Workshop on Interactive Teaching for Young Learners

Hafizhatu Nadia
English Department, University of Muhammadiyah Banjarmasin
Indonesia

Dina Rafidiyah
English Department, University of Muhammadiyah Banjarmasin
Indonesia

Yansyah
English Department, University of Muhammadiyah Banjarmasin
Indonesia

Keywords:

Interactive teaching

Games

English for Young Learners

ABSTRACT

Introducing young learners to learn a foreign language need extra efforts. It is due to the unique characteristics of young learners which require the teacher to live up the classroom's atmosphere to engage them during the lesson. The present article elaborates the interactive instructional strategies can be used by teachers for teaching them. Thirty-eight students in the "Sentosa" orphanage and five caregivers joined the workshop to experience the practice of interactive teaching. The interactive teaching worked out three games, including *I See Something, Spelling Bee, and Board Race.* Questionnaire was given after the workshop and observation was also conducted so the students' responses toward the strategies can be recorded. The result indicated that most of the young learners love to learn through those games. The interaction among them were also intense so it fostered the process of acquiring the new vocabulary. The teachers also commented that this strategy was fun and interesting.

*Corresponding author: yansyah.albalangi@yahoo.co.id

INTRODUCTION

English lessons are still a scourge for some students. These subjects are considered difficult because students are imagined that English classes are difficult with the demands of memorizing vocabulary or grammar. This situation makes the absorption process to the material given not optimal. According to the theory of Affective Filter Hypothesis (Krashen, 1982) learning is also influenced by non-linguistic factors, such as motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety. If students already feel that the learning they will face is boring or makes them afraid, then their ability to achieve learning goals automatically becomes ineffective.

Learning English in Indonesian formal schools is still emphasized in the correct sentence structure, so that aspects of using English as a communication tool are neglected. Many things affected this condition, starting with the history of English as a foreign language in Indonesia, the teaching of English which was too rigid, also the limited use of English in everyday life.

Kevin Dalton, Public Relations at the Indonesia Australia Language Foundation (IALF), stated that learning English in Indonesia tends to be too rigid and should be done not only in classrooms. There are many problems in Indonesia, such as: limited vocabulary, difficulty understanding tenses and others. According to Kevin, all these problems can be overcome by using English every day for 15-30 minutes (Arifah, 2014). An interesting learning atmosphere will make students relax so that they are better prepared to accept foreign languages. Effective language acquisition is when the learner is active. Student activity can be obtained if we can design student-centered learning. When the atmosphere is challenging for the students, the will use the target language. This class atmosphere can be seen when we apply games-based instruction. This method is not only fun, but also it can make the students become more competitive.

One way to achieve enjoyable learning is to use games in learning English. According to Mahmoud & Tanni (2012) using games as an encouragement and warming activity to maintain the attractiveness of learning and bring the keys to real life to study. McLeod (2018) emphasized that according to Vygotsky a child can learn more if there is support from his friends through games or better known as ZPD (Zone of Proximal Development).

There are several reasons why games should be considered for teaching. De Wit (2012) explains that there are several reasons for using games in English class: (1) games should be used as a more fun way than other media; (2) games should facilitate a friendly competition; (3) games should facilitate everyone to be active and engaged; (4) games should facilitate students to use the language itself; (5) games should facilitate learning, exercises, or lesson reviews. Without considering the aforementioned things, the games may leave excitement to students without a meaningful lesson. This should be taken into account when we design a lesson plan.

There are also some previous studies, which support the use of games for teaching. Huyen & Nga (2003) contend that learning vocabulary through games may become an effective and interesting strategy for an English class. Research findings indicate that games are not merely about excitement, but, more importantly, it is for a meaningful activity and lesson reviews. Communicative competence is the core goal. Mahmoud & Tanni (2012) studied about the effective use of games from teachers' perspectives. They found that the majority of teachers agree that games influence students' attitude toward language learning. The use of games is not only for fun activities, but it is aimed to facilitate creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, role play, and collaborative work. Petrovic (2014) proves that give benefits to English class. Research method is a small scale syntax and interviews with two teachers who have interest in the development of games. Their students showed clear indications of increased motivation when they faced challenges in learning English. They opt for solutions rather than switching the word to their native language. They are too ambitious with the game and determined to win.

Regarding types of games can be used for classroom purposes, Gaudart (1999) said that there are four games that contribute positively to learning English in Malaysian context: (1) card game, (2) game board, (3) simulation, and (4) others. Basically, teacher should be creative in taking existing, well known or popular games and adapting them to the classroom to maximize student involvement. Many games require modification based on the consideration of student needs. There are lots of ideas for games available, but their benefits depend on the teacher. Teachers should ensure the game is suitable for their students and relevant to their work or real life. Fun learning is important but learning goals need to be achieved.

