



EFFECTIVENESS OF USING GAMES IN TEACHING GRAMMAR TO YOUNG
LEARNERS

M.A.Mustofakulova

senior teacher of the department of English language theory and practice:

D.B.Baxtiyorova

the student of the group 747-19

Teaching grammar has undoubtedly been one of the most controversial issues in the history of English language teaching, strongly influenced by different approaches which have dominated the area of foreign language teaching (FLT) in different periods. With the emergence of communicative language teaching (CLT) in the 1970s, grammar was first marginalised as the focus shifted from accuracy to fluency. Language acquisition theory rejected the explicit teaching of grammar on the grounds that language and grammar can be acquired subconsciously. However, the effectiveness of this theory was later questioned as reports of low writing proficiency and poor grammar came through. Two different ways of understanding the role of grammar developed in the process, the weak and the strong views⁸³. According to the strong view, learners will 'pick up' grammar subconsciously through communicative tasks, so there is no need to teach it explicitly. On the other hand, the weak view sees explicit grammar teaching as beneficial for language development. There is a general consensus among researchers today that there is a place for grammar in the foreign language curriculum, but that it should be considered in the context of meaningful communication and that learners need to be helped to link grammar items and structures with the communicative functions they perform in different contexts⁸⁴.

Most authors in the area of teaching English to young learners agree that grammar is an essential component of language learning and should be taught at all levels, including YL. However, since young learners are able to comprehend meaningful messages, but are unable to analyse the language as a system, it is clear that grammar learning should be mostly implicit rather than explicit. In addition, given the learners' cognitive level, grammar should be presented and used within a meaningful context, reflecting authentic uses of language. As Millrood notes, "a grammar-sensitive teacher will see the language patterns that occur in tasks, stories, songs, rhymes and classroom talk, and will have a range of techniques to bring these patterns to the children's notice, and to organise meaningful practice"⁸⁵.

Actually, method and techniques are the most important element of teaching. Choosing method also cannot be separated with the concept of teaching- teacher- lesson

⁸³ Кубрякова Е.С. Номинативный аспект речевой деятельности/Отв. редактор Б.А. Серебренников. Изд.4-е. — М.:Книжный дом «ЛИБРОКОМ», 2012. — 160 с.

⁸⁴ Лакофф Дж., Джонсон М. Метафоры, которыми мы живем / Пер. с англ.; под ред. и с предисл. А.Н. Баранова. — М.: Едиториал УРСС, 2004. —256 с.

⁸⁵ Мильруд Р.П. Методика преподавания английского языка. English Teaching Methodology: Учеб. пособие для вузов. — 2-е изд., стереотипн. — М.: Дрофа, 2007. — 253.



and learners-centered lesson-, the concept is the effect of teaching and learning process⁸⁶. Each element in teaching cannot be separated, because it has relation and being a complement one another. From the concept, teacher can determine what method which is suitable. Teaching language is not easy; because language is so wide and need has many function and meaning. Language teacher needs good strategies, a suitable method and technique in the class room. Because of those reason, teacher must have wide knowledge, keeps up to date, and open-minded.

Teaching grammar for young learners is not easy, because grammar is one of language system that must be taught for the language learner. Sometimes, in speaking people do not need grammar more, but it is needed to tell, to describe the right procedures. For the young learners, teaching grammar must be taught in a different ways. English for young learners is thematic, so when teacher teach grammar, teacher must prepare the media, and picture⁸⁷. Young learners more like to see than read. Sometimes, reading is boring for some people, especially young learners or other learners that do not like reading. Teaching English grammar can be hard going - for the teacher and the students. It doesn't have to be difficult or painful, however teach English grammar using fun learning games are one of attractive learning.

As we all know, children love games. Games have a special role in any foreign language teaching programmed because they facilitate foreign language learning especially for young learners. With the introduction of communicative language teaching, English language teaching and learning has become much more demanding for teachers and learners just like any other innovation poses challenges for its users.

Games have become crucially important for English language learners and teachers not only because they provide enjoyment and relaxation, but also as they encourage students to use their language in a creative and communicative manner. Similarly, because the definition of the term “young learners” encapsulates those children between the ages of about 5 years old to 12 years old⁸⁸.

It can be suggested that games are a natural part of young learners' lives. Games also provide wonderful atmosphere in the children's language class. It is widely documented that English language games improve learning, and be one of the most effective classroom tool. The first reason why games are so useful since games make learning fun, children are willing participants and are not just present in class because they have to be. Students pay more attention because when they enjoy themselves, they do better, feel better about them, and do even better – it is a learning cycle working in their favor.

Playing a game has a purpose and an outcome. Hadfield stated that games as “an activity with rules, a goal and an element of fun⁸⁹.” In order to play, students have to say

⁸⁶ Лapidус Б.А. Проблемы содержания обучения языку в языковом вузе. —М.: Высш. школа, 1986. — 144 с.

⁸⁷ А.С. Асиновский. Полевая лингвистическая практика: Учеб.-метод. комплекс сложной структуры / Отв. ред: науч. ред. Н.В. Богданова. —СПб., 2006. — 98 с.

⁸⁸ Лаздинь Т.А. Методы оптимизации отбора терминологических единиц и их представление в учебном французско-русском словаре (на материале предметной области «Права человека»): Дис. ... канд. пед. наук /СПбГУ. — СПб., 2009. — 343 с.

⁸⁹ Hadfield J. A collection of grammar games and activities for intermediate students of English. -Longman publishing house., 2013. P. 4



things. Therefore, they have a reason to communicate and this makes them want to know and learn more. In addition to this, games stimulate and motivate children to a new level. They know that if they do not pay attention, they will not be able to play the game well and they will let their team down so they make more effort to join in and learn as much as possible. He stated that games encourage learners to direct their energy towards language learning by providing them with meaningful contexts. Therefore, it is important that teachers should not see games as time fillers or tools designed for fun only, but integrate them into their foreign language teaching program. Moreover, games are one of the best ways to direct young learners' energy not only to learning grammar, but also to many skills and areas of the language. However, it should be taken into consideration for teach young learners through games require special effort from the teacher.

According to *Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners*, stated that “the set of rules that describe the structure of a language and control the way that sentences are formed”⁹⁰. Some people could say that grammar is not very important, but they are wrong. Based on Scrivener said that, it is of course definitely possible to speak without following any grammar rules only with the use of vocabulary. Moreover, learning grammar is really important to achieve the higher levels of the language. On the other hand, the word grammar could be horrifying for students. It could be the hard nut to crack for the teacher to persuade pupils to learning grammar. However, it depends on the teacher how they solved this problem. They need not follow traditional methods in teaching grammar like setting the rules, filling the grammar exercises or testing but she can use another amusing way games.

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⁹⁰ www.EnglishLanguageResourcesfromMacmillanDictionary.com



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