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The Results of Using Games In Learning Process

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INTRODUCTION

Among numerous sources of children's interest in the language learning process, games seem to be very important. Obviously, there are a lot of other sources, such as pictures and stories. Pictures serve as a visual stimulus, while games use both visual and aural channels and activate language production and, sometimes, physical movement [2, 112].

MAIN PART

Young learners love to play, and they participate in a game with more enthusiasm and willingness than in any other classroom task. Yet, games are sometimes perceived as entertaining activities, playing which children are not really learning. There are teachers who fail to realize the importance of games, considering them not a wealth of various techniques and an opportunity for real communication but an uncontrolled and noisy waste of time. However, children in general learn better when they are active. Thus, when learning is channeled into an enjoyable game, they are very often willing to invest considerable time and effort in playing it. Moreover, in view of diverse learning styles and preferences the students display, benefits from games seem to cater for everyone as children find playing activities much richer language studying work than doing other kinds of practice. If games are properly designed, they may become an excellent and essential part of a children's learning programme.

- Games are a welcome break from the usual routine of the language class.
- They are motivating and challenging.
- Learning a language requires a great deal of effort.
- Games help students to make and sustain the effort of learning.
- Games provide language practice in the various skills - speaking, writing, listening and reading.
- They encourage students to interact and communicate.
- They create a meaningful context for language use [63].

The more variety we can introduce into teaching, the more likely we are to meet the needs of all the different learners. What is more, as children need to be motivated, exciting and relevant classroom exercises appear to be necessity if real understanding and acquisition is to take place. For games are activities with rules, a goal to achieve, and an element of fun; they seem to be challenging and interesting enough to keep the young students occupied and eager to complete the task. The majority of activities, which are found in resourceful materials for teachers, are based on the belief that the games children enjoy and are interested in playing outside the classroom can be adapted and exploited for use in the English language classes. Furthermore, as they use English for real purposes, they make the children play and learn at the same time. Moreover, games help to create a context in which children's attention is focused on the completion of a task without

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realizing that language items are being practiced. As a result, language learning takes place in a context that children can directly relate to. However, it is always necessary to keep in mind the interests and needs of the learners. Games can provide a valuable learning experience in which the children practice and revise language only if they are carefully chosen, according to students' styles of learning [3, 182].

On the other hand, it is noteworthy that games like any other activity or tool can be overused when exploited too much so that the motivating element disappears rapidly.

Since children's concentration and attention spans are short, variety is a must. This means variety of activity, variety of pace, variety of organization. As already mentioned, children have an amazing ability to absorb language through play and other activities which they find enjoyable. That is why games seem to be a challenging and exciting tool to make the young learners motivated and satisfied with making progress in acquiring a language.

There are many reasons why creating activities for young children's language learning is very important. First of all, it is extremely valuable because it allows for meeting pupils' individual needs. Complete dependence on the textbook is not suitable for all students as they are of different levels and have different interests and diverse learning styles. Furthermore, the textbook being designed for a general audience may not fully match the students' specific requirements. However, creating materials for learning can be very time consuming and often needs resources, like photocopying facilities. Moreover, the most common barriers can also be the cost involved in realizing some conceptions, lack of handbooks from which to get ideas, lack of skills to design some activities. A good solution to overcome some of the difficulties mentioned above seems to be to involve pupils in preparing activities. They are full of ideas and enthusiasm. They can do some illustrations, they can prepare short stories and dialogues or riddles, and they can also make rhymes, chants, or short poems. It gives them a real reason for using language; and gradually, they can create activities for each other.

Selecting activities for children language learning

Before choosing an activity for use with a class, it is necessary to consider some criteria which should be helpful in making decisions whether to use the particular activity, to reject it or to adapt it.

First of all, it is essential to provide a clear and meaningful purpose for using language which capitalizes on young learners' desire to communicate, for example, activities which involve a game, puzzling something out, or getting missing information from another person. All these make sense and are meaningful to young learners.

Next important criterion is to challenge the learners and make them think so that they are more engaged and so process the language more deeply. There is sometimes a danger that activities are used because they work well or because learners enjoy them. What is important and should matter most is the language-learning value an activity has.

Another very significant point is providing activities which are enjoyable and interesting and which make children want to continue doing them so they get more practice, for example, creating monsters, guessing, and games with the winner or prize. However, it is important that these all have a clear language-learning purpose so that children are practicing and they are not done just to keep pupils amused.

Additionally, it is noteworthy to select activities which create a need or pressure for children to use English, for when the game is very exciting, pupils tend to use the mother tongue. Because of the natural urge to win, they may cheat and use their first language. Therefore, the activity should be designed so that it would require children to use English at some stages, for example,

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by recording their answers or getting them to report back to the class in English. This increases exposure to and use of the language [58, 90].

Finally, it is meaningful to provide activities which allow children to be creative with the language and give them opportunity to experiment with it. This will help the young learners to test out their hypotheses about the language and assist the development of their internal language system.

It is necessary to remember that no activity can fulfill all the criteria simultaneously. Therefore, it is always vital to decide what the priorities are before choosing the activity.

The process of adapting activities, which are found in the textbooks, is a good way of beginning to create teacher's own materials. There are many ways of adjusting the language or the task to suit the level of the pupils and teaching situation. For example, we can either simplify the language or the task or make them more difficult and complicated. Moreover, we can use teaching materials from the textbook or prepare our own. In addition, we can make the activity more interesting for the children giving them some space for their own creativity.

Apart from meeting students' need, the process of adapting an activity is a helpful way of gaining fresh perspectives on our teaching. What is more, it also helps to stand back from our teaching and look at it in order to find out what works and what does not. It is also beneficial to get pupils' opinion as a check on our own perceptions.

To sum up, the main argument for adapting the materials is not only to ensure a better fit between our teaching and the needs of our students but also to stand back from the routine of our daily teaching and consider it from a different perspective.

Language learning is hard work. Effort is required at every moment and must be maintained over a long period of time. Games help and encourage many learners to sustain their interest and work.

CONCLUSION

Games help the teacher to create contexts in which the language is useful and meaningful. The learners want to take part and in order to do so must understand what others are saying or have written, and they must speak or write in order to express their own point of view or give information. The need for meaningfulness in language learning has been accepted for some years. A useful interpretation of 'meaningfulness' is that the learners respond to the content in a definite way. If they are amused, angered, intrigued or surprised the content is clearly meaningful to them. Thus the meaning of the language they listen to, read, speak and write will be more vividly experienced and, therefore, better remembered.

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