This community service activity was mentoring for one caregiver and 4 caregiver assistants to assist in designing English language learning by providing motivation, knowledge and skills for children of Sentosa Orphanage Banjarmasin so that they can learn and be able to communicate in English using games or game. There are 38 foster children in the institution consisting of:
1. Elementary School: 2 students
2. Middle School: 25 students
3. High School: 11 students

Teaching English in the orphanage is expected to become more effective after the workshop, because caregivers can assist foster children in daily life, so that the use of English can be optimal in accordance with the activities of the orphanage. Therefore, this community service is very important for making English material that can make orphanage children not hesitate in using it. Rising awareness of the orphans that English can be used in their daily lives is expected to grow their motivation to learn English independently.

English language skills will make orphans have more skills, so they can compete in the job market, both locally, nationally and internationally. It is hoped that in the future there will be many alumni of Sentosa Orphanage who can take part and prove to the wider community that they are indeed superior. The success of this community service can be a pilot project in other orphanages. Therefore, the purpose of this workshop was as a form of service for lecturers and students of the English Language Education Study Program, Teacher Training and Education Faculty (FKIP), University of Muhammadiyah Banjarmasin, to provide scientific contributions to the community. After this training activity was held, it was hoped that collaboration between scholars and the orphanage caregiver would be established.

METHOD

The participants were one caregiver, four caregiver assistants, and 38 foster children. The data are collected through two main instruments: observation and questionnaire. The observation was done by recording the students' responses during the games implemented in the classroom. The questionnaire was handed in the end of the activity. The questionnaire was divided into two kinds: questionnaire for teachers and questionnaire for students. The questionnaire for teachers covered ten items to evaluate the community development activity, such as the teachers' familiarity with the use of games for teaching, the teacher's belief related to the use of games for teaching, and the teacher's opinions for the benefits of the community services program. Next, questionnaire for students focused on asking questions related to their opinions on the games used. The questionnaire was designed as simple as possible by simplifying the instruction and statement because the subjects were young learners. Their age is between 8-13 years old. The students were only required to give star from one to five for every statement.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The community service was conducted on January 21st, 2019 at the Sentosa Orphanage, Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan, Indonesia. The purpose of this program was to empower the care givers at the Sentosa Orphanage by giving them insight of interactive teaching methodologies through games. It was also aimed to encourage the foster children to love English so they have good foreign language skills, which may be useful to brighten their future. During the workshop, there were three games introduced, including Spelling Bee, Board Racing, and I see Something.

Before the implementation of each game, the students were introduced to some vocabulary, such as colours, things around them, transportation, and fruit. This step is important since we need to make sure that the students know the words we are going to play with. The use of game was only to make the students practice the new vocabulary so they know how to use it in context.

The first game, Spelling Bee, was intended to measure the students' understanding on the spelling of the new words. The tools we need to play this game is only paper and pen/pencil. The students were challenged to spell the word pronounced by the trainers in English as quick as possible. The students were grouped to make the students collaborate and compete. Each group sent one student as the representative to the front of the class. The competitive atmosphere is quite important in playing a game to make the students feel enthusiastic to learn and win. In the end of the game, the group who can collect most points by quickly and frequently spell the words correctly won the game. Picture 1 shows the implantation of this game.

Picture 1 Spelling Bee

The next game was board race. We need markers and board for playing this game. The students need to be divided into two group and each group get one marker. The goal of this game is to make one student from each group to run to the board and to write list of the words as quick as possible within the time given. The teacher need to mention the category of the vocabulary and he/she will ask them to list the words related to it, for example, within 30 seconds. The group who can make the longest and most accurate list will earn points. This activity makes the students have physical activity, which make them engaged during the lesson, as well as memorize the list of new vocabulary. Picture 2 describes the atmosphere of the classroom when this game was played.

Picture 2 Board Race

The last game, I See Something, is a game which make the young learners sing and learn about colour and vocabulary. The song lyric for playing this game is simple as follow.

Blue…Blue….I see something blue…..
Blue….Blue….I see something blue….
Blue….Blue….Blue….Blue…Blue…Blue….
I see something blue…..

When the teacher and students sing the last verse, the students will run around the class and search for things in the classroom which is in blue, for example book, pencil, bac, etc. After they find it, they need to mention the stuff they found for example, "I found blue bag." This game can help students to recognize colour and things around them. Picture 3 displays the students' participation in this game.

Picture 3 I see something

Regarding the teachers' responses toward the implementation of interactive teaching, Table 1 shows us that most of the teachers gave positive responses. They have known several methods for applying games in the classroom even some of them have already used them in their classroom.

They agreed that games can help students to better understand the lesson and make it more fun. Most of them were in the same mind that the games introduced in the workshop were applicable to be applied in their classroom. They also admitted that the workshop elevated their knowledge of teaching English to Young Learners.

