

INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES FOR TEACHING CHILDREN

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Abstract

Young learners have very little opportunities in using English for communication in Indonesian classrooms. To overcome the problem, the teacher should think of interactive activities to encourage students in class. However, as teachers, they have to be aware in choosing the suitable activities for young learners. There are lots of activities for young learners such as: games, TPR (movement), music/songs, coloring, drawing, making things, and sorting/putting into categories. Well-chosen activities are helpful as they give children to have fun and at the same time allowing them to practice language skills. The activities that work in class should rules, instructions, time management, praises and rewards. This paper provides a brief overview of interactive activities that can be used to encourage young learners to participate more in class. These are the following selected activities that used for teaching English for young learners such as but first, mime a monster, five little elephants, draw the picture, draw your friend's life, bingo, running dictation, hues your friend's habit and "truth or dare". In conclusion, it is hoped that all activities can make children become more active and they are willing to participate during the English lesson.

Key words: interactive activities, teachers, young learners

INTRODUCTION

English is used as a foreign language in Indonesia. Ramelan (1992:2-3) also stated that English is very useful for communication. It is taught from playgroup to University level. David (2017), mentioned that in teaching young learners, there are some essential factors to be considered by teachers:

1. Children like to copy or imitate anything from the teacher
2. Children like to compete with their classmates such as: games and quizzes
3. Short concentration span. They need different kinds of activities.
4. Children will respond well if the teacher looks interested and gives praise to them.
5. Children like to be encouraged if the teacher uses their names and also gives positive feedback.
6. Displaying work can motivate children and establish a sense of pride and ownership.
7. Young learners are happy to act, sing and repeat. In other words, they are not as shy as adults.
8. Physical movements (role plays, mime, TPR) stimulate the students.

- 9. Children love to see real things, for example: a picture of a car.
- 10. Need for balanced variety of stirring and setting activities.
 - stirring to get them motivated

- settling to calm them down.

Stirrers	Settlers
Oral work	Copying
Team competitions	Coloring
Drama	Listening activity with worksheet
TPR activity (e.g. song with actions)	Tests
Group work / discussions	Being read to / reading comprehension
Storytelling	Recording new vocabulary

The following activities can motivate children to participate in class.

1. Line up activity

The teacher asks ten students to line up. Then, the teacher gives an example of a question: How old are you? I am seven years old'. They must ask the question to other classmates and so on. What they have to do is to make a line starting from the lowest number to the highest number.

Other ideas:

- Shoe size
- Birthday
- Time waking up this morning
- House number
- Number of siblings
- Longest journey to school
- First arrive to classroom

2. Mime a monster (Phillips & Malley, 2003)

- Point at various parts of the body and elicit the names such as: head, arm, leg
- Teacher points some children to come in front of the class. The children are going to make a monster with their bodies.
- The teacher describes the body, for example: Make a monster with two heads, one arm, two legs, and a tail). The children have to make it with their arms, legs, and other parts of bodies.

3. Five little elephants (Sarah Phillips, 1993)

The teacher recites the rhyme and asks the students to repeat. Then, the teacher starts using the movement while reciting the rhymes. The example of the rhyme is entitled "Five Little Elephants".

