

Teaching English using Song and Game in Elementary School Students: A Comparative Study

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Abstract

Teaching English to young English young learners in primary school is a gratifying endeavor that demands patience, ingenuity, and a fervor for pedagogy. Various instructional methods, such as using music or interactive activities, can be employed in the classroom. The objective of this study is to investigate the efficacy of utilizing songs and games as pedagogical approaches in the training of English to primary school children. The study examines the advantages and disadvantages of these two methods in enhancing language proficiency and establishing an immersive educational setting. Observational data was obtained from two distinct schools and their respective courses. The findings suggest that both songs and games might be efficacious in instructing English, while they have distinct benefits and drawbacks. The study provides guidelines for educators and highlights the importance of creating a favorable classroom atmosphere.

Introduction

The discipline of Teaching English for Young Learners (TEYL) is experiencing tremendous growth worldwide, with English instruction becoming more prevalent at the primary levels. Teaching English to young learners in elementary school is a gratifying endeavour that demands patience, ingenuity, and a fervour for education (Imaniah & Nargis, 2017). By exposing English young learners to the English language at a young age, educators can facilitate the cultivation of robust language abilities that will greatly benefit them in their academic and professional trajectories. Teachers have a vital role in creating a good and fun learning atmosphere, where young students can feel at ease while exploring a new language (Harmer, 2007). The teacher should employ captivating and dynamic instructional techniques that accommodate the distinct requirements and preferences of the students. Integrating games, songs, stories, and interactive activities not only enhances the enjoyment of the learning process but also facilitates improved retention of language topics.

Teaching English to young learners necessitates a teacher to exhibit ingenuity and flexibility in their methodology (Alsyouf & Al Kayed, 2021). Through the careful selection of pedagogical approaches and instructional resources, educators have the ability to establish a highly efficient educational setting that fosters the acquisition of proficient linguistic abilities in English young learners. Teaching English to young learners can be tough because it is a foreign language. Prior to selecting learning strategies aimed at enhancing students' self-esteem, it is crucial to take into account several factors, including the subject matter, its adaptability to diverse learning approaches, the students' age and educational level, and the teaching environment (Butler, 2015; Leong & Ahmadi, 2017; Zein et al., 2020).

When it comes to teaching English to young learners, the age at which they are taught is a crucial period for the development of language proficiency, particularly in English. This is due to the exceptional capacity of young learners to assimilate knowledge, and the collaborative efforts of parents and instructors to enhance their cognitive performance. This article will specifically address the four essential competencies required for teaching English, namely: auditory comprehension, oral communication, textual interpretation, and written expression. These skills are interconnected and enhance the growth of English learners' capabilities. At the beginning, learners will be encouraged to focus on listening techniques. Listening is a fundamental skill that is crucial for acquiring knowledge in all topics within the elementary curriculum. Teachers can enhance students' performance and engagement by offering a clear understanding of the upcoming auditory content and the corresponding expectations. Learners' active engagement during the listening process, rather than passively waiting until the finish, effectively sustains their interest and mitigates the risk of boredom. An effective listening strategy that can be utilised is engaging in narrative listening, which holds importance in an individual's cognitive and experiential development, akin to the faculties of vision and locomotion.

Method

In this part of the study, the researcher described its research methodology. The research methodology includes research type, research setting, data collection technique(s), and research instrument.

Research Type

This study was conducted as a qualitative descriptive study employing a case study design. Qualitative research, as defined by Creswell (2013), is a methodological approach employed to explore and gain understanding of the subjective interpretations and beliefs held by individuals or groups regarding societal or human matters. The objective of this strategy is to provide the reader with an accurate and detailed depiction of the subject, rather than to measure or quantify the outcomes. The case study design is employed to examine the correlation between the utilisation of songs and games in elementary school instruction.

Research Setting

The investigation was carried out in two schools, each with two distinct classes. The initial school session took place at SD N 07 Samarinda Ulu in Samarinda, whilst the subsequent school session was held at SD N Adikarto 1 in Magelang. The study included English young learners in the 3rd and 4th grades.

