York.