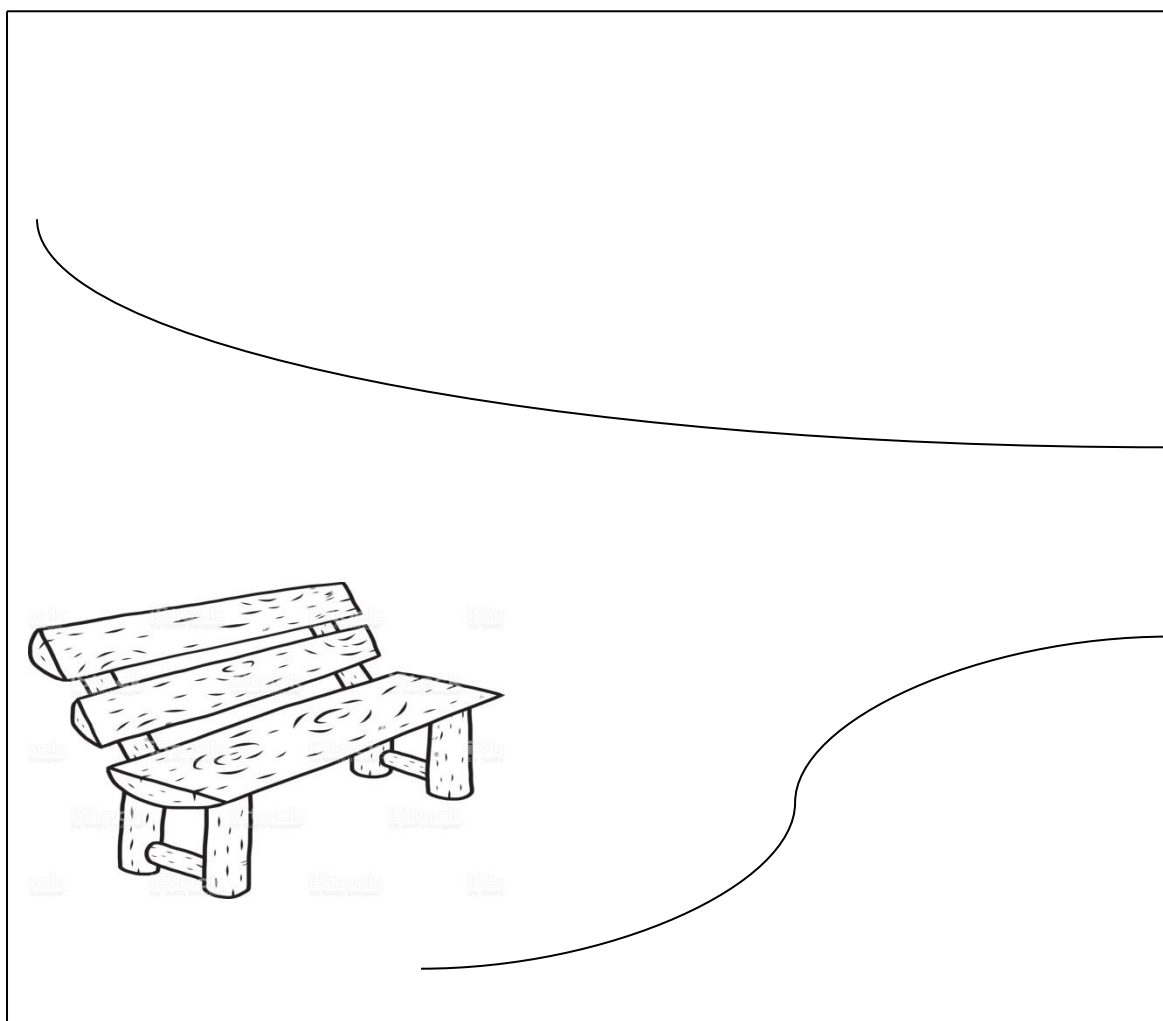
Five little elephants standing in a

row.
Five little trunks waving hello.
"Oh", said an elephant.
"Time to go".

4. Draw the picture

The teacher gives out an incomplete picture and asks the

children to draw based on the instruction. For example: draw a small bench on the right side, draw two clouds and half sun on the left side and on the top, draw a big kite in the middle, etc. After finished doing it, the children compare with their friends and they start coloring the picture.



5. Bingo

As mentioned by Weisskirch, R (2007), a bingo game is a learning game which helps students to build confidence in knowledge. Bingo is

easy to play and it is really fun game to play in a group. Everyone can play the game; even the teachers can create their own bingo cards. Bingo cards mostly about

numbers, words, phrases, or pictures.

BINGO				
15	1	10	3	17
25	8	14	18	21

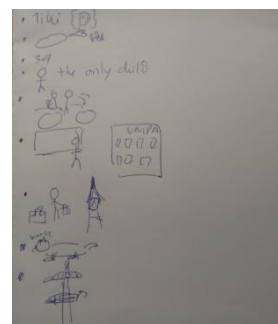
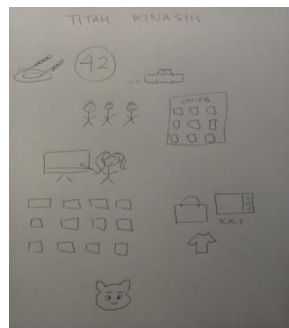
7	23	FREE SPACE	2	6
9	13	16	12	22
5	11	4	20	19

Figure1. Bingo number

BINGO		
asked	ate	cried
brought	slept	said
watched	went	ran

Figure2. Bingo words

- Print out different BINGO cards for each child.
 - Distribute one BINGO card to each child (each card should be different).
 - The teacher reads one sentence. The students listen and cross out the correct word on the card.
 - The child with full of cross out words shouts BINGO.
 - Note: BINGO card can be with words, numbers, shapes or colors).
6. Draw your friend's life
 - Tell the students, they are going to draw their classmates' lives
 - Elicit what they could draw and write ideas on board (family, pets, house, hobbies, school, etc)
 - Give them 15 minutes
 - Give praise and positive feedback
 - Display the drawings on the bulletin board.



7. Taboo

According to Akkuzu, N. & Arzu, M. (2016), the Taboo game is an

active learning activity which provides a practical learning education and also the opportunity

to enhance students' vocabulary. In other words, the taboo games are recommended to be used for an educational game. It creates interesting and fun activity. Also, it helps the students develop their motivation to learn English. It is supported by Koprowski, M.

(2006), taboo is included as one of the games for recycling vocabulary. The students became motivated during the game. Taboo means a word that cannot be used. The teacher prepares cards which contain of taboo words such as:

<u>apple</u> round red iphone	<u>birthday</u> gift balloon cake	<u>sun</u> circle yellow hot	<u>plane</u> pilot transportation ticket	<u>blue</u> color sky sea
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<u>orange</u> sweet vitamin C fruit	<u>cat</u> animal meow fish	<u>chef</u> cook food restaurant	<u>nurse</u> doctor hospital patient	<u>school</u> student teacher book
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<u>fish</u> swim water finding nemo	<u>pizza</u> cheese food beef	<u>camera</u> selfie photo smile	<u>bus</u> transportation driver wheels	<u>milk</u> white cow drink
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Next, divide the students into groups and each group has the leader. The leader explains to his members by using his own sentences. He must explain the underlined word but without saying the three words below.