Data Collection Technique and Instrument

Data collection technique pertains to the systematic gathering of information or data from multiple sources with the aim of resolving a problem. Data collection techniques encompass a diverse range of methodologies, including observation, interviews, questionnaires, surveys, and more. The researchers employ observation techniques to gather data in this investigation. Observation is a research methodology used to directly gather information. George (2023) explained that the observation method relies on the utilisation of the five human senses - sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch - to gather information. He further clarified that observation is

dependent on the observer's subjective interpretation of their sensory perceptions. The primary subject of the observation pertains to the utilisation of media, such as songs and games, as instructional tools for teaching the English language within the classroom setting. A video recorder is employed as the research instrument to capture all the learning activities taking place in the classroom. The researchers can analyse the process of learning and other elements through the video of the teaching activity.

Results and Discussion

Teaching English to Young Learners Using Song

The initial video showcases a teacher-student interaction prior to the commencement of the learning process. Within a span of less than 10 minutes, the instructor efficiently addresses several aspects, such as extending greetings to the students, engaging in warm-up activities, and initiating a brainstorming session through the utilisation of thought-provoking questions. It is advantageous to provide English young learners with preparation prior to their study. According to Harper (2018), pleasant greetings have the ability to foster relationships between instructors and students, reduce stress levels for both educators and students at the beginning of the day, and establish a feeling of community and belonging in the classroom. Mohanti (2019) contends that engaging in preparatory activities, such as daily prayer and warm-up exercises, can foster discipline among students. In general, engaging in greetings, communal prayer, and warm-up activities prior to instruction can foster a favourable classroom atmosphere, cultivate a feeling of inclusion, alleviate anxiety, and enhance student discipline.

A collective singing of a song is performed as a means of generating warmth. A song is an auditory instructional medium employed by teachers to convey educational content. It provides a simpler method for children to retain information in their memory for an extended period. Psycholinguistic research has demonstrated that music has the ability to impact the process of language learning and acquisition in both hemispheres of the brain (Carroll, 2008). In addition, Hendrianai (2020) demonstrates that incorporating songs into the learning process offers several benefits to students. These include enhancing their language skills in listening and speaking, improving language components such as vocabulary mastery and pronunciation, expanding their knowledge, boosting their confidence and relaxation, and enhancing their mood and focus. Nevertheless, Avdju (2021) asserts that the utilisation of songs in educational settings carries inherent drawbacks and potential hazards, such as the presence of unsuitable material and a diminished level of classroom management. The teacher has selected a song as the instructional material for today's lesson. A subset of the kids is becoming enthusiastic and engaged with the current educational content. The English young learners get knowledge about various occupations through musical compositions. Subsequently, the teacher conducts a comprehensive review of the material with the students. During the review session, students have the opportunity to recall the vocabulary encompassed within the song.

Following the completion of the introductory segment, the subsequent task entails engaging in a discourse regarding the content pertaining to the occupations of the taught professions. In this session, the teacher enunciates unfamiliar words, which are then repeated by the students. It is crucial to undertake this task in order to avoid misinterpretations and enhance English young learners' oral communication abilities. Subsequently, the instructor dispenses worksheets for the English young learners to engage with, followed by presenting their responses in front of the entire class. Students possess the capability to accurately respond to the question.

The final task in instructing third-grade students at SD N 027 Samarinda Ulu was to summarise the content and engage in a discussion regarding the upcoming session's theme. Subsequently,

the action concluded with a collective act of prayer. The teaching technique in this video is congruent with the lesson plan and is effectively adapted.