Table 1 Teacher's Responses

No.	Statement	Means
1	I have known several methods for applying games in the classroom	3.2
2	Games have ever been used in teaching	3.1
3	Games help students to understand the lesson	3.8
4	Games make the lesson more fun	3.6
5	Games benefits the students' learning	3.6
6	Spelling bee is applicable to be used in the classroom	3.3
7	Board race is applicable to be used in the classroom	3.2
8	"I See Something" is applicable to be used in the classroom	3.5
9	The community service brings good impact on improving the teacher's teaching skill	3.5
10	The community service improve teachers' knowledge related to teaching English to Young Learners	3.9

Next, the result of students' opinion towards the implementation of interactive teaching is reflected in Table 2. It consisted of 8 items and most of them agreed that they loved the games introduced and really enjoyed the lesson. The writers, noticed, during the observation, that most students were active and enthusiast to join the games and they were quite confidence to express the new vocabulary because they wanted to be the winner. The atmosphere of the classroom was fun and they had a lot of physical movements because in the "I See Something" and "Board Race" they needed to run around the class. Among those three games, it seems that "I See Something" became the most favourite one because it earns the highest mean (3.5).

Table 2 Students' Opinion

No.	Statement	Means
1	I love to learn using games introduced today	3.6
2	Today's lesson is very interesting	3.6
3	The games introduced don't make me feel bored during the lesson	3.1
4	I gain some new vocabulary	3.4
5	I love to learn using spelling bee	3.4
6	I love to learn using "I See Something"	3.4
7	Board race is applicable to be used in the classroom	3.3
8	"I See Something" is applicable to be used in the classroom	3.5

Therefore, based on the result of observation and questionnaire, we can conclude that the workshop helped the teachers to improve their teaching skill and knowledge. It added their collection of educational games can be applied in their classroom for helping the foster children to learn English. The students also expressed that the games introduced were interesting and fun. It made them learn and retain some new English vocabulary. The games create a joyful learning atmosphere, which made the students engaged during the lesson. This finding is in line with previous studies and literature review related to the teaching of English using games. Games are a natural way for children to understand the world around them. Therefore, it should be part of their learning, including learning a foreign language (Klimova, 2015), even Gozcu & Caganaga (2016) argue that game is one of the important components in English learning. There are some benefits of using games in English language classes : (1) games may light up the atmosphere of classroom; (2) games can be used to motivate and challenge students, this is because learning a language needs much effort; (3) games may support learning process; (4) games facilitate learning activities and exercises including four macro skills of English-speaking, writing, listening and reading; (5) games may help students' interactions and communication; (6) games provide contexts for language learning (McLeod, 2018).

In the present workshop, all of those benefits are reflected from the atmosphere of the classroom and the students' responses.

Based on the observation, the following considerations may also be taken into account in designing English lesson with games: (1) relevant game (with the size of class, competency, culture context, time allocation, topic, and classroom management); (2) the way students exploit the games depends on the design and the implementation of the game; (3) clear instruction, clear rules, and time allocation; (4) demo is more important than an explanation; (5) clear objective and learning targets; (6) clear goals and targets need to be aligned with the level of difficulty and students ability; (7) make sure the shy and the silent students are able to take part and do not feel isolated; (8) preliminary training, evaluation of the result on the game (9) make sure the games are still fun to do, but help students learn. To make it more fun, teachers may give rewards to those who win the game. All of those rules were applied during the workshop, which made the teachers agreed that games benefits both the students and the teachers to achieve the objectives of the lesson.

CONCLUSION

Games offer intective method of teaching for young learners because they feel challenged to learn. The competitiveness atmosphere when playing games raises motivation to be the winner and it makes the acquisition of new vocabulary run smoothly. The teachers agreed that the games introduced in the workshop were applicable to be used for teaching the foster children. They children also said that they love to learn using the games because it was fun and interesting to learn English through this way. Based on this finding, it is suggested for teachers to involve games as a method for teaching, especially teaching English to young learners.

REFERENCES

Arifah, N. A. (2014). Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris di Indonesia Terlalu Kaku | ABC Radio Australia.

De Wit, A.-L. (2012). Teaching Tips - Using Games in the English Second or Foreign Language classroom. Retrieved January 23, 2019, from https://www.wits.ac.za/witslanguageschool/

Gaudart, H. (1999). Games as Teaching Tools for Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. *Simulation & Gaming*, *30*(3), 283–291. https://doi.org/10.1177/104687819903000304

Gozcu, E., & Caganaga, C. K. (2016). The importance of using games in the EFL classrooms. *Cypriot Journal of Educational Sciences*, *11*(3), 126–135.

Huyen, N. T., & Nga, K. T. (2003). Learning Vocabulary through Games: The Effectiveness of Learning Vocabulary Through Games. *Asian EFL Journal*, *5*, 1829–1841.

Klimova, B. F. (2015). Games in the Teaching of English. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *191*(June), 1157–1160. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.04.312

Krashen, S. D. (1982). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. https://doi.org/10.2307/328293

Mahmoud, A. A., & Tanni, Z. A. (2012). Using Games to Promote Students' Motivation towards Learning English. *Journal for Educational & Psychological Research & Studies*, *2*(5), 11–33.

McLeod, S. (2018). Vygotsky simply psychology. Retrieved January 23, 2019, from https://www.simplypsychology.org/vygotsky.html

Petrovic, E. P. (2014). *Examensarbete Games in the Language Classroom-To Play is to Learn*. Malmö Högskola Fakulteten. Retrieved from http://muep.mau.se/handle/2043/17961