
Using Games as an Effective Strategy for Teaching Young Learners

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Annotation: The article is dedicated to the analyzing vocabulary instruction with the study of effective ways of teaching vocabulary in English which presents a certain interest both for the theoretical investigation and for the practical language use. Discusses the importance of using games in teaching young learners. The aim to highlight the importance of vocabulary learning as an essential part in foreign language learning.

Keywords: game, linguistic, co-operate, vocabulary, gesture, student-centered, tool, kinesthetic, comprehensible, implement, entertain

A game is a structured form of play, usually undertaken for enjoyment and sometimes used as an educational tool. Games are sometimes played purely for entertainment, sometimes for achievement or reward as well.

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.

Using games when teaching vocabulary to young learners require trained teachers who involve children in playing and mastered the linguistic part of the language. Understanding games will help teachers in finding and creating games that make their students learn while they play.

In a game one or more players could play to compete or co-operate according to a set of rules. Gaming is goal-defined, rule-governed and competitive that has a closure and engage the students. Games as an activity carried out by cooperating or competing decision-makers who want to achieve their objectives following a set of rules. Games are closed activities that have a beginning and an end with a winner who defines the end of the game. Games require cooperation with other members and competition against another team or players. While playing, young learners need to use the language and repeat patterns which will help in developing and improving their skills. Player could communicate with words, mime, use body movements, and gestures among many which guarantee fun and unpredictability [1].

Games are used to assist young learners during their language learning. They make classes entertaining and sustain effort and interest. They create an atmosphere of meaningful communication where young learners communicate before, during, and after the game. This atmosphere help in forming comprehensible input including what they understood as they listen and read and comprehensible output including writing and speaking. Also, games give a rise to emotions when language instruction becomes serious and dry. They help to decrease their nervousness and shyness especially if the game is played in small groups. Furthermore, games could involve all four language skills, speaking, writing, listening, and reading. Games give students an active role when playing promoting student-centered activities. When played in small groups, students could develop their skills of disagreeing in a polite way, asking

for help, and working with others. They encourage cooperation, team spirit, competition, and turn taking. Games encompass a number of intelligences such as visual intelligence when games involve drawing, interpersonal intelligence when they include playing with others, and kinesthetic intelligence when they provide hands-on elements like cards [3].

Therefore, young learners must practice through variety and appropriate techniques that aid their information process and simultaneous operations of the language. Games are important in teaching vocabulary because they highlight the necessary and important words to achieve the objectives of the game. Games create a fun and relaxed atmosphere where young learners could learn fast and retain words better. Moreover, games are an effective tool to teach vocabulary to young learners. The Implementations of Teaching Vocabulary Using Games.

There are two steps that must be kept in mind when implementing games to teach vocabulary to young learner by their teacher, grouping the students and giving explanation and instruction about the game. Sitting the students together encourage cooperation, but this does not mean that they have to be in groups all the time while they are working. Having a group of more than five students will result in counter-productivity where chaos might emerge. Grouping techniques of this kind will help in create a cooperative and competitive atmosphere among the members of the groups.

Giving Explanation and Instruction about the Game

It is important to explain the game to young learners in order to achieve the desired outcome and fulfill the goal behind its implementation. Teachers have an integral part in the classroom when implementing games because they have to give clear explanations and instructions about them so that students understand how to play and practice the list of vocabularies intended to be learned. If the teacher did not explain the rules and instructions of the game, choosing games as a method to explain vocabulary to young learners will be a waste of class time. There will be no outcomes if the students did not know what to do and they will get bored very fast.

Games, as stated before, are interesting methods to teach young learners vocabulary. They help students in learning their vocabulary effectively without boredom and they will acquire the lessons easily.

Using games by teachers in teaching process has following benefits:

- Provide a good model making its meaning clear
- Controlled practice. Elicit good imitation of new language and appropriate responses
- Communicative process. Give students a chance to use the language

Practical Challenges of Implementing Games in Teaching Vocabulary

Although games proved to be a successful method when teaching vocabulary to young learners, they give rise to some challenges for the teacher and the students. The first challenge is the noise and unorganized classroom. In order to manage the class, the teacher must understand the students' characteristics in order to create a good environment for learning. Teachers of young learners need to choose a variety of creative games to sustain young learners' attention instead of being occupied with something else. Creativity is an important aspect when choosing or designing games to teach vocabulary to young learners.

Another challenge teachers may face is that students sometimes want to speak in their mother tongue during the class and game to communicate with each other and their teachers. Teachers have to respond in English, even if the student is asking the teacher something in their native language. There should be a balance between the type of game, number of vocabularies, time, effort, and the use of the students' native language. Experienced teachers will have no problem balancing all these challenges while using games in teaching vocabulary to their young learners [2].

All in all, games motivate and entertain students but also help them learn in a way which aids the retention and retrieval of the material. Using games has become a popular technique exercised by many

educators in the classrooms and recommended by methodologists. Though the main objectives of games are to acquaint students with new words or phrases and help them consolidate lexical items, they also help develop the students' communicative competence.

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