If he wants to explain apple, he can create a clue like: you can find it in the market, the color is green and the shape looks like an orange. Once, the leader mentions one of the taboo words, the game is over.

8. Running dictation

Running dictation is one of the techniques where the students work in a team to dictate words or sentences, runner and writer in each group are needed (Hess, 2001). Running dictation is really helpful to facilitate the students in improving listening achievement. According to Alex (2013), running dictation is a fun task for all skills which is done in groups. It is a good activity for interaction between students.

These are the steps how to play running dictation. First of all, divide the children into three groups. Each group sends two students as their representative to come in front of the class. One child from each group is facing the white board and holding the board marker. The second child is given a card which consists of a drawing of parts of the body and shapes. Then, the second child from each group dictates something to the first child, for example: draw two small triangles for the eyes, draw a big circle for the face, draw a heart for the mouth, etc. The one who can finish the drawing first is the winner. Another idea for running dictation is preparing some sentences for higher level.

Tommy like playing football. He usually plays football on Sunday.
Tommy has many friends. His friends also like playing football.

Example1. Running dictation "hobby"

You get off the bus and walk along the road. You get to your house, take out your key and put it in the lock. You go in the house, take off your shoes and put them on the floor. You go to the kitchen, look in the freezer, take out an ice-cream, tear open the wrapper and bite off a mouthful. Then you go into the living room, switch on the TV, and turn up the volume. At last, you can chill out.

Example2. Running dictation "daily activities"

9. Guess your friend's habit

It is an activity which involves students to get to know more about his/her partner in class. Each student is given a card and he/she must first whether the descriptions on the card "right" or "wrong". If it is right, the students can give a

tick (v) and (x) for the wrong answer. Then, to check the answer, you as student A asked student B “do you usually wear jeans during weekend?” If your answer and your partner are the same, it means you are right. You can continue with the next question until all is done.

Student A

PARTNER’S NAME _____	TRUE	FALSE	v = I’m right x = I’m wrong
usually wears jeans during the weekend			
always goes to bed before midnight			
eats chocolate every day			
always remembers birthday			
usually goes out on Saturday nights			
often does the washing			
always gets the bus to school			
sometimes goes out for lunch on Sundays			
often listens to classical music			

Student B

PARTNER’S NAME _____	TRUE	FALSE	v = I’m right x = I’m wrong
often wears sports shoes			
sometimes sings in the bath			
drinks coffee every day			
often writes letters to friends			
sometimes goes shopping in the evening			
usually does the washing up			
always goes to school by car			
often goes to the cinema			
watches TV every day			

10. Truth or Dare

It is a fun game for a group of five to ten students of all ages (Roger, 2007). This game is fun and can be used for everybody. The game is very popular among [children](#), but it is sometimes played by adults too. The rule is players can also ask each other question through methods of [Spin the Bottle](#); where the bottle lands, a player is questioned. If there is no bottle, it can be replaced by **a pen or a pencil** as a tool.

Here are a few steps to teach “Truth or Dare”:

- a. Get the players into a group, sitting on the floor or around a table.
- b. Choose one player to start the game. This player asks "Truth or Dare?" of a second player in the circle.
- c. Have the second player choose between answering a question and performing a dare.
- d. Ask the question or present the dare. Ideally, both the questions and the dares should be a little embarrassing, but not mean or dangerous. Remember, your turn to answer or perform will come around soon.

The example of Truth or Dare can be seen from the following items below.

TRUTH	DARE
Have you ever cheated during exam?	Sing a nursery rhyme
What are you afraid of?	Don't blink for 1 minute
Who is your favorite hero?	Stand with one foot only
Have you ever been caught in a lie?	Demonstrate your best dance
What would you do if you met your favorite singer?	Say "I love you" to your teacher

CONCLUSION

Nowadays, the skills of English in a global world are considered as one of the requirements life-skills especially for young learners. Because of this situation, some parents tend to send their children to school which provides English program. Unfortunately, not all teachers are well-prepared with the materials. They

prefer teaching in a traditional way to teach with updated techniques. In Indonesia, the children have very little opportunities in using English communication. To support the needs, the writer shows some ideas, on how teachers can provide young learners with greater opportunities to communicate in English.

In brief, this paper shows that interactive activities help a lot in teaching young learners. The activities are highly motivating and interesting for children. By sharing experiences, ideas and knowledge, it is hoped the teachers can apply the interactive activities in teaching young learners. Those interactive activities are a powerful way to motivate students to learn English in a different way. It allows the students for individual and peer-to-peer learning. The activities also add a practical experience that supplements the materials. Having been through the process, the writer strongly believes that the interactive activities are a perfect mechanism for all skill areas of language production with higher-level English language learners—it is also engaging, motivating, and creative. This study and the writer's experience show that all the interactive activities for children to play such roles and have a positive effect on students learning outcomes.

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