Teaching English to Young Learners Using Game

The instructor commences the lesson by extending salutations to the students and engaging in collective prayer. Implementing this approach is an excellent method to establish a conducive and inclusive atmosphere for educational purposes. An inclusive and receptive classroom environment is crucial as students, like everyone else, want a sense of security and appreciation in order to flourish. According to education expert Linda Darling-Hammond, when children feel a strong feeling of belonging, they fully engage in the learning environment. Additionally, it fosters a sense of camaraderie and reverence among the English young learners and instructor. Subsequently, the teacher verifies attendance to confirm the presence of all students. Ensuring the inclusion of all English young learners and preventing them from missing any crucial content is a significant measure. Through the process of recording attendance, the teacher can also discern any children who may want supplementary aid or assistance. Subsequently, the teacher commences a collaborative brainstorming session by distributing an image of a house to the students and prompting them to engage in a collective discussion.

The teacher establishes a correlation between the ongoing topic and the subject matter being instructed. Through facilitating these dialogues and exchanges, the instructor can assist students in cultivating a more profound comprehension of the subject matter and its significance. Vygotsky thinks that learning is a social phenomenon, and significant learning takes place when students actively participate in cooperative activities and dialogues with their classmates and instructors. Another prominent individual is Jean Piaget, a Swiss psychologist renowned for his contributions to the field of cognitive development. Piaget stressed the significance of interaction and active involvement with the surroundings for the purpose of learning. According to Piaget, kids develop their comprehension of concepts by actively engaging in practical situations and engaging with others. Both Vygotsky and Piaget's theories endorse the idea that classroom debates and exchanges can enhance students' comprehension of the subject matter and its significance.

Following the completion of the learning exercises, the teacher inquires about the English young learners' sentiments regarding their acquired knowledge and makes preparations for the subsequent session. Educators utilise feedback as a means to assess students' comprehension of the subject matter and pinpoint any areas that may require additional clarification. This can enhance students' level of engagement and commitment to their studies. It is crucial to make adequate preparations for the upcoming meeting to ensure that students are thoroughly prepared and have a clear understanding of what to anticipate. Ultimately, the teacher concludes the class.

The incorporation of songs and activities in English instruction for elementary school children presents both benefits and drawbacks. Both educational strategies have been shown to foster a sense of inclusion, alleviate anxiety, and enhance student discipline. Research has demonstrated that songs are highly successful in facilitating language learning and acquisition. This is due to their ability to engage and stimulate both hemispheres of the brain, resulting in improved memory and long-term retention of information among English young learners. Furthermore, the incorporation of songs into the learning process has been shown to enhance linguistic abilities, including listening and speaking skills, vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation accuracy, knowledge retention, self-assurance, relaxation, mood, and concentration.

Nevertheless, it is crucial to contemplate the possible hazards and drawbacks associated with the utilisation of songs and games in the educational setting. Researchers have voiced concerns regarding the presence of inappropriate content and a lack of classroom management. Teachers must meticulously choose songs and games that are suitable for the age group and are in line with the educational goals. Additionally, it is imperative to guarantee that the material is culturally sensitive and inclusive.

Upon comparing the two educational modalities, it is apparent that both songs and games may effectively engage learners and facilitate learning. Music has the ability to foster a favourable and inclusive atmosphere for education, foster a sense of togetherness and admiration among students and educators, and facilitate students' comprehension of the subject matter. Conversely, games possess the ability to engage users and provide enjoyment, fostering active involvement and improving English young learners' cognitive and physical abilities. The decision to utilise either songs or games for instructing English to primary school kids can be influenced by multiple aspects, including the educational goals, the English young learners' inclinations and learning modalities, and the accessible resources. Teachers should contemplate integrating a blend of both approaches to accommodate the varied requirements and interests of their English young learners.

Conclusion

Incorporating songs and activities into English instruction for primary school English young learners can yield advantages such as fostering a favourable classroom atmosphere, improving linguistic abilities, and encouraging active participation in the learning process. Nevertheless, it is crucial for educators to meticulously choose suitable material and guarantee a regulated atmosphere within the classroom. Teachers can enhance the learning experience for their English young learners by employing a blend of music and interactive activities.

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