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THE EFFICACIOUS IMPLEMENTATION OF GAMES INTO ELT TO YOUNG LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT

The article deals with the issue of applying educational games into teaching practice of young learners. The aim of this study is to examine the significance of games, educational purposes of games, the types of games and their classification. The research is also devoted to the analysis of crucial requisites, namely how to choose games, when and how to use them by outlining the views of outstanding scholars and educators.

Keywords: game, young learners, approach, communicative competence, interaction, intelligence, language skills, cognition, linguistic, communicative, competitive, co-operative, classification, game selection requirements

INTRODUCTION

Language learning is a challenging task which can sometimes be thwarting. In order to make this period more intriguing and easier teachers often use games. Games are children-centered in that they are dynamic in playing the games, and games can often be organized such that young learners have the foremost roles with teachers as facilitators. Meanwhile, teaching speaking to young learners is not a straightforward work, as well. It is required from teachers to spend all their efforts and must be maintained over a long period of time. In such cases, games aid and inspire young learners to sustain their interest and study.

METHODOLOGY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

At current time, a considerably great amount of attention is being given to the use of games in the classroom, particularly to young learners. Numerous scholars and authorities in the field express their viewpoints on the efficaciousness of using various games and activities in the classroom. For instance, Malay in Johnson and Marrow (1981:37) state that games and game like activities have an essential role in the enlargement of communicative competence “naturally, creatively and authentically”. Natural means that in game like activities, students take part freely. They can occupy their real personalities with their partners without an extra burden of

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attempting to be someone else. Creative means that in the relations among pupils, they can express their own views by using words in a diversity of meanings and situations. Authentic means that the speech the learners used in interaction with each other are genuine. As said by Carlson (1952) games are activities which are used to offer a fun, relaxed and friendly atmosphere especially in classes to acquire foreign language for pupils. In addition, they can be used at any stages of class, to supply and amusing age challenging respires from other classroom activity. According to another prominent figure W.R. Lee, “Games can involve all the basic language skills as a means of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and a number of skills are often involved in the same game”. Since many games can be available to be played outside class, they also provide a means for young learners to use the language out of class time, as well.

Games can bond to varied intelligences such as:

- Games played with other people include collaborative intelligence;
- Games comprising drawing access with visual intelligence;
- Games can have a practical element in terms of cards, spinners or pieces which link with kinesthetic intelligence.

Not only games can have an impact on promoting language skills, but they are also a helpful tool to enhance learners’ mental agility and intellectual capability. For instance, a scholar Ian Moore thinks that games can be an effective method because they are able to integrate skills such as reading, writing and speaking. It presents children an opportunity to get out of their seats and learn in hands-on surroundings. Additionally, children may not be aware that they are even learning English. In their thoughts they are only playing a game. Another linguist, Richard Sandford, a researcher at the non-profit educational research firm Futurelabs, wrote in his 2006 paper "Teaching with Games" that games foster problem-solving skills through their design. Therefore, players must overcome difficulties to reach the aspired ends. Similarly, outstanding scholars M. Martha Lengeling and Casey Malarcher also demonstrate the benefits of using games ranging from cognitive aspects of language learning to more co-operative group dynamics in children-centred classrooms in their book “A Natural Resource for Teachers” ('Forum' Vol. 35 No 4, October - December 1997 Page 42).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research was carried out in an attempt of illustrating to what extent games are of essence in teaching EFL (English as a Foreign Language). It has been found

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out that when learners are relaxed, they are more likely to retain more information and participate freely and energetically. The analysis includes the following steps:

Communication

In the classroom games are of great importance to force collaboration and communication among the learners. The teacher should be certain that everyone has a turn to take part in the game and lends a hand with communication wherever needed.

Pride in Success

While playing games in order to acquire language pupils attempt hard to win the game. Through their language usage, the children learn to get skilled at the language, accordingly implanting a sense of achievement when their hard work assists them to succeed.

Speed

When teachers carry through lectures, they can only undergo a certain amount of material during the lessons and must make time to reply questions from the pupils. However, when the pupils have a chance to play a game to learn English, the pupils can gain more knowledge and learn more materials in the same amount of time. Teachers sometimes can answer questions as they appear during a game, guiding to clear comprehension of words or phrases.

Preparation and Play

Games which are targeted at teaching English to young learners are reasonably simple to create. Games can also be used to control the overall classroom atmosphere and provide a structure to the English lessons. Additionally, games assist a teacher to evaluate easily where each student stands and provide an opportunity for the teacher to take notes on the pupils' levels and interests while children are having fun by playing games.

To recapitulate, conclusion can be drawn that

- games are affective because they lower affective filter, encourage creative and spontaneous use of language, promote communicative competence, motivate and engage interest;
- games are cognitive as they reinforce, review and extend and focus on grammar communicatively;
- games are dynamic since they are student-centered, provide an opportunity that teacher only acts as a facilitator, build class cohesion, foster whole class participation and promote a healthy competition;

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- games are adaptable because they are easily adjusted for age, level, and interests of learners, utilize all four skills and require minimum preparation after development.

Furthermore, there are a great number of games which vary in their appearances and objectives from each other. Language games can be classified into linguistic games and communicative games. Linguistic games relate to accuracy, such as presenting an appropriate antonym. Contrariwise, communicative games mostly focus on the efficacious interchange of information and views, such as two pupils spotting the differences between two pictures which are akin to one another but not exactly the same. However, correct language usage is still vital while achieving the communicative goal comes close second. At the meantime, language games cover aplenty groupings. They are the followings:

1. Classifying, ordering or arranging games. For example, students have a set of cards with different clothes on them and they sort the cards into girls' and boys' clothes.

