INTEGRATING TRADITIONAL GAMES INTO THE EYL CLASSROOM

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Abstract: Language teachers for young learners need cultural sensitivity as well as the ability to design lesson plans that motivate students to pursue cultural learning and help them communicate with people from different cultures. Yet, it seems to be common practice that foreign language teaching frequently neglects local cultural awareness, the teacher focuses on enriching vocabularies by using textbooks rather than combining it with the traditional games in the classroom. Therefore, this paper presentation will explore the benefits of traditional games and how to integrate them into the classroom. It focuses on the implementation of Indonesian traditional games in English teaching for young learners. The design is created by integrating materials from conventional English games into traditional games as a base. This paper will present the importance of traditional games integration into the course, their implementation into the classroom and the impact of traditional games into developing knowledge among students.

Keywords: language teaching, traditional games, EYL (English for young learner)

Introduction

Nowadays, Indonesia has been applied English in children. As an adopter, Indonesia needs extraordinary treatment in presenting, educating, and utilizing this dialect to the learners and clients, the adolescent or grown-up one. Piccolo (2010) states that teaching English to youthful learners are not the same with instructing English to grown-ups or even young people. That is the slip-up a considerable measure of educators makes when they confronted with overwhelming class of 3 to 5 year olds. The eccentric disposition of youthful learners generally makes their educators getting frenzy.

Young learners have extra energy to do some activities. They are so enthusiastic in something but ignoring something else. It is quicker to raise a child’s motivation and enthusiasm than an adult’s, but it is also easier to lose a child’s motivation and enthusiasm than it is with an adult’s (Olga Simpson, in Picollo, 2010). To raise the young learner’s enthusiasm, there are so many ways and treatments in doing this, based on the needs. One of them is using games, because children love to play the most. There are some kind of games that they can play, in physical and electrical games one.

In fact, English teaching for young learner is now and then connected in same courses as English instructing for grown-up. Indeed, these two age-levels are precisely diverse. The recreations as ‘the wrap’ of the material are conventional amusements which are a piece of Central Java social fortune. It is realized that the amusements are practically terminated, on the grounds that they are left by Javanese youngsters. Our youngsters today are more acquainted with the "foreign made" amusements. Though, there are numerous social capacities behind these customary recreations which were planned by Javanese predecessors. One of them is the message of harmony. This paper will propose an outline of English material pressed in conventional amusements. This has an importance of social protection and keeps the social congruity and makes a fun air in instructing children.

Characteristic of Young Learner

Young learner divided into two group, Scott and (Yterberg, in Kasihani, 2010) grouping them into two level: the first level for five to seven years old and for eight to ten years old includes to the second level which is belong to beginner because most of them study foreign language in these age.

For gaining the successful in teaching English for Young Learner, the teacher must understand the characteristic of young learner. Ytreberg (1990:1) mention some basic characteristic of young learner:

1. Children sometimes feel have problems to distinguish the real world from the imaginary world. It can be difficult for teachers to cope with it and to understand their perception of reality.
2. They love to play
3. When working or playing they like to be accompanied with others. Most of them do not like to work alone.
4. They use language skills long before they are aware of them.
5. They learn by mimics, using gestures and body movements.
6. They have short attention and concentration span.
7. They do not always understand the world of adults. The teacher needs to use the instruction in an appropriate way and use the language and phrases so that the children can easily get the message.
(Slattery, in Kalendova, 2008) gives the different characteristic of young learner. According to him the children who be learner like :

1. love to play and use imagination
2. are naturally curious
3. enjoy repetition and routines
4. are developing quickly as individuals
5. learn in a variety of ways, for example, by watching, by listening, by imitating, by doing things
6. are not able to understand grammatical rules and explanations about language
7. have quite a short attention span and so need variety of activities
8. talk in their mother tongue about what they understand and do – this helps them learn
9. can generally imitate the sounds they hear quite accurately and copy the way adults speak

Based on the explanation above the writer assumes in teaching young learner it is very important to support their enthusiasm from the beginning of learning.

**Games for Young Learner**

Effective learning can be conducted as a process intellectual and enthusiastic capacities of the learners are accommodated well. Then again, the same treatment for diverse adapting way helps making humanistic and powerful learning process. As the learners are fulfilled and delighted in on learning process, the procedure could be said effective. According to Adisasminto (2008:84) arts as a game-form is almost equal with humanistic learning form. He explained that art-activities and other activity forms which could be called ‘playing’ are a creative process involving the imagination as its big portion.

On such a condition, human can put themselves on boundless innovative world, offer chance to hone their imagination and discover something new on standard thing in the basic perspective. Further, she clarifies that learning procedure, which is a troubled movement for the mind, will be all the more viably done in an unwind condition. Learning procedure ought to impact fun exercises as an imaginative thinking way. The exercises, for example, recreations, particularly on artistic expression will bring about favorable mental condition, coating fair, self-ruling, imaginative, equalization, and otherworldly state of mind.

**Traditional Games**

Indonesia has a variety races and cultures, which one of it is traditional games. In the East Java there are many traditional games which is very useful for English teaching. They are *dhakon*, *bhenik* (gatrik), *kkean*, *gobak sodor*, *engkiek* (jumping and trampling from one board to the others), *bantiengan*, and *delik-delikan* (hide and seek). Many lessons learned from the traditional game, ranging from unity, sportsmanship, agility, in addition to local philosophical value. For that, still turn traditional games.

By playing games, children will be entertained and also will keep social relationship with others, and the social correlation will be maintained to their adulthood. Adisasminto (2008:83) states that game as one of cultural product can make physical and mental activities merrier. The existence of games is equal with the existence of art as the product of human activities. On the process of playing games, there are beauty and joys of togetherness, like the art product which could ‘absorb’ the focus of creator artist.

However, in accordance with the progress of technology, traditional games are rarely played. Children prefers to modern games such as play station, video games, or even on-line games that can be easily connected using internet rather than traditional games. The effort of Traditional games recovery has a deeper meaning. This is aimed at revitalizing the traditional games to be played and loved by Indonesian children. In addition, it has cultural reservation on the process of English learning.

There are some reasons why traditional games can support the process of English learning for the kids. As it is previously mentioned, humanistic and effective learning can increase interpersonal relationship and can create fun learning process. Traditional games can push the children’s potential to its peak, for this will reduce the pressure and lead them to feel free. In the other hand, the togetherness atmosphere in the games supports the children’s social quotient, it provides an opportunity to use instructional language and also traditional games help increase understanding of culture.

**Teaching English through Traditional Games**

Teachers need to find the appropriate traditional games needed. There are some traditional games which can be used in teaching English for young learner. Let’s take a game *gobak sodor* as an alternative English teaching media.

*Gobak Sodor* is a game of exercising and mind. It consists of two teams, one team of three people. A rule of thumb is to intercept the opponent cannot escape to the last line in a back and forth. They usually have small talk in this session to swindle the opponent. This swindle session can be modified as the subject of English
learning. The player will ask in English and should pronounce the words loudly to let others heard and evaluate the pronunciation. Whereas the other player should answer in English too, for example, “What is your name?”. If someone makes any mistakes in pronouncing the words, the group will be lose and the next group will get their turn.

The topic of small talk is accorded to the lesson, it could be about fruit, family, color, body, house, animal, weather, fruit and vegetables. This can be done by giving chances for all other player (or numbers of question can be limited based on agreement) to ask a question about the topic discussed, before someone try to pass the border. It means if he/she cannot give a correct answer, he/she is not allowed to pass the line and the group will be lose. Hopefully, learners will not only understand the material, but also are able to pronounce the words well. The true is measured by the understanding of the material and the right pronunciation.

Closing Remarks

By considering the implication of cultural value preservation in the application of the local genius as the material for English learning, it will not be too much hope that we have a chance to keep the endangered traditional games in place. The application of games as media of English learning is one of the efforts to take. Hopefully, the children, then, will not only play the games in the school context, but also make them as part of their daily social activities and their autonomous learning. The children will know traditional games as something beneficial for their study and get the social benefits as fundamental for personal development which actually are planted by their ancestors, the original creators of the games.

Bibliography


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