2. Information gap games. In such kind of games, one or more participants have information that the others are required to accomplish a task. For instance, one player might have a drawing and their partner has to create a similar drawing by listening to the information given by the pupil with the drawing. Information gap games can include a one-way information gap, such as the drawing game just mentioned and a two-way information gap, in which each player has sole information, such as in a Spot-the-Difference game, where each person has a faintly varied picture and the task is to find the differences between two pictures.

3. Guessing games. There is a mixed diversity of guessing games. One of the well-known examples of a guessing game is 20 Questions, in which one person is required to think of a famous public figure, place, or an object. The other participants can ask 20 Yes/No questions to discover signs in order to predict who or what the person is thinking of.

4. Search games. It is noteworthy to add that search games are another alternative on two-way information gap games, with everyone giving and searching information. Find Someone Who is an apparent example. Pupils are provided with a grid. The requested task is to fill in all the cells in the grid with the name of a classmate who suits that cell, for example someone who is a vegetarian. Pupils mingle asking and answering questions to fill their own grid and assist classmates to complete theirs.

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5. Matching games. As it is familiar from its name, participants are required to make a match of pictures or cards with the words. For example, students put 20 word cards on the table, combined of 10 pairs, face down randomly. Each play turns over two cards at a time, with the intention of turning over a matching pair using their memory.

6. Labeling games. These sorts of games are also one example of matching games, in that participants match pictures and labels.

7. Exchanging games. In these games, students swap cards, objects or ideas. Numerous card games fit this category, such as the children's card game "Go Fish".

8. Board games. One of the best-known board games that vaguely highlight language is Scrabble.

9. Role play games. Role play can involve students playing roles that they do not play in real life, such as dentist, while simulations can involve students performing roles that they already play in real life or might be likely to play, such as a customer at a restaurant. Dramas are normally scripted performances, whereas in role plays and simulations, students come up with their own words, although preparation is often useful.

According to Hadfield (2004:4), there are two sorts of games: Competitive games and Co-operative games. Competitive game in which players or teams compete to be first to reach the goal and co-operative games provide a chance for players or teams to unite together to achieve their aspired goal.

Another scholar Chamberlain (1981:29) states that most language games are divided into the following categories: phonetics games, spelling games, dictionary games, syllable-based games, vocabulary games, sentence building games, games for creativity and free expression.

A wide diversity of games can be used while teaching English to young learners. Like activities games are also fall into numerous groups as below:

Whole Class games

The multitude of games such as interview activities, bingo, jeopardy and board games can be played by the entire class.

- An interview activity to practice the "Where do you come from?" and "I come from ~." structures might give a start by distributing slips of paper with some different country names. Participants can then be given a worksheet with all the country names written on it and explained that their aim is to get a pupil signature for each country by getting involved with their classmates and asking the question. When

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the target question is asked, learners should reply according to the slip of paper they received.

- Bingo can be played with letters, numbers, words or other topics that the teachers desire to practice.

- Jeopardy mostly focuses on listening and does not provide learners with lots of speaking practice. The straightforward thing to do is have pupils make groups of four to five and write categories and stars for each answer on the board. It is requested from the teacher to have five or six categories and probably five answers for each category. This activity can last for whole forty-five minute lesson and finally the group with the most points wins.

Games in Small Groups

Besides whole class games, there are also a hefty number of fascinating games that can be played in groups of about four students; more precisely in small groups.

- Board games are frequently played within a small group where pupils move pieces and answer questions or form sentences based on pictures.

- Card games which are really adequate for young learners as a means of Go Fish or Memory can be adjusted to use in the classroom. For instance, when the teachers aim to introduce the theme *Comparatives*, card games can be a precious tool. Simple card games are also exploited to assess intellectual capacity by making up cards with letters. The participants need to spread all the cards face up on their desks, then the teacher says a letter aloud and the first pupil to slap the correct card gets it. The game is carried on until all the cards are gone and at the end of the game the pupil with the most cards is the winner.

As mentioned above, there is a significantly tremendous number of games aimed to teach children in an entertaining and competitive way. Without any reservation, applying games into teaching procedure reinforce the communicative skills of young learners to a great degree. Whole class games are also proven to be notably vital in team building. Nevertheless, selecting appropriate types of games, especially in teaching children are very essential, because the young learners are very apt to get bored so easily which causes a dismal failure in designing the lesson properly. Hence, as stated by a famous scholar Sugar in choosing the games to play, teachers need to consider a number of elements. The following are the things that the teachers need to take into account before playing a game in the English classroom.

- Target Audience
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- Number of Players
- Size of the Class
- Learning Outcomes
- Playing Time
- Game Variations

CONCLUSION

To sum up, language teaching is a real fierce and demands the teachers to be patient, experienced, sophisticated and skilled in this sphere in order to obtain the desired objectives. Particularly, in teaching speaking to young learners the teacher needs to be well aware of his learners' level, knowledge, age, gender, interests as well as class condition in order select appropriate activities and games and design the lesson adequately. Additionally, teachers are also required to always bear in mind that the children tend to get bored as they have relatively short attention span. Therefore, one of the effective and productive methods in teaching young learners is through games which have a great educational value as a means of facilitating the children in an effectual